

Genesis: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

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[0 : 00] Jigsaw puzzles. I don't know how many of you enjoy a jigsaw puzzle. Our family quite enjoys big puzzles. The bigger it is and the harder it is, the better. Especially on a holiday, maybe a lunar new holiday, you're in Hong Kong.

It's a way of detaching from technology and social media. It's a way of having family time together. There's nothing like a great, big, challenging puzzle. But of course, if you've ever done a puzzle, what is the key?

You've got to know what the picture is, right? Having a view of the big picture helps you to make sense of the individual pieces and where they go. Trying to do a 5,000-piece puzzle without any idea of what's going on is challenging and frustrating and confusing.

So you need the big picture in order to make sense of the individual parts. Much of life is actually like this. It's kind of like your job. If you don't know what part your job plays in your company or your corporation or your institution, it's easy for your job just to become a dry job.

But when you see the purpose, when you see the big picture, you see what role you're playing, your job can become a vocation, a calling. Today we're starting this new preaching series called The Wonderful Work of God, tracing the storyline of God and His work through the Bible.

[1 : 26] And what we're going to do over the next couple of weeks is we're going to try and zoom out and see the big picture of the Bible. I'm sure you know this, but the Bible has a storyline, a narrative arc.

It has a beginning and an end. The Bible is not just a collection of wise sayings to live by. Some good advice to try and get you through your day. The Bible is not just a collection of sacred writings by random individuals throughout the ages.

The Bible is one book made up of many parts, but it's one book and it's got one storyline, one narrative arc. In order to understand the parts of the Bible, to make sense of it, it really helps to see the storyline.

That's what we're going to be doing. Vaughan Roberts in his book, God's Big Picture, tells this great story, illustration. He says, imagine you've got children, you've got two children, and some great aunt comes from overseas and she brings your children gifts.

And she gives your son a book, the latest spy school adventure, mystery. And she gives your daughter a Barbie, but your daughters don't really like Barbies.

[2 : 33] Your daughter is an avid reader and wants the book. And so your two kids are fighting over the book. And you say to your daughter, okay, we'll go to Bookazina and get another copy, but Bookazina is out of books.

And you say, we'll order it online, but Amazon is out of books. And so you say, okay, I know what we'll do. We'll tear the book in half and give you each a piece. And so you give the first half to the eldest child and the second half to your youngest child.

And your first child finds out that Humpty Dumpty, Professor Humpty Dumpty, was killed in the library. But his part of the book ends before you can find out who did it.

And the second child finds out that all the king's horses and all the king's men get arrested for some crime they've committed, but don't know what crime they committed. Both are going to be frustrated as they don't know how to make sense of the book.

Sometimes as Christians, we just like our section of the Bible. We read the New Testament and it's wonderful. It's full of good news, but we don't really know why it's full of good news. We don't know what the bad news was. Or we just read the bad news, or we read the Old Testament and we think, wow, God is so angry.

[3 : 39] God's so uptight. You just calm down a little bit. But you don't know how the story ends. In this section, the wonderful work of God, we're going to trace the storyline of the Bible and see how it all makes sense.

And today we're going to start, where all good stories start, we're going to start at the beginning. In Genesis 1 to 3. And it's a long passage. We're not going to be able to look at all of it. But what we're going to see is this, that God's plan for us is to live under His rule, experiencing His blessing, in joyful, loving relationship.

But the problem is that sin, because of sin, we have lost our way. But God's plan is not over. God is still going to bring His plan to pass.

Okay, so on that note, let me call CK up and she's going to read to us the scripture reading. You can follow along in your bulletin or on the screen. Thank you. CK. Thank you, Kevin, for setting the context.

Today we're going to read an abridged version of Genesis 1 to 3. It will briefly cover the creation of the world, the mankind, and the fall. So please follow along on the screen.

[4 : 50] In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep.

And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day, God finished His work that He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work that He had done.

So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it, God rested from all His work that He had done in creation. These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.

When no bush of the field was yet in the land, and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground.

Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. And the man became a living creature.

[6 : 15] And the Lord God planted a garden in the Eden in the east, and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the side and good for food.

The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. A river flowed out to Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers.

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat.

For in that day that you eat it, you shall surely die. Then the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a helper fit for him.

Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. Then the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

[7 : 36] Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, Did God actually say you shall not eat of any tree in the garden?

And the woman said to the serpent, We may eat the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.

But the serpent said to the woman, You will not surely die, for God knows that when you eat of it, the eyes will be opened, And you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, And that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, She took of its fruit and ate.

And she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig trees together, and made themselves loincloths.

[8 : 49] And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, And the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat? The man said, The woman whom you gave to me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.

Then the Lord God said to the woman, What is this that you have done? The woman said, The serpent deceived me, and I ate. The Lord God said to the serpent, Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock, And above all beasts of the field.

On your belly you shall go, And dust you shall eat all days of your life. I will put enmity between you and woman, And between your offspring and her offspring.

He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise his heel. To the woman he said, I will surely multiply your pain and childbearing. In pain you shall bring forth children.

[10:00] Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you. And to Adam he said, Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, And eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, You shall not eat of it.

Cursed is the ground because of you. In pain you shall eat of it all days of your life. Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the plants of the field.

By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, Till you return to the ground, For out of it you are taken, For you are dust, And to dust you shall return.

The man called his wife's name Eve, Because she was the mother of all living. And Lord God made for Adam, And for his wife garments of skins, And clothed them.

Then the Lord God said, Behold, The man has become like one of us, In knowing good and evil. Now, Lest he reach out his hand, And also take of the tree of life, And eat, And live forever.

[11:07] Therefore, The Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden, To work on the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man, And at the east of the garden of Eden, He placed the cherubim, And a flaming sword, That turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

This is the word of God. Great, Thank you, CK. CK, That was a long reading, And you read so well. Thank you for that. Okay, Let's look at this passage. This passage is, There's so much richness in it, And we could spend weeks on this alone.

We're going to fly quite high level, But there's a lot of detail, So, Don't worry about all the detail, Just try and get the big picture. But let's see where we can go. First thing I want you to notice, Genesis 1 and 2, Is not a cosmological textbook.

It's not trying to give us, Every minute bit of detail, About the way the world was created. There are certain things, We don't need to be dogmatic about.

I don't think Genesis 1 and 2, Tells us the age of the earth. Was the world created, In seven literal 24 hour periods, Or seven epochs of time? I don't think we need to be, Dogmatic about that.

[12:18] What is the point? Well the main point of this, Is that creation is not an accident. It's not a random event that happened. It's not a result of chance.

Rather all creation, Everything that exists, From galaxies and stars and nebula, Down to subatomic particles, Is the design of a creator, Eternal, Uncreated being, Whom we call God.

And the New Testament says it like this, John writes, He says, All things were made through him, He's talking about Jesus, Without him, Was not anything made, That has been made.

That's the main point. God is the one who, By purpose and design, Has brought everything into existence. Now there's a couple of things, That this tells us. One, God is the author of everything that exists.

One verse one, In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Verse 31, And so it was, God saw everything he made, And behold, It was very good.

[13:19] God is not a part of creation, He didn't emanate out of creation, He sits over and above creation. Creation is not divine, We don't worship creation. God is distinctive, Set apart from, Everything else that exists.

So we don't worship creation, As if it's God, We don't think God is part, Or emulated out of creation, God is distinctive. The Bible word for distinctive, Is holy. God's holiness, Is not only his moral perfection, It's also the fact that he is other, He's in a category different, From everything else. He's the only uncreated essence, In this world. Secondly, He's the author of creation, He has creator rights over it. You could say, He's the lord of creation, Or the ruler of creation, Or the king of creation.

Now on the one hand, This means, God gets to determine, How creation functions and works. He gets to determine, The scientific principles. Things like gravity, And thermodynamics, And those

kind of laws, That you all know more about than me.

He gets to determine, This is how my world is going to operate. If you build a bridge, It's going to be stable and steady, Because there are certain laws, That God has put in place.

[14 : 31] It's going to, It's going to, Our world can operate like that. But God also gets to determine, The moral principles, By which the world operates. He gets to say, What is good and right?

What is wrong? For instance, In 2 verse 16, He says, To Adam, You may eat of any tree of the garden, But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, You must not eat, And the day that you eat of it, You will die.

Well who is God? Why does he get to say that? Well it's because he's God. He has creator rights, You could say, Patency, Over his creation.

It belongs to him. Now, What this means, Is a couple of things. On one hand, It means that the proper response, Of creatures, Is to worship, And adore him. So Psalm 95, Says it like this, For the Lord is a great God, A great king above all gods, In his hands are the depths of the earth, The heights of the mountains are his also, The sea is his, For he made it, His hands formed the dry land, We sang about that earlier, So come, Let us worship and bow down to him.

God is distinctive, He is the creator, Uncreated one. Notice what else this means. In Genesis, We see that human beings, Have a special place, In God's creation.

[15 : 56] In one sense, Human beings are, Kind of like all other creatures, We are under God's rulership, We are a result of his, Creator hands, We are dependent upon God, We live under his rule, But Genesis also goes to great lengths, To say there's, Something distinctive, Something different about human beings, We are not merely just, Intellectually advanced animals, There's something categorically different, About humans from every other creature, And the words that the Bible used for this is, We are made in God's image, We are image bearers, We carry God's image, Which means that, There's something in our makeup, Something in our DNA, Which is distinctive, Something, Almost that we carry God's nature, His DNA within us, Now again, This means a couple of things, On one hand, It means that, All human beings, Have dignity, And value, And respect, Whether you're male, Or female, One is not better than the other, Not more important, Whether you're Chinese,

Or Caucasian, Or black, Or whatever color you are, There's equal dignity, And respect, Your ethnicity, Your culture, Your gender, Your capabilities, Intellectual, Or your physical abilities, Or disabilities, All human beings, By virtue of nature, That you are made in God's image, You carry inherent within you, Dignity and worth and respect, This is true even for unborn children, In the womb, Made in God's image, But it also means that, As human beings, We have a great responsibility, Because there's something distinctive, About humans, That we are not like other creatures, We are made in God's image, For a purpose, To rule, With God, And on behalf of God, His creation, To co-rule, To steward, Or look after his creation, So in Genesis 1, God says this, Let us make mankind in our image, After our likeness, And then the next sentence is, And let them have dominion, Over the fish of the seas,

And the birds of the air, And the livestock, And over all the earth, And every creeping thing, So make them in the image, What's the purpose? That they can rule with us, And for us, Over our creation, We are co-rulers with God, Now this obviously doesn't mean, We get to use and abuse creation, However we want, God is a loving ruler, And we as his stewards, Are to love his creation, Like he loves on his behalf, Okay, So there's a couple of things, God is the creator, Humans are distinct, But here's the fourth thing, For us to see, The final note is that, The goal of creation, With humanity anyway, Is intimacy, And relationship with God, When you read Genesis 1 and 2, There's kind of these two creation accounts, Genesis 1 is kind of high level, God makes the heavens, And the earth, The galaxies, And the earth, Plants and animals, And humankind, And then chapter 2, Kind of narrows down, And God tells the creation account, Again from a second angle, And the second angle, He really focuses on humanity, And what's his big point there, Notice the focus on relationship, God's relationship to humanity, Our relationship to one another, And our relationship to creation, That's kind of the main point, Of Genesis chapter 2, Why does God take a step further, And make human beings in his likeness, Why does God make us to be relational, It's not because God is lonely, He has perfect relationship, Within the Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit, He doesn't need us, It's not because God needs anything, He makes us to enjoy, And benefit, And partake in his goodness, That's what it means to be in a relationship with him, Even God's commands like, Don't eat of this, Don't do this, Don't go near there, These aren't arbitrary

commands, Because God is just trying to trip us up, These are for the purpose of relationship, I want to have a relationship with you, Don't go somewhere, That's going to damage our relationship, And so friends,

This is really important here, God tells us, Part of the essence, Of what it means to be a human being, One of the core essences of our humanity, Is to live in constant, Dynamic, Ongoing, Relationship, With God, And that when that is missing, There's a core part of our humanity, In essence of what it means to be human, That is missing, It's the reason why, St. Augustine famously said, You have made us for yourself, Oh God, And our hearts will always be restless, Until we find our rest in you, In Genesis chapter 2, God says, God rests from his creation, And invites mankind into that rest, How?

[20 : 48] By coming into relationship, Friends, It's the reason why, No amount of money, Or career progression, Or romantic relationships, Or sexual experiences, Or promotion, Or anything else you can put in that category, No amount of those things, Will most deeply satisfy you, Because your heart wasn't made, For career promotion, Or money, Or romantic relationships alone, It was made fundamentally, The essence of your, The deepest part of your heart, Is to be in a relationship with God, And so yes, You are a moral being, Yes you are a creative being, You are a relational being, But at most basic, Essential level, What it means to be a human being, Is as the Latin phrase is, *Coram Deo*, To live before the face of God, To walk in relationship with him, And so here we see in Genesis 1-2, This perfect picture of God's design, For the world, It's as Vaughn Roberts puts it, It's a picture of the kingdom of God,

It's God's people, Living in God's place, The garden of Eden, Under God's rule, And experiencing God's blessing, That's the pattern, For God's creation, God's people, Living in God's place, Under his rule, And experiencing God's blessing, And all, Everyone lived happily ever after, No unfortunately, That's not what happens, Right, Unfortunately, We get to Genesis chapter 3, Because in some ways, Genesis 1-2, Can sound a little bit like Disneyland, Right, It sounds all wonderful, It sounds amazing, Sounds magical, But it sounds unrealistic, Because if you've lived, More than one day, In the real world, Especially maybe our world presently, With everything that's going on, It can feel like, This is a very far picture, From our world, And that of course, Is what Genesis 3 is all about, In Genesis 3, We see two main things, We see the problem, And we see the effect, Of the problem, We see the cause, Of what went wrong, And we see its consequences, So let's look at those things together, Firstly, What's our great problem? Man's great sin, What goes wrong, With God's good will, In the real world, Mankind decides, Not to live under God's rule, We rebel against his authority, We decide to do things our own way, And we replace God's gracious rule, With our independence, Putting ourselves, In the place of God, And we see this in a number of ways, Notice firstly, How Adam and Eve, Question God's word, And they question God's authority, What does Satan say to them, In verse 1 of chapter 3, Look at the bulletin, He says, Did God actually say, You shall not eat of any tree, In the garden?

And Eve responds, Yes, He did, He said if we do that, We will die, And Satan says, Oh that's rubbish, You won't die, No God is just, He's playing with you, God knows that when you eat of it, Your eyes will be opened, You will be like God, You'll be wise, Don't listen to God's word, Don't listen to God, And they believe him, They doubt God's word, They question his authority, And they start to ask themselves, Is it really important, To obey everything God said, And maybe we can just obey most of it, And that's good enough, And they question his word, And his authority, And look at how they do this, Why do they do this, Because they doubt God's goodness, Look at 3 verse 6, It says, When Eve saw that the tree was good, For food, It was a delight to the eyes, That the tree was to make one wise, She took of its fruit, And she ate it, She gave some to her husband, Who was with her, And he ate as well, Why do they reject God's authority, Rebel against his word, It's because they've been convinced, That God is not so good, God doesn't really want, Their best interest at heart, He's just putting arbitrary rules in place, God is a killjoy, He wants to stifle their fun, He wants to minimize their pleasure, He wants to restrict their happiness, And so they say, God we know a better way, We know what we're doing, And so maybe I can ask us, How many of us have felt like this, Maybe even the last week, You felt like, God I know you probably don't want this, But I'm sure you just don't want my happiness, If it makes me happy, What can be wrong with it, Surely God wants me to be happy, And we find ourselves, Questioning God's word, And his authority, But notice the second thing, They want to be like God, They want to take his place, I've often thought about this over the years, There's this one tree, That they are forbidden to eat of, What is the tree

called?

[25 : 29] It's the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, And I for years have thought, That is the strangest thing, Like what is wrong with knowing, The difference between good and evil, Surely that's a good thing, I mean you would think that God, Would want his people to know, The difference between good and evil, Right, What's wrong with that?

But actually, The issue here, Is not simply knowing good and evil, It's the authority to determine good and evil, Look at verse 11, It says, Eve saw that the tree was desired, To make one wise, You might say, What's the problem with being wise, Right, That's a good thing, The issue is not simply knowing, The difference between good and evil, It's determining it, It's deciding it, It's defining it, It's saying, We will decide what is right and wrong, We will decide what is good, And what is not good, When Adam and Eve want to do that, They don't just want to know good and evil, They want to define it, Essentially they want to be God, They want to take God's place, They don't want to submit to his authority, His rule, They don't want to live under his rule, They want to be their own authority, And friends, This really is the essence of sin, Isn't it?

Sin is not just doing bad things, It's having a heart posture that says, I want to be in God's place, I want to be my own God, I want to be my own authority, John Stott famously said it like this, The essence of sin is man substituting himself for God, Mankind asserting himself against God, And putting himself where only God deserves to be, Humanity claiming prerogatives, That belong to God alone, Friends, Here we have the reason, The cause, For everything that is wrong, And broken, And sad, And anxiety causing, And horrible, And painful in our world, That God's good design for his world, Is to live in shalom, Perfect peace, And unity, And harmony, But as his pinnacle creation, We've rebelled, And we've gone our own way, And we've said, We will be our God, God, Back off, We've sinned against God, And we've rebelled against his rule, And we've pursued a path of wanting to be his equal,

But unfortunately, The bad news doesn't end there, Because not only is the problem, There's, The consequences are equally tragic, Sin's tragic consequences, And we see a couple of things here, Let me run through them quickly, The first is, We see that, The consequence of sin, Is that death enters into the world, Earlier on, You remember, God says to Eve, To Adam and Eve, Don't eat of the tree, Don't rebel against my command, If you do, You will surely die, And they don't listen to God, And they don't die, You think, God was bluffing, They called his bluff, But actually, We see that death, Does enter the world, Death enters every aspect of the world, It enters their relationships, It enters the way they handle creation, It enters their own sense of self-worth, And identity, The imago Dei, The image of God is broken, A part of it dies, But actually, As you read Genesis on, You see, Death enters into the world, In the most tragic way, In Genesis chapter 4, It starts off with, Adam needs sons,

Cain and Abel, Cain rises up, And murders his brother, And then one of Cain's descendants, A man called Lamech, He is a fierce warrior, And he boasts one day, I've killed the man, Just for looking at me funny, He doesn't quite say that, He says for insulting me, Or striking me, But he kills the man, In his rage, And then Genesis chapter 5, There's this genealogy, Of all the descendants of Adam, And says, So and so lived so many years, And he died, And so and so lived so many years, And he died, And he lived so many years, And he died, And he died, And he died, And he died, And death, Enters into our world, It's the consequence of sin, Coming into our world, And where God's world, Was marked with life and joy, It's now marked with destruction, Death and decay, The second thing is, All mankind is infected, With this hereditary disease, Called a sinful nature, We are all born, With a defect in our souls, Called this sinful nature, And it's passed down, From generation to generation,

[29 : 44] We are all inherently born with it, We cannot get away from it, We have this nature inside of us, Our souls are bent on following, After our forefathers, Adam even going our own way, And rejecting God, And saying, We will do things our way, And that becomes, The default posture, We sang about, Deliver me from my, Prideful disposition, Our disposition, Our posture, Becomes one of pride, I will be my own master, I won't listen to your rule, I'll listen to my rule, I'll become independent, So we are by nature, Bent on doing things our own way, Rejecting God's rule, Wanting our independence, And the problem with this disease, Is it's lodged in our souls, And it makes us to, Continue to perpetuate, The same things that our forefathers did, And so we look at them and say, Adam, You're so foolish, Why could you do that, Look at what you've done, But our sinful nature means, We perpetuate the same sins ourselves, And of course, That leads to, The

more obvious consequences, We see in our everyday lives,

Breakdown of human relationships, Did you see, Notice how, Adam and Eve's relationship, Rather than Adam protecting Eve, And standing up for her, And being there for her, What does he do? He throws her under the bus, CK I love how you read it earlier, God says to Adam, What have you done?

He says, She made me do it, And Eve, What have you done? The serpent made me do it, But Adam and Eve's relationship, Rather than being intimacy, And joy, And protection, And safety, Is now marked by blaming, Distancing each other, Conflict with each other, And even our most intimate, And even our most intimate, And precious relationships, Are now marked with, Conflict, There's shame, There's mistrust, There's using and abusing, Mistreating each other, Friends, Have you ever felt, Used or abused, Mistreated, Blamed for something you didn't do?

It's the tragic consequences, Of sin being unleashed, In our world, And of course, Mankind's relationship, With creation, Is broken, Rather than being, God's image bearers, We now steward, And look after his creation, Now that relationship, Is fraught with difficulty, Child bearing, Work, Every part of our relationship, With the world, Is broken, But of course, The biggest issue here, Is that mankind's relationship, With God is broken, And so actually, Our horizontal relationships, Are a mirror image, Of our broken relationship, With God, And we may, To walk with God, And know him, And experience his joy, And the intimacy, Of being loved, And known fully, By this God, And now, We don't know that anymore, We don't feel that, We don't sense that, Our identity, And our security, Our rest, That we were made to live with, Has collapsed in on itself, And here we see, The tragedy of the fall, In Genesis 2, At the end it says, In the beginning of chapter, The beginning of chapter 2, It says, God rested, Invited Adam, And this rest, At the end of chapter 2, It says, Adam and Eve were naked, And they felt no shame, It's nakedness with one another, But it's also nakedness with God, It's this place of complete vulnerability, Security, Rest, Transparency, No shame, No difficulty, But at the end of chapter 2, What happens, All that is gone, After they sin, They cover up their nakedness, They hide from the face of God, Let me ask you this question, I don't know if you've ever experienced this, What happens when a child, Is in a healthy relationship with their parents, And they create something wonderful, Okay, They do an art or a craft, Or a STEM project, And the parent walks in the room, What does the child do?

[33 : 22] Mom and dad, Look what I made, And the mom and dad say, Those are the most wonderful squiggles, I've ever seen, Right? Amazing, Beautiful, I'll pay you a million dollars for it, Okay?

A child loves to show off what they've made, But what happens when a child, Does something wrong, They write all over the wall, They draw on the couch, Okay? Or they play with something, They're not meant to play with, And then they break it, And then the parent walks in the room, What does the child do?

They cower, They hide away, They try and say, I did nothing wrong, Even though their face tells you, They've done something wrong, Right? This is what we see with Adam and Eve, Isn't it? As they rebel, They cover the shame, They hide from God's face, And they try and avoid his gaze, And look where it ultimately ends up, Look at the final verses of chapter 3, This is utterly heartbreaking, It says, The Lord God sent them, Out from the garden of Eden, To work the ground from which he'd taken, He drove out the man, At the east of the garden of Eden, He placed a cherubim, With a flaming sword, And turned every way, To guard the way, The tree of life, The ultimate story, The end of the story is this, Humanity is expelled, From God's gracious presence, From God's, Plunge into a world of darkness, Where everyone fights to survive, At the end of Genesis 3, We see the kingdom of God, Is in tatters in some sense, Now they are, God's people are not living in God's place, They've been expelled from Eden, They're out of God's place, They're not living under his rule anymore,

They're their own authority, And they're certainly not experiencing God's blessing, Now, As we come to a close, I don't want to tell too much, Because that's what the next 10 weeks are about, But, If you've got a Bible, I want you to quickly look at Revelation 21 and 22 with me, The very end of our Bible, The storyline of the Bible, Is not the end of the story, Because it goes on for all eternity, In Revelation 21 and 22, We see, Even more than before, God's people, Living in God's place, Under God's rule, Experiencing God's blessing, The kingdom of God is restored, And how do we get from Genesis 3, To Revelation 22, In fact in Revelation 22, What we see is heaven is pictured as a garden city, And in the middle of this garden, There's a river running through it, Like in Eden,

And on the side of the river, Is the tree of life,

[36 : 02] God's people are back in Eden, In fact a better version of Eden, And how do we get from Genesis 3, To Revelation 22, In this garden city, This new heavens, New earth, There is no Satan, There is no sin, There is no temptation, There is no loneliness, There is no blaming, No broken relationships, No anxiety, No shame, No emptiness, God's people, Living under God's rule, Experiencing his never giving up, Never running dry, Eternal blessing, So how does that happen, Well that's what the rest of the Bible is about, That is the story, Of the wonderful work of God, It's God restoring, A lost and sin ravaged world, Back into eternal relationship with him, Under his rule, And experiencing his blessing, And how will God do that, Well one, He'll deal with the cause, The sin and the rebellion, And he'll deal with that, And he'll fix that, But the other thing he'll do, Is he'll deal with the consequences, And he'll heal it, And restore it, God is going to deal with both the cause,

And the effect, And bring back his people, Even better than it was before, But in Genesis 3, We see the first signs of it, Look at chapter 3, Verses 15, God tells the snake, Which is a picture of Satan, That there will come a descendant of Eve, A man, One who will crush the head of Satan, Even as Satan thinks that he has damaged this man, There will come a certain person, And out of his suffering, He will bring down Satan, And overturn the effects of sin, And look again at verse 21, It says, The Lord God made for Adam and Eve, Garments of skin, And he clothed them, God covers their shame, And their brokenness, But how does he do it?

Some innocent life, Has to die, For their shame to be covered, Someone has to die, For their shame to be covered, Friends if you are familiar with Christianity, It's Genesis giving us hints, Of Jesus and the cross, How one day Jesus, A man, A descendant of Eve, In some senses, Will come, And in his suffering, He will crush Satan, And he will reverse the effects of sin, And he, The innocent one, Will die to cover our sin, And our shame, Friends, John Starr famously put it like this, Earlier I only read you half the quote, Listen to the full quote, The essence of sin is man substituting himself for God, But the essence of salvation, Christianity, Is God substituting himself for man, On the cross, In our place, Man asserts himself against God, And puts himself where only God deserves to be, God sacrifices himself, And puts himself where man deserves to be, Man claims prerogatives that belong to God alone,

God claims penalties, That belong to man alone, Friends even here at the very lowest points of the Bible, The lowest points of human history, We've seen already, God's plan is not defeated, It's not in jeopardy, God is going to restore all things, Even better than before, This is God's story, That he wrote before the foundation of the world, This is the wonderful work of God, Restoring all things under Christ, Redeeming his creation, And if you are a Christian, Friends, This is your story too, Let's pray together, Father God, We have, Looked at your word, Thank you for your word God, That helps us make sense of the world, God, As we thought about Graham, Smith earlier, As we think about our own lives, There's so much pain and brokenness, So much agony, And sometimes we cry out like the psalmist, Why God, How long, Oh Lord, Lord, What you've told us this morning, Is that, The brokenness of the world, Is not the way you designed it, Or willed it to be originally, But you have a plan, A plan written before even the creation of the world, That you will restore all things, And God, We hold on to you, We look to you, We trust you, God, This very week, As we go out into a broken world, Into a sin ravaged world, As we carry a sinful heart within us, We pray God, That your spirit will be at work in us, We pray God, That your spirit will, Put to death our sinful nature, That you'll make us more alive to you, And that God, You by your grace will, Enable us to be agents of grace and light, In this world, Help us to be a city on a hill, To be life into a city of darkness, Help us God, To walk with you, To encourage one another, To hold on to the hope of heaven, And then to love our city, And to bring peace here as well, God,

[40 : 55] As we hold on to you, We pray, Do these things in our lives, We thank you Jesus, For dying on the cross, And dealing with, The cause of this broken world, We pray, Spirit of God, Come and deal with the consequences, Even in our own lives, And make us ready for heaven, We pray these things in your great name, Amen.