

SIGNIFICANCE

Devotional | Predicament and Solution | December 4, 2022

GRACE
FELLOWSHIP

Discuss: Why do you think the world is a mess? How do we fix it?

Key Text: *“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* (Romans 6:23)

In our series called “Significance,” we’re learning what the Bible says about great questions regarding our origin, identity, purpose – and more – in life. In today’s lesson, we’ll see what Scripture says about the questions “Why is the world a mess?” and “How do we fix it?” No matter a person’s worldview, it seems clear that something in the world and in us is broken—things are not the way they are supposed to be—and we can’t escape the brokenness.

A humorous story is told about the mother of five children who came home one afternoon and noticed the house was quieter than usual. She looked in the living room and all five of her kids were sitting in a circle, playing with five of the cutest skunks you’ve ever seen. Instantly, the mom began to scream, “Run, children, run!” Each child grabbed a skunk and ran in different directions! Instead of helping, her screams so scared the children that they each squeezed their skunk...and you can guess what happened next when the squeezed skunks reacted!

No matter where you go on Earth, the stink of sin and brokenness is there, and there’s no getting away from it. The truth is, the world is broken because we are broken. We take sin and brokenness with us wherever we go. Let’s see what the Bible says about this predicament—how we and the world got this way; and the solution—how it can all be fixed. The world’s story can be captured in four scenes:

1. Creation - God’s original intention and design of the world

Six times during creation week, God saw His handiwork and declared it “good” (Gen.1:4,10,12,18,21,25). When it was all finally finished, He surveyed everything He had completed and pronounced it all to be “*very good*” (Gen.1:31). God placed humans as His representatives to rule and care for His creation and to live in a loving relationship with Himself and one another. Everything humans needed to flourish and live in harmony was provided by God.

This, of course, is God’s way of doing things. Since God can make a perfect universe, we can have full confidence that He knows what He is doing with our lives, too. Because God is good, whatever God does is, by definition, good! Ephesians 2:10 says, “*We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*” Romans 8:28 says, “*We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*”

Discuss: How does it affect your view of God, yourself, and the world to know that God originally declared all of His creation “very good”?

2. The Fall – Adam and Eve’s choice to disobey God and its catastrophic effects upon the world then and now

God had given the whole world to Adam and Eve with only one prohibition—there was one tree in the Garden of Eden from which they were not to eat. God warned them that if they disobeyed Him and ate the fruit, they would die. Adam and Eve chose to eat the fruit anyway. Because of their rebellion, sin, pain, and death were introduced into the world. Romans 5:18-19 says, “*One trespass led to condemnation for all men...by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners.*” All of creation “fell,” and all the pain we see in our world was introduced because of sin. The pattern of pain, suffering, and death continues as people live in rebellion against God. When we see anything in the world which is not good—such as sin, suffering, and death – we can know that such things constitute an intrusion into God’s perfect creation. They were not “created” as a part of creation, nor will God allow them to continue their intrusion forever. They all eventually must be eliminated.

Discuss: What key words and phrases do you see in Romans 3:10-18 regarding the Fall and its effects?

3. Redemption – Christ’s work to restore us and all things to God’s original intent

At the perfect time (Gal.4:4), God sent His Son, Jesus, to earth to die on the cross to pay sin’s penalty as our substitute (Is.53:4-6). Jesus then rose from the dead to assure us that God’s judgment against our sin was satisfied (Rom.1:4). Now our sins can be forgiven, and we can be brought into the relationship with God that He had created us to experience (Rom.5:9-10). For us to experience this forgiveness and relationship with God (salvation), we must turn from trusting in our own efforts to be right with God (repentance) and trust in Jesus alone (Acts 20:21).

Discuss: According to these verses, what benefits and blessings belong now to those who trust in Christ as Savior? 1 Corinthians 12:13; 2 Corinthians 5:17, 21; Ephesians 1:13-14; Galatians 5:16; John 3:16

4. Restoration – God establishes, rules and reigns in His perfect and final kingdom

The Bible asserts that history is headed somewhere. When Christ returns, He will bring all of God’s plans for the universe to culmination. All evildoers will be brought to justice and all suffering will end. God will fully restore all His creation—a New Heaven and New Earth filled with His righteousness (Rev.21-22)—replacements for what was spoiled by sin. All who have received Christ will be resurrected to rule with Christ in His eternal kingdom. We’ll experience eternal life in all its joy and wonder.

Discuss: What key words and phrases do you see in Revelation 21:1-4 about the New Heaven and New Earth?

For Further Study:

Free online commentary on every book of the Bible at www.enduringword.com

“Creation, Fall, Redemption” article at www.cslewisinstitute.org

“3 Circles Gospel Presentation” at www.NAMB.net