

Talk It Over

Good News In Tough Times

(Week 1)

When Your World Is Falling Apart

SMALL TALK

1. What part of your world seems most topsy-turvy lately? Your world physically, emotionally, spiritually, relationally, financially, or other?

VIEWPOINT

2. **READ Genesis 1:26-27; 31.** What does it mean to be created in God's image, and how was this "very good"?
3. **READ Genesis 2:8-9, 15-17.** Which trees was Adam allowed to eat from? What was the one commandment given? Did Eve hear the commandment from God or Adam?
4. **READ Genesis 3.** On the day that Adam and Eve's world fell apart, what signs of hope also came out of that day? What makes a promise of God a solid hope as opposed to merely wishful thinking?

GETTING PERSONAL

5. How much of the Bible is about "tough times"?
6. What signs of hope are you seeing in your topsy-turvy world?
7. How does the Good News to Adam and Eve on their worst day give us solid hope in our topsy-turvy world?
8. What do you do to keep your hope running strong in tough times?

MAKING PROGRESS

9. One of our core statements is: "Followers say, 'Follow me.'" What is your native language lately? a) complaint (the language of unbelief) or b) praise and gratitude (the language of the believing heart)? What can you do to make the language of a believing heart your default native language?

May 10, 2020

Good News In Tough Times

1-When Your World is Falling Apart

Have you felt like your world is falling apart? Doesn't it feel like everything is topsy-turvy right now? Maybe you feel like things are falling apart physically? Maybe you are no longer going to the gym because it isn't open, and while working from home the trip back and forth to the refrigerator counts as exercise! And you count your chews at reps! Hey, it counts for something. I'm getting really strong jaw muscles.

Or maybe you feel like your world is falling apart financially. Does it seem like there more stress in your home? Does your shelter in place feel like a not so safe shelter?

We have gone through a tremendous shift in so many areas, haven't we? The pandemic didn't just nudge a little, it feels more like total upheaval doesn't it? Like tremors in an earthquake and we don't know whether it is going away or about to become bigger.

Whether you are feeling it now, or not, you will feel tough times some time, so this is a message that we all need. Some just need it more right now than others.

When your good times turn into tough times, hang on to good news.

What good news? That's what this series is all about.

Today we will begin at the beginning of all tough times...

On the worst day of the world, God gave us hope.

I. **One day, our whole world FELL APART**

When we turn the page from Genesis 2 to Genesis 3, everything went from the best of times to previously unimagined worst of times.

Could anything be better than life in Eden before the fall? God said 7 times that it was good in Genesis 1. The 7th time was after creating Adam and Eve in his image, and they were experiencing God's glory and reflecting God's image well. And God said it was VERY good.

Then also in Genesis 2 a necessary component for free choice was introduced. The one forbidden choice. Are you really free if no choice matters? You are free to choose, when choice matters. This is the scenario God set up. This set up leads us to chapter 3. When the parents of all humanity chose to disobey.

Chapter 3 changes everything for our world. Have you ever had a page in your life that changed your whole story? This page changed everything in all of our stories. In one sense we entered tough times from Genesis 3 through Revelation 22, when finally there is a full restoration from the tough times.

Meanwhile, all the pages between continue to provide a choice. Will we hang on to God's Good News during our tough times?

Let's take a closer look at that critical turning point.

***Genesis 3:1-7 (CSB) {1}** Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You can't eat from any tree in the garden'?"*

{2} The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit from

the trees in the garden. {3} But about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, God said, 'You must not eat it or touch it, or you will die.' "

{4} "No! You will certainly not die," the serpent said to the woman. {5} "In fact, God knows that when you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." {6} The woman saw that the tree was good for food and delightful to look at, and that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. {7} Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

On one day, in one decision, their whole world of perfection, harmony, peace, love, joy, and unbelievable intimacy with God and each other ended.

Genesis 3:8-9 (CSB) {8} *Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. {9} So the Lord God called out to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"*

They never hid from God before, but something has changed inside of them. They feel shame. They feel exposed. They don't want to see God. They hide.

God asks, "Where are you?" When God asks you a question, it is not because he does not know the answer. God is asking because you don't know where you are. You don't know you are lost? It is a question to orient you. It alerts Adam and Even to the fact they haven't quite figured out for themselves. Something has changed. They are now lost. And they don't really want to see God about it.

Genesis 3:10-13 (CSB) {10} *And he said, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid.”*
{11} *Then he asked, “Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”*
{12} *The man replied, “The woman you gave to be with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate.”* {13} *So the Lord God asked the woman, “What have you done?” And the woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”*

Their world was in shambles—a world of fear, confusion, shame, guilt, embarrassment, and chaos.

To make matters worse, they play the blame game. It was your fault. No, it was her fault. No, it was his fault.

In one day, everything changed, not just for Adam and Eve, but for the entire world. Everything changed. But...

II. On That Day God was STILL GOOD

Genesis 3:21 (CSB) *The Lord God made clothing from skins for the man and his wife, and he clothed them.*

On the worst day of the world, God breathed hope into the situation.

A. God PROVIDED

They didn't deserve this, but God provided for them.

God is already setting into motion the pictures of sacrifice and forgiveness, this early in the story. A sacrifice took place. Skins came from animals. I'm guessing that God took the life of these animals, in order to provide for Adam and Eve. He does this before there is repentance. This is a picture of grace.

This is a picture of atonement. We might be tempted to say the first picture of atonement. But it is not the first picture. We'll get to that in a moment.

This picture is the picture of sacrifice. God provided something good even though this pair just did something evil. Isn't that amazing grace?

For us today, the good news remains: God will provide for us today just as he provided to Adam and Eve on their worst day if we come to him. God provides for us what we need, even in our topsy-turvy world, a state of utter confusion as to what to do, and where is it all headed, a world that feels like everything is falling apart. God isn't falling apart. God is not surprised. And God graciously provides for us.

That my friends is a very good God! Isn't that good news?!

This is beautiful. This is huge. God will take care of you right now.

But this is peanuts compared to something else God did that day. What do I mean?

B. God PROMISED

Genesis 3:14-15 (CSB) {14} So the Lord God said to the serpent: Because you have done this, you are cursed more than any livestock and more than any wild animal. You will move on your belly and eat dust all the days of your life. {15} I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.

On the worst day of the world, God breathed hope into the situation.

God promised that an offspring (a child) of Eve would bruise the head of the serpent. Isn't that great? If you have never heard this

before, you are probably puzzled. It just seems weird. Let's take a closer look.

Scholars refer to this as the "first gospel." This is the first prophecy about the coming Good News. This is no longer merely about a snake and a woman. This is about the Devil, and his defeat, by the seed of the woman.

Revelation 12: 9 (CSB) So the great dragon was thrown out — the ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the one who deceives the whole world. He was thrown to earth, and his angels with him.

There would be a specific seed or offspring of the woman. "He" would crush the head of the same old serpent (the devil) that tempted the woman, and that "He" would bring total victory.

III. One Day, God MADE it RIGHT again.

"Seed of the woman": Isn't this interesting? From a Jewish perspective, the genealogies are normally traced through the seed of the man. But not here.

Why? This is already a prediction of the virgin birth of Jesus.

Wow. Adam came long before Jesus. This was spoken in the presence of Adam and Eve, it was passed down from generation to generation eventually getting to Noah. Then it is passed down till it is written down. Genesis was written by Moses, 1,500 years before Jesus walks on this planet.

Jesus' father was his heavenly father, not Joseph. So, he of all people on earth came only from the "seed of the woman". That's amazing!

[On the worst day of the world, God breathed hope into the situation.](#)

The battle would not be over on that day of confrontation between the seed of the woman and snake and his seed.

“Satan” would be able to bruise only His heel. Now with a poisonous snake this a very bad thing. But something worse befalls the snake. The real victory would belong to the Seed of the woman who would crush the head of the serpent. This looks ahead to the Cross. There the serpent, the ancient dragon, the devil, the adversary (“satan”) did his worst to Jesus. But the cross became the means of our salvation and it, along with the resurrection of Jesus, assures us of the ultimate and final defeat of Satan.

***Romans 16:20 (CSB)** The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.*

Look who is trampling him underfoot now! Under your feet! The life of Jesus in you defeats the plans the enemy has for you!

On the worst day of the world, God breathed hope into the situation.