



P.A.S.S. Questions For Sunridge Life Group Leaders

For the week of March 23-29, 2014 – Grace To Know (Gen 3:15; Romans 5)

P - participation (get everyone involved in the dialog)

1. Is the idea that you are a theologian new to you? How do you feel about that?

A - application (makes it personal)

2. For those of us who do not read well or often, what can be done to grow and develop theological depth – and certainty?
3. What would it have been like to live in the Garden of Eden?
4. How far did we fall?
5. How does SHALOM (undefiled harmony with God) differ from our concept of peace?

S - scripture (thinking biblically is a learned behavior! :-)

6. Using the Cheat Sheet, review the gospel
7. Distinguish between the gospel and moralism.
8. Review the order of salvation. Do you see anything you haven't seen (or known) before?
9. What words or concepts really stand out to you?

S - sharing – If there's time review the updated values of Sunridge.

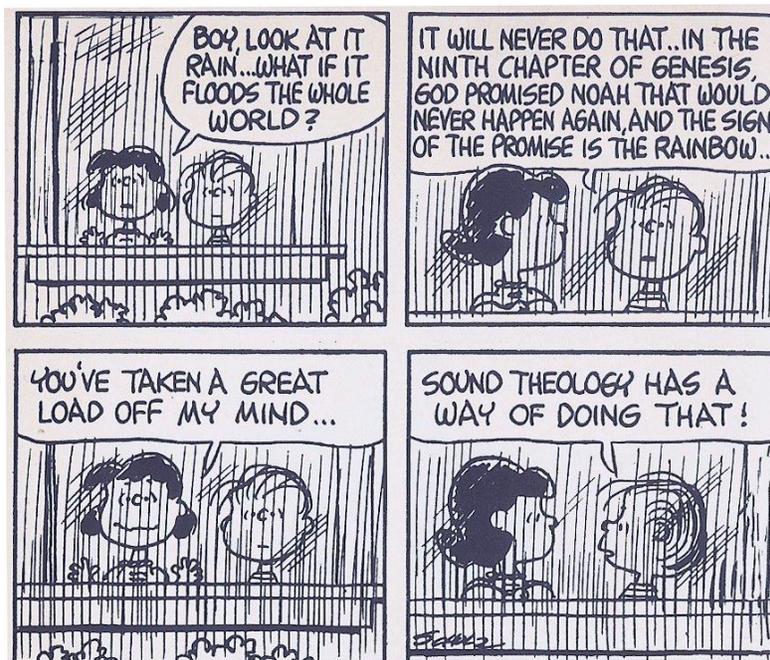
- Do they reflect who we are?
- Where are we strong?
- Where do we need to grow and develop?

Grace To Know

March 24, 2014

I. INTRO

- A. We will be in Genesis 3 today...
- B. I don't know if you've ever thought about this, but every person on the planet is a theologian. You are a theologian. (It can be easy to relegate theology to others.)
 1. The word *theology* simply means: Theology = The study of God. A more literal translation might be: Theology = Words, or thoughts, about God. (Atheists and agnostics are theologians too.)
 2. God made us in His image, and we are built to think in theological terms -- to think about God and what God does. Every person on the planet has a theology that's based on how we view God.
 3. Everyone is, therefore, a theologian.
 4. Last Oct (2013) there was an article in *The Atlantic* magazine, one of the oldest and most liberal magazines in America (1857) published an article entitled: *Study Theology, Even If You Don't Believe in God*. A byline said, "This lost liberal art encourages [people] to understand history from the inside out."
- C. I like for us to watch a 2-minute video to help us understand this idea that we're ALL theologians: <http://www.godtube.com/watch/?v=FC1ECMNU>
- D. So, the question is **not** whether or not we are theologians, the REAL question is: Do our thoughts about God match God's thoughts about Himself? (Sunday mornings should be more than a couple of hymns and a hope so...)
- E. Let's look at some Peanuts theology...



- F. The title of this sermon is: *Grace To Know*. We're continuing to consider the theme of grace. I'd like for us to ask the question: What are the theological underpinnings of grace?
- G. Last week we finished making our way through Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Ephesians is, first and foremost, about grace.
1. Ephesians helps us define grace: "*In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace⁸ that he lavished on us.*" Ephesians 1:7-8a
 2. Grace: All that God is lavishly poured into us.
 3. The most important concept for us to understand about grace is that: Not only is grace the only PATHWAY to salvation, but grace (also) becomes the POWER to change.
 4. What we saw in Ephesians was that the first three chapters were theological and the second three chapters were directive. Paul is saying in Ephesians that there is grace for KNOWING and grace for GROWING. (Indicative vs. Imperative)
- H. Today I'd like to accomplish two things:
1. I'd like to identify the **gospel of grace** as THE **central theme** (or, common thread/Scarlet Thread) of the Bible – it begins in Gen and travels all the way to Rev.
 2. I'd like to conclude today by reviewing the difference between Justification and Sanctification.
 - a. The mission statement of Sunridge is to help people FIND and FOLLOW Jesus. As we will see, the FIND = Justification while the FOLLOW = Sanctification.
 - b. This distinction between *justification* and *sanctification* – and how grace empowers both is foundational to building a strong and stable theology that, as Lucy said, will take a "great load off [your] mind."
 3. I'd like to pray as we dive in...

II. BODY

- A. The first two chapters of the Bible and the last two chapters of the Bible in Revelation serve as bookends. There is no sin or "fallenness" in those chapters – everything is as God created it to be.
1. God's story, or His-Story, comes to us as a redemptive drama in four parts. Or, you **might think of it** as a *classical symphony* with four movements toward a grand *crescendo*...
 - a. **Creation** - when everything was as God meant it to be. (Young vs. Old earth?)
 - b. **Fall** - the tragic intrusion of sin and death, resulting in the pervasive brokenness of all people and everything God has made.
 - c. **Redemption** - God's astonishing promise to redeem His fallen image-bearers **and** creation through the grace-full work of his Son, Jesus Christ. As we will see, the movement of redemption begins in Gen 3:15.
 - d. **Consummation** (or, Fulfillment) - the magnificent fulfillment of God's plan to gather and cherish a people forever, and to live with them in a more-than-restored world, called "the new heaven and new earth."

2. In both Creation and Consummation there is a state of perfection known as SHALOM. Shalom is the Hebrew word for peace – but it means so much more than our limited understanding of peace (i.e., the absence of conflict)...
 - a. A succinct definition would be: SHALOM - Undeified harmony with God.
 - b. Here's a more complete definition: Biblical *SHALOM* means a universal flourishing, wholeness and delight; a rich state of affairs...the webbing together of God, humans, and all creation in equity, fulfillment, and delight. *SHALOM* is the way things ought to be.¹
 - c. While there is SHALOM in the first two and last two chapters of the Bible, the whole rest of the Bible has only one (central) story line: God's redemption of humankind. (By grace alone, through faith alone, in Jesus alone, for God's glory alone...)
3. And then we get to Genesis 3...Again, this is known as The Fall. Adam and Eve **fall** into temptation and SHALOM is replaced with a curse. (Erin, last week...)
 - a. Through Adam, sin entered into the world with its promised punishment (or, consequence), which is both physical and spiritual death.
 - b. Adam and Eve are plunged into alienation -- both from God AND from one another. They are driven out of the garden, away from God's presence.
 - c. What was at the heart of their choice? Usually the sins of pride and rebellion are mentioned, but I would argue those are **not** the root issue.
 - d. The root issue would be the longing **to not be accountable to anyone** – including the Creator God. **They chose independence from God** – and their choice continues to affect the whole human race...
 - e. Let's pick it up in Genesis 3:14-19, ¹⁴ *The Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, And dust you will eat All the days of your life;* ¹⁵ *And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."* ¹⁶ *To the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you will bring forth children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you."* ¹⁷ *Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life.* ¹⁸ *"Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field;* ¹⁹ *By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return."*
 - 1) Verse 15 -- *And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise Him on the heel* is known as the *protoevangelium* – the first mention of the gospel in the Bible.

¹ Cornelius Plantinga. *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin*, Eerdmans 1995:10.

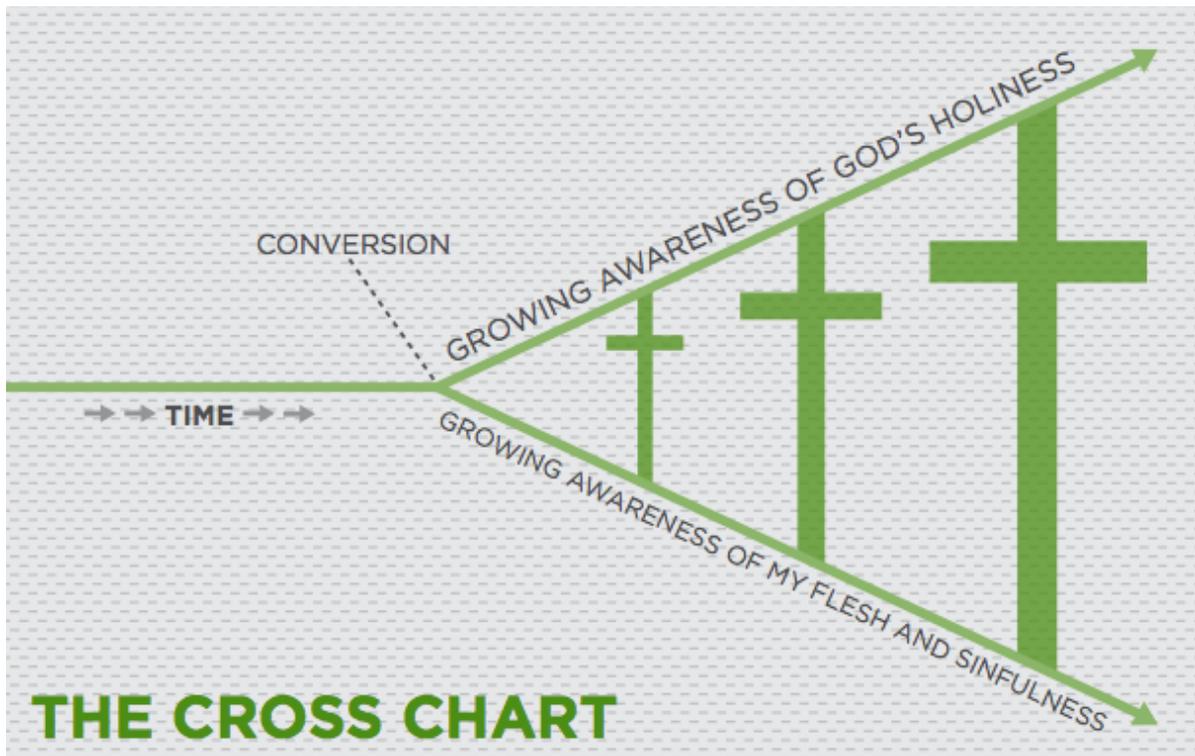
- 2) From this point forward the gospel of God's grace and God's plan to bring about redemption through Jesus Christ becomes the central theme of the whole Bible.
 - 3) This Genesis 3:15 promise becomes an organizing theme for the rest of Scripture and the rest of human history. (Green Toyota)
4. Jesus is the second Adam who condescended to leave the glory and the perfection of heaven to live the life Adam should have lived and to die the death Adam should have been condemned to. Jesus overpowers the age of condemnation and death. Here are some parallels between Adam and Jesus that show us the gospel of grace²:
- a. The first Adam brought thorns TO us (3:18), the second Adam wore a crown of thorns FOR us. (The parallels are intentional)
 - b. The first Adam substituted himself for God, the second Adam substituted Himself for sinners. (The contrast is stunningly beautiful...)
 - c. The first Adam sinned AT a tree, the second Adam bore our sins ON a tree.
 - d. The first Adam brought condemnation to humankind, the reverse Adam brought salvation to humankind.
 - e. The first Adam failed the test in the Garden of Eden, the second Adam passed the test in the Garden of Gethsemane - when He concluded His prayer with the words, "...*Not My will, but Yours be done*" (Luke 22:42).
 - f. Adam's SELFISHNESS in Eden robbed the earth of SHALOM, the SELFLESSNESS of Jesus in Gethsemane and on the cross re-gifted us with the promise (or down payment) of SHALOM.
 - g. The first Adam regarded equality with God something TO BE grasped. The Second Adam, as we read in Phil 2:6, DID NOT regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself taking on the nature of a servant – and became obedient to the point of death on a tree fashioned into a cross.
 - h. John Stott – "The essence of sin is the man substituting himself for God, while the essence of salvation is God substituting Himself for man."³
 - 1) The obedience of Jesus is given to us as a gift – THAT is grace!
 - 2) The righteousness that grants us access to the presence of God is given to us as a gift from Jesus - the second Adam.
 - 3) The only thing that we contribute to this gift is our realization of own need.
- B. We will draw this to a close today by reviewing the order of salvation. Please pull out the "Cheat Sheet" from your program... (Peace WITH God is justification, the peace OF God is sanctification)

III. CONCLUSION

- A. We never outgrow our need for the gospel...

² This section was adapted from a sermon on Romans 5 by Tullian Tchividjian, pastor of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church.

³ John Stott. *The Cross of Christ*, IV Press 1986, 2006: 159.



Sermon Cheat Sheet

The Gospel--The *good news* that Jesus died and rose from the dead to restore our relationship with God. We never outgrow our need for the gospel, which is necessary for both salvation and transformation.

Moralism--The false belief that we can achieve righteousness by means of moral improvement.

The Order of Salvation

1. **The Gospel Call**--We are awakened to the gospel message in such a way that we respond. *Acts 15:17; Romans 13:11-14*
2. **Conversion** = Repentance + Faith. As one action we repent, or turn away, from sin and trust in, or turn to, Jesus Christ for salvation. *Mark 1:15; Acts 19:4*
3. **Justification**--Immediately after conversion we are justified, which is a one-time action that forever changes our legal standing before God. God declares us not guilty but righteous because of the finished and complete work of Jesus. *Romans 3:24-26; 4:25; 5:15-21*
4. **Adoption**--Not only has our legal status changed but our family status is also changed as God makes us members of His family. *Romans 8:15, 23; 9:4; Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:5*
5. **Sanctification**--The Sunridge values statement refers to sanctification as "transformation" because it's easier to understand and relate to in our current cultural climate. So, sanctification, or transformation, is the ongoing work of God's grace to set us free from sin and make us joyful servants of God's righteousness and reconciliation. *Romans 6:19, 22; Philippians 2:12; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Thessalonians 2:13*