

DAY 1 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER ("SOAP")

CONVERSATION STARTER

As you read through Genesis 1-3 this week, how do you imagine your perspective might shift?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

Scripture: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day" and the darkness "night." And evening passed and morning came, marking the first day.

Then God said, "Let there be a space between the waters, to separate the waters of the heavens from the waters of the earth." And that is what happened. God made this space to separate the waters of the earth from the waters of the heavens. God called the space "sky." And evening passed and morning came, marking the second day.

Then God said, "Let the waters beneath the sky flow together into one place, so dry ground may appear." And that is what happened. God called the dry ground "land" and the waters "seas." And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let the land sprout with vegetation—every sort of seed-bearing plant, and trees that grow seed-bearing fruit. These seeds will then produce the kinds of plants and trees from which they came." And that is what happened. The land produced vegetation—all sorts of seed-bearing plants, and trees with seed-bearing fruit. Their seeds produced plants and trees of the same kind. And God saw that it was good. And evening passed and morning came, marking the third day.

Then God said, "Let lights appear in the sky to separate the day from the night. Let them be signs to mark the seasons, days, and years. Let these lights in the sky shine down on the earth." And that is what happened. God made two great lights—the larger one to govern the day, and the smaller one to govern the night. He also made the stars. God set these lights in the sky to light the earth, to govern the day and night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And evening passed and morning came, marking the fourth day. **Genesis 1:1-19 NLT**

Sermon Insights: God created us with design and intention, so it stands to reason that the Creator knows the best way to live in His creation. "Let there be..." God spoke creation into existence.

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

What new thoughts, ideas, images or questions does this Scripture cause you to have about God?

Does God's magnificent power, order and intention cause you to look at the world in a special way?

How do you "fit in" to God's creation?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, I love the order and intention that you put into the world. I thank you that you are a God who can be trusted, a God who takes special care of his creation, and a God who allows for even sinful people who have damaged things to have new life through Jesus. Thank you for showing great love, patience, and care for us!

DAY 2 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER ("SOAP")

CONVERSATION STARTER

Is it easier for you to be aware of your own potential or the potential of others?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

Scripture: *Continued from Genesis 1 after the fourth day:* Then God said, "Let the waters swarm with fish and other life. Let the skies be filled with birds of every kind." So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that scurries and swarms in the water, and every sort of bird—each producing offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good. Then God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply. Let the fish fill the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth." And evening passed and morning came, marking the fifth day.

Then God said, "Let the earth produce every sort of animal, each producing offspring of the same kind—livestock, small animals that scurry along the ground, and wild animals." And that is what happened. God made all sorts of wild animals, livestock, and small animals, each able to produce offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground."

So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. Then God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground." Then God said, "Look! I have given you every seed-bearing plant throughout the earth and all the fruit trees for your food. And I have given every green plant as food for all the wild animals, the birds in the sky, and the small animals that scurry along the ground—everything that has life." And that is what happened. Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good! And evening passed and morning came, marking the sixth day. **Genesis 1:20–31 NLT**

Sermon Insights: Lessons from Adam and the Garden of Eden: 1) God gave us breath. Man was different: created in God's image and likeness. Not just spoken: God formed Adam's body from the dust of the Earth and breathed life into him.

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Ponder what it means to be made "in God's image"—you AND the people in your life...

One of the features of this universe is that every living thing produces more of the "same kind." What does that say about God's desire to share life with others?

God instructed the first humans, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it..." What does that say about human rights, roles, and responsibilities?

Are you living into your God-given potential?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, thank you for making us in your image and teaching us how to live through Jesus!

DAY 3 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER ("SOAP")

CONVERSATION STARTER

Describe how you imagine the "Garden of Eden."

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

Scripture: So the creation of the heavens and the earth and everything in them was completed. On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation.

This is the account of the creation of the heavens and the earth.

When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, neither wild plants nor grains were growing on the earth. For the LORD God had not yet sent rain to water the earth, and there were no people to cultivate the soil. Instead, springs came up from the ground and watered all the land. Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils, and the man became a living person.

Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he placed the man he had made. The LORD God made all sorts of trees grow up from the ground—trees that were beautiful and that produced delicious fruit. In the middle of the garden he placed the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

A river flowed from the land of Eden, watering the garden and then dividing into four branches. The first branch, called the Pishon, flowed around the entire land of Havilah, where gold is found. The gold of that land is exceptionally pure; aromatic resin and onyx stone are also found there. The second branch, called the Gihon, flowed around the entire land of Cush. The third branch, called the Tigris, flowed east of the land of Asshur. The fourth branch is called the Euphrates.

The LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it. But the LORD God warned him, "You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden—except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die." **Genesis 2:1-17 NLT**

Sermon Insights: Lessons from Adam and the Garden of Eden: 2) God gave us work. Notice that it was the "Garden of Eden" and not the "Jungle of Eden" – full of order and design...fruitful and productive!

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Work was a good gift from God to humans before sin, brokenness, and the cursing of the world. In what way does work refresh and rejuvenate your soul?

Why do you think God would put rules with dangerous and severe consequences in the Garden of Eden?

Why do you think God rested as a purposeful activity after the work of Creation?

Have you chosen to let God breathe NEW life into you through Jesus?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, thank you for being present in my life even when I don't understand or appreciate you. Thank you for not only creating the world with order and design, but also creating people with order and incredible complexity. Teach me to love as you love.

DAY 4 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER ("SOAP")

CONVERSATION STARTER

What do you like to fix?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

Scripture:

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him." So the LORD God formed from the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would call them, and the man chose a name for each one. He gave names to all the livestock, all the birds of the sky, and all the wild animals. But still there was no helper just right for him. So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man slept, the LORD God took out one of the man's ribs and closed up the opening. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib, and he brought her to the man.

"At last!" the man exclaimed. "This one is bone from my bone, and flesh from my flesh! She will be called 'woman,' because she was taken from 'man.'" This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. Now the man and his wife were both naked, but they felt no shame. **Genesis 2:18–25 NLT**

The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the woman, "Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?" "Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden," the woman replied. "It's only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, 'You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.'" "You won't die!" the serpent replied to the woman. "God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil."

The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves. **Genesis 3:1-7 NLT**

Sermon Insights: Lessons from Adam and the Garden of Eden: 3) *God gave us spiritual life.*

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

The world is simply not the same. Before sin, Adam and Eve were so innocent that being naked seemed perfectly natural. After sinning, they felt the need to cover themselves with large, sticky leaves because they felt shame deep on the inside. How has sin caused you to feel insignificant and insecure? Are you allowing Jesus to eliminate your sense of guilt and shame and replace it with significance and security?

Someone once suggested that the best definition of "sin" is "to violate something's purpose." Adam and Eve's purpose was to walk with God in innocence and obedience, not to struggle with the weight of discerning and redefining good and evil. How has Jesus helped you recover your purpose in life?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, you know and see everything...you know the heart, the good and bad, of every person...and you still choose to show patient and kind love to us. Thanks!

DAY 5 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER ("SOAP")

CONVERSATION STARTER

Why is blaming someone else for a problem usually not helpful?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION (5 MINUTES)

Scripture: When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the LORD God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the LORD God among the trees. Then the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?" He replied, "I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked." "Who told you that you were naked?" the LORD God asked. "Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?" The man replied, "It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it." Then the LORD God asked the woman, "What have you done?" "The serpent deceived me," she replied. "That's why I ate it."

Then the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all animals, domestic and wild. You will crawl on your belly, groveling in the dust as long as you live. And I will cause hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel."

Then he said to the woman, "I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy, and in pain you will give birth. And you will desire to control your husband, but he will rule over you."

And to the man he said, "Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat, the ground is cursed because of you. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it. It will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat of its grains. By the sweat of your brow will you have food to eat until you return to the ground from which you were made. For you were made from dust, and to dust you will return."

Then the man—Adam—named his wife Eve, because she would be the mother of all who live. And the LORD God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife.

Then the LORD God said, "Look, the human beings have become like us, knowing both good and evil. What if they reach out, take fruit from the tree of life, and eat it? Then they will live forever!" So the LORD God banished them from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made. After sending them out, the LORD God stationed mighty cherubim to the east of the Garden of Eden. And he placed a flaming sword that flashed back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life. **Genesis 3:8–24 NLT**

Sermon Insights: Consider what we've lost in the garden AND what has been restored in Christ!

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

If God knows everything, why did he ask Adam, "Where are you?"

The "blame game" started early on: Adam blamed Eve who blamed the serpent. Do you own your own choices, or are you blaming other people, situations, circumstances, etc.?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Lord, we thank you that we know the end of the story—Jesus comes to take our guilt onto his body on the cross so we can be forgiven by your limitless grace. Help us to turn our eyes and hearts and minds towards you as we continue our struggle against the effects of sin in a broken world.