

Tactics of the Enemy – Building on a Foundation of Truth Feb 19 23

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Hi to those online!

Church-Wide Prayer Requests! Life on Mission: Tupendane Africana – shipping container arrived! But the Uganda Revenue Agency has possession of it.

1. People are feeling alone – who can you love this week? Serve? Disciple?
2. Pray for small groups! Connect cell started on Wednesdays! We'd LOVE to see you there!
3. Families in school! Our businesses! That Christians would be known for their LOVE & SERVING
4. Pray for lost by name

RECAP: Genesis 1-3 – 24 truths!

Know the Truth: Learn about God and learn to know God – best way to distinguish LIES

Creation - In the beginning... God

Foundational Truths:

1. **God is Sovereign** – all powerful, exists outside space. He is not material and has no material limitations as we do.
2. **God is Eternal** – he is not limited by time. He can be in all and through all.
3. **God is Creator** – IF he created us, me, then we exist for HIS PURPOSES AND NOT OUR OWN.
4. **I am created in the image of God. I am not just an animal. Imago Dei** –we were created in the image of God. This means, we are NOT just animals.
5. **I am valuable to God** – he made me in his image and made only one of me.
6. **I am created male or female** – God made me male, or female, and both reflect who he is.
7. **God's creation was created GOOD**
8. **God gave people the ability to choose him, or reject him**
9. **God wants people to love him of their own free will**

A. The Fall – the entrance of sin & evil into creation

Genesis 3:1-24 The Fall, a glimpse of Redemption and the Curse...

- Adam and Eve disobey God.
- Shame, guilt, fear and blame are seen immediately!
- God removes them from the Garden so that they won't "live forever" they are removed from paradise.
- Sin has now infected them. Their willful disobedience was more than a mistake. They had rejected God's good plan for them and had chosen what God warned them before would KILL THEM.
- And DEATH it did bring. It corrupted the entire creation. It corrupted their own nature. It alienated them from God and from paradise. It removed them from God's good plan and his desire to LOVE THEM AND BE WITH THEM.

God's good plan for human beings was for paradise! Innocence! LIFE! JOY! PEACE!! PURPOSE!
FULFILLMENT!!

When sin & evil entered the world... with it came: diseases, cancer, heart disease, car accidents, broken marriages and homes! Tragic accidents, tsunamis, earthquakes that kill thousands of people... mental health problems, anxiety and depression, suicide! Addiction! Murder! Lying! PAIN & DEATH.

CREATION WAS BROKEN – PEOPLE WERE CORRUPTED WITH SIN

Why did God give us choice? (RECAP FROM LAST WEEK)

- You cannot choose to love God unless given a legitimate choice to reject him
- But...as Norman Geisler writes, "forced love is a contradiction in terms."
- C.S. Lewis, "Merely to override human will... would for him be useless. He cannot ravish. He can only woo."

Cultural Misconception: You are good the way you are! Live your truth! Follow your heart! Look inside yourself to find who you are! I was born this way – so I behave this way!

I would ask: if these statements are true – why is there so much pain and suffering in the world? what if your heart leads you to harm others? The war in the Ukraine. Is Putin following his heart? What about in Canada – do you like every law that is being passed? Whatever side you are on... you want to be able to follow YOUR HEART & DESIRES... but people all desire differently... and our desires are at WAR WITH EACH OTHER.

B. The result of Adam's sin – We were born into sin. We are all sinners

The seed of ALL mankind was in Adam (Eve). Adam and Eve could not produce beings greater than themselves... their sin corrupted their flesh, their nature, and as a result... ALL of their offspring.

We have both: 1) a sinful nature inherited by Adam AND 2) we are sinners ourselves.

CULTURE Misconceptions: you were born that way – it's who you are – you are good on the inside – trust your feelings, desires and attractions and be true to yourself!

- This is built on a faulty answer to the question of WHO AM I? IDENTITY... it assumes that we are ALL inherently GOOD. I am GOOD. My desires are GOOD. My intentions are GOOD. My heart is TRUE & GOOD. Scripture teaches the opposite! We are SINFUL! And points us to the TRUE ANSWER JESUS!

CHURCH misconceptions: Genesis says you were born good! You just make bad choices. You are simply broken.

- This leads believers to trust in THEMSELVES. It also leads them to a victim mindset.
- **For example:** God made me this way, if he doesn't want me behaving this way, he should stop it.

Truth: we were born in the imago dei – but were corrupted by sin and are sinners ourselves. We are not simply victims. We are also perpetrators.

Despite this – we are LOVED by God! And he made a way for us to be saved from our sin!

Psalms 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Ephesians 2:1-3 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—

This is not to say that people are incapable of good – they are! Even unredeemed, or unsaved people are capable of doing good. Even in the corrupted state – the IMAGO DEI can shine through!

- Showing kindness, generosity, love, care for the poor, etc. (Nazi guards taking care of the kids)

Romans 3:10-12 as it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”

This is critical for our understanding.... When you think that people are GOOD... then the answer to EVIL lies within US... more personally... if you think YOU ARE GOOD – you will look INSIDE YOURSELF TO SOLVE THE PAIN & EVIL YOU EXPERIENCE

Jeremiah 17:9-10 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? “I the Lord search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.”

Mark 7:21-23 For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

We are constantly looking for WHO TO BLAME for the evil in the world... we are always looking OUTSIDE OURSELVES FOR THE PROBLEM OF EVIL AND PAIN IN OUR LIVES.. – yet we look INSIDE OURSELVES FOR THE ANSWER... – if people only did what you said – then the world would be better! Self-sufficiency at its best!

- The PROBLEM of evil is INSIDE each of us. We all SIN.
- The ANSWER to evil is OUTSIDE of us. In CHRIST ALONE.
- **For example:** when the Ukraine war started I read one interview where a woman stated she was shocked that this could still happen in the 21 century!
- **In Ordinary Men:** Reserve police battalion and the final solution in Poland – genocide researcher Christopher Browning writes, “I could have been the killer or the evader – both were humans.”
- **Sociologist Harald Welzer wrote,** “we are left then with the most discomfiting of all realities – ordinary “normal” people committing acts of extraordinary evil. This reality is difficult to admit, to understand, to absorb... As we look at the perpetrators of genocide and mass killing, we need no longer ask who these people are. We know who they are. They are you and I.”
- **Elsie Wiesel an Auschwitz survivor concluded,** “deep down... man is not only executioner, not only victim, not only spectator; he is all three at once.”
- **Atheist Michael Ruse said,** “I think Christianity is spot on about original sin – how could one think otherwise, when the worlds most civilized and advanced people (the people of Beethoven, Goether, Kant) embraced that slime-ball Hitler and participated in the Holocaust?”

Objection: we haven't ALL committed genocide! And thankfully this is TRUE. BUT... we have ALL sinned.

- Like Adam and Eve in the garden... we look at God's law and scoff to some degree or another... we think he's a kill joy, that he is robbing us of a better life, that he doesn't have our best interest at heart... e.g. Sexual Immorality. God says wait till marriage – one man, one woman. We think we know better – look at the result! E.g. porn, sex slaves, sexually transmitted disease, adultery, broken homes, broken people! **Question:** when will we learn that God's way is the ONLY WAY?
- Lying, cheating, stealing, lustful thoughts, self-centered living, rejoiced when others suffered (that we deemed deserved it), hurt others, torn others down, hate, rage, angry outburst, and more! Sexual immorality, greed! Disobeying parents!
- We ALL sin.

Considering the EVIL seen in our history and is still present today: The question should change from, "how can a loving God allow evil?" to, "how can a loving God allow people to exist?"

When that question changes: When you see the evil inside... then you will understand **GRACE** – you will also understand the **Fear of the Lord** and be utterly speechless at the **LOVE OF GOD** to us!

C. The Consequences of Sin – Justice must be served!

For example: this past January... we heard about the death of Tyre Nichols... I watched the video.. and literally got sick... as he was beaten to death by police... crying out for his mom... they were all fired and have been charged with murder, assault, kidnapping, and misconduct... DO YOU WANT JUSTICE TO BE SERVED? Would it be FAIR to just let those guilty of such crimes off with no repercussions?

For example: a man who abuses his wife... beats her... won't allow her to get help... or a woman who does that to their children...

- Should we stay quiet? Should they be allowed to go unpunished?
- Or, do you want them to PAY. Maybe an EYE FOR AN EYE SOUNDS RIGHT.

For example: a thief breaks into a store and robs them... what should happen?

For example: what about the friend that betrays you? Or lies to you? Do you want them to pay?

ALL of us know that JUSTICE DEMANDS a consequence for wrongdoing.

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

When people commit a crime, they are sent to stand before a JUDGE to receive their sentence...

- **We are INCONSISTENT:** Justice for everyone else. Grace for us!

Scripture says JESUS IS OUR JUDGE. We have all sinned against him.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Revelation 20:11-15 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life.

And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

The penalty due us because of our sin is Hell. Hell is an eternal place created for everyone who rejects God. Satan and his demons, along with everyone who chooses to reject God will be there for eternity. It is a place with a total absence of God's goodness – because we have rejected God... he gives us what we wanted... and pulls away ALL of his goodness.... There is only pain and suffering left.

God offers us a CHOICE! to live in eternal bliss with him or eternal torment away from his presence

Douglas E. Potter writes, "Hell serves at least two purposes. First, hell separates the unredeemed, in accordance with their decision, from the God and the redeemed forever. Certainly, God would not be considered loving if he forced unbelievers, against their will, into heaven. Second, hell is a place of eternal punishment for those who have sinned against an eternal God – that is, the punishment fits the crime."

COMMON LIE: how could a loving God send us to hell?

TRUTH: He doesn't send us to Hell – we all BELONG in hell because we ALL sin.

This is an important consideration! We want to live the way we want. We want to hold onto our RIGHTS. Then we must also understand the consequences of our choices and desires.

- That's not fair! I want to be able to walk off a cliff and not be killed! God sees EVERY cliff – he made them ALL! He offers to show us the way to LIFE – BUT gives us the dignity of CHOICE.

Those who choose to reject God must be given what they want. Regardless of how tragic the consequences are. God desires ALL to be saved! For none to perish! But he gives us a CHOICE.

Potter writes, "to not honor human freedom violates human dignity and would not be loving"

C.S. Lewis famously wrote, "there are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God 'thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, in the end, 'Thy will be done' ALL that are in hell choose it.

He also said, "the doors of hell are locked from this inside."

CHOICE??? If JUSTICE DEMANDS CONSEQUENCE – Then how could we choose to ESCAPE THE CONSEQUENCE OF OUR SIN?

D. The Great Rescue! Jesus' plan to save us

The first Adam sinned and sin and death spread to all of us. We are all under condemnation.

1 Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

John 3:16-17 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

Jesus, God, the very definition of LOVE – holiness, righteousness, goodness – HE came down as a human being. Lived a PERFECT life and then allowed himself to be KILLED on a CROSS – died for your sins! Then was RAISED BACK TO LIFE! ANYONE who chooses HIM – will become the RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD!!! HE MADE A WAY!

John 1:12-13 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God — children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

In the next message we will unpack this further... today we will close with this...

Foundational Truths: IF you choose Jesus as your ONLY Savior & your Functional Lord...

1. You are a child of God – adopted into his family!
2. You are forgiven the consequences of your sins
3. You are no longer alone
4. You belong to Jesus
5. You belong to his body – the church
6. You are no longer a slave to sin
7. You have access to God's Presence!
8. You have the SAME Spirit in you that raised Christ from the dead!

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

Today – you have a choice! What will you choose?

Worship & Pray! TOGETHER WE RUN

MARANATHA!! Come soon Lord!

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SC CHURCH WIDE PRAYER REQUESTS 2023

Cruise ship → → → → → Battleship

1. **Life on Mission** (Mt 28:18-20, Mt 22:37-40): Love, serve & disciple people to Jesus
2. **Next Gen** (Ps 78:7-8): Encounters with Jesus, strong mental health, boldness & belonging
3. **Persecuted Church** (Lk 21:13): Faith, fortitude & wisdom “to not waste the opportunity to share the Gospel”
4. **Heart of Prayer** (Ps 27:4): Every generation to find Jesus & learn to bring their needs to Him in prayer
5. **Church Renewal:** Directors for India and other new countries & many global disciple makers