



Life Group Study Notes

“We Are Family: God’s Family”

Sr. Ps. James Lowe - August 12, 2018

Warm Up (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question to answer, or ask another. No right or wrong answers.

- What is your favorite household rule? Why?
- What is one rule in a sport that you think should be changed? Why?
- If you could change any law in our society, which would it be, and why?

Word (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at www.bethelworld.org

Genesis 3:1-9 ESV *Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"*

Evil did not originate with the Creator. All that God had created was separately good and collectively very good. Other Scripture (Isaiah 14 & Ezekiel 28) alludes symbolically to an angelic creature referred to as Satan, Lucifer, or the Devil, who though being created upright, nevertheless rebelled against the Creator. This very angelic being, who sought to be independent of and even greater than God, came under God’s judgment and is destined for an eternal hell. This Satan was the one who enticed the first humans to follow in his footsteps and also rebel against God.

The first humans were taken in by the desire to be independent of God's authority. They mistrusted God's goodness and doubted his ominous warning of death as the just punishment for rebellion. All of us to this day are fundamentally guilty of the same basic sins. We mistrust God's goodness by rejecting various aspects of God's commands. We doubt the reality and severity of God's punishment for our sin. We desire to determine for ourselves what is good and what is evil. We want to live autonomously and fashion God into our own fallen, fallible image, instead of living as God's upright, holy image.

God judged and condemned Satan and humanity for their wickedness. Yet he also promised to send his Son to atone for all of our sins and to defeat forever Satan's influence among humans. In a cryptic pronouncement of judgment spoken to Satan, God said, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15 ESV). As Scripture unfolded through the centuries, God later revealed that the promised offspring of the woman was none other than Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus lived a sinless, obedient life of devotion to God, and then took the punishment we deserve for our sins and rebellion. Rising from the dead three days after he was crucified, Jesus conquered the power of death. Now he offers forgiveness to everyone who will turn to him to be restored to God.

God's judgment for sin is severe and remains in place until this day. But his mercy is even greater, offered to us through his Son, Jesus. If we will turn to God, renounce our rebellion and sins, accept what Jesus has done for us, and surrender to God's legitimate authority over our lives, God will forgive us, accept us, and adopt us as his own children. He will not only cleanse our consciences of our guilt, but will also give us his presence through his Spirit who comes to dwell in us as a down payment guaranteeing the full restoration of God's image in us.

Discussion (10-15 minutes)

Choose one of the points, and discuss how the lesson applies to our lives.

- In what ways do we seek to determine for ourselves what is good and what is evil?
- Why is God's judgment against humanity's rebellion so severe?
- What is so wonderful about God's promise to restore his image in us?

Prayer (10-15 minutes)

Pray any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.

- Thank God for what Jesus has done and has ultimately promised to do for us.
- Ask God to open our eyes to ways in which we sinfully redefine good and evil.
- Ask God to deliver us from our mistrust, doubt, and rebellion.