

The Aftermath of Sin's Victory, part 5

Genesis 3:14-19

(preached Pine Grove 8/19/18; Sunday PM)

Introduction

A local farmer had driven his tractor to town for many years, but when the town hired a new cop, he decided to enforce all the local traffic laws.

As a result, he started issuing tickets to the old farmer.

Well, that went on for some time but the farmer never stopped driving his tractor to town, so the cop had the farmer thrown in jail for 30 days to teach him a lesson.

While he was in jail, his wife wrote him a letter..

Sticking to strict jail policy, the cop read the woman's letter and then gave it to the old farmer..

The letter read, "Honey, without you here, I will need to plant the potatoes in the field. When should I start digging the field?"

The farmer replied in his own letter, "Sweetheart, don't go near the field. All my guns are buried out there. Wait til I get home."

Well, the cop went and mailed the letter back to the lady, but that night, he snuck out to the field and dug all around to find those guns.

Seeing none, he came back to the jailhouse that morning.

To his surprise, the man handed him another letter to mail to his wife.

It read, “Sweetheart, the cop here was kind enough to come and dig the field for you last night. You can now plant the potatoes.”

And the moral of the story is Farmers work smarter, not harder.

Well, work is the subject of our text tonight as we finish off Genesis 3:14-19..

This little passage of 6 verses has occupied 6 weeks of our time as we have carefully gone through the 3 curses that came down on Satan, on Eve, and on Adam...

And the reason for that is simple..

These curses define the difficulty of our world today..

They explain this struggle that exist between good and evil in the world today..

They explain the struggle in relationships today.

They explain the struggles with kids and spouses today..

They explain the struggles of work and the deterioration of our bodies..

Long story short, these verses are reasons that life is hard at times...

Now the importance of that is simple..

You don't have to hire a team of therapists to try and figure out why you can't find happiness..

You know that happiness is hard in world where children and spouses and work is difficult..

And on top of all those hurdles, the greatest hurdle is that you are a sinner as well..

Your own pride, your own selfishness, your own anxiety, your own sin all contribute to making life hard for you as well..

In other words, Genesis 3 gives us an accurate view of the world..

And look, a biblical worldview is very important in a day where everyone is all sorts of reasons for the troubles of the world and all sorts of answers to how you can make it better..

Now, let me also be clear about this..

Though the consequences of Adam and Eve's sins were tragic..

Death came into world..

Diseases came into the world.

Drama in families came into world...

Hard work came into the world..

Though all those things are tragic and sad and make life hard in this world, God has also provided some relief in the world..

When I was a kid, I was terrified of medicine...

The main reason is that my grandmother always used alcohol to clean any cut we had..

And alcohol is awful for a cut..

When you apply it, it feels like you got cut again..

Well, my other grandparents never used alcohol.

They used something called red oil, also known as Sofaco Oil..

It was red, but the beauty is that it never burned when applied..

Cuts were bad, but red oil provided relief that wasn't nearly as painful as alcohol..

Well, the fall of man is bad..

Sin coming into the world is bad..

Death coming into the world is bad..

Family strife, hard work are all bad consequences of the fall of man..

But God has provided relief to the curse in a couple ways..

First and foremost, God provided relief to the worse consequence...

Christ came to die in the place of guilty sinners...

And when a sinner repents and puts his trust in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, the penalty of death is removed..

And guilty sinner was under a death sentence is declared not guilty and he passes from death to life...

This is the gospel...

Adam and Eve sinned.

They passed their sin to everyone who was ever born after them.

With that sin also came a death sentence passed on to everyone after them as well..

But God in his mercy has provided relief to the death penalty for all who believe in Christ...

Yet, God is not done providing relief to mankind..

Though he could have simply stopped with relief from the consequence of death, God's mercy even pushed Him to provide relief for the curses on man and woman as well..

In a very real sense, God is a Father desiring to do all he can for his children...

And since God has cursed every man and woman after Adam and Eve, God has also offered relief from the curses as well..

If you remember, the woman was cursed in the process of bringing children to the world..

Children were going to be physically painful when they were born but also spiritually and emotionally painful after birth..

Yet, the promise of God in the book of 1 Timothy that a woman can be delivered from the full effects of that curse by living a life of godliness and teaching her children to do the same..

And we talked about how many of you have experienced this curse to a lesser degree because you have lived by 1 Timothy 2..

You have lived a life of faith and love and holiness and self control and you have taught that to your children and you have been blessed by God both in your life and in your relationship with your children..

You have put a little red oil of obedience to the Word on the curse of children in your life and it has soothed your difficulties..

The same is true of the curse that you experience with your husband..

Though there is a desire in you to rule and control him, you have honored the word of God, put yourself under the leadership of your husband, and your relationship has been blessed...

The strife that could be there as a result of the curse has been soothed by your commitment to live by the Word of God..

And you even find great joy in a marriage relationship that could be a source of great difficulty in your life..

So God is good to the woman first of all through the cross in delivering her from the worst consequence of sin which is death..

But God is also good to woman in delivering her from the possible strife between her and her children and husband but offering her a little suave that comes as she lives a life of obedience to his word and teaches her children to do the same..

Well, is their relief for the man as well?

And the answer is yes..

First and foremost, he can be delivered from the penalty of death as well if he will turn from sin and trust Christ...

But there is also relief from the curse that fell to him as well...

And what is his curse?

Well, we read about it last week...

Genesis 3:17-19..

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 [f]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 [g]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."

If you remember, we saw the cause of the curse in verse 17..

Adam listened to his wife rather than listening to God..

God had told him to not eat of the tree in the middle of the garden, yet Adam decided to obey Eve when she offered it to him instead of obeying God..

As a result, he was cursed..

Then we saw the contents of the curse..

The last half of verse 17 through the first part of verse 19 detail the curse that has gotten...

First, the ground will be cursed, which will make it difficult for Adam to grow food for him and his wife..

Second, work will be a lifetime sentence..

The end of verse 17 says that his toil in the cursed ground will fill his life..

Now some ask what about retirement?

Well, retirement is fine but work never ends..

For the majority of folks who are physically able, work is a reality until they die..

Third, on top of the ground being cursed, there are also other obstacle to work like weeding out thorns and thistles..

Fourth, work will tire Adam's body..

There will be the sorrow of work which drains him emotionally.

There will be the thorns of work that injure him physically.

And there will be the sweat of work that takes its toll on his body...

Like we said last week, work will now be a matter of blood, sweat, and tears...

And the final word on the curse is that work will put him in the ground..

Yes, the cause of death is always sin but work will make the quality of Adam's life less and it will contribute to his physical death...

So those were the cause, the contents and the consequences of Adam's work...

And I want to make a note here to be clear and to make sure we talk about this curse properly..

The curse of Genesis 3 on the man is not the curse of work..

Work was around before sin..

Turn to Genesis 2:7.

7 Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living [f]being. 8 The Lord God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed. 9 Out of the ground the Lord God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Adam's body is made of dirt which explains why the body will go back to dirt..

God breathed an eternal soul into that body of dirt, and then God placed Adam in an incredible garden..

There is no sin at this point...

And skip down to verse 15...

15 Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.

You see work was created by God before the fall..

It is even part of a universes that was declared very good by God..

Now, most of us struggle to understand that, but the reason is because none of us have ever worked in a world without sin..

The same is true for the curse on the woman..

A lot of ladies roll their eyes at the thought of a perfect husband and perfect children...

And the reason you can't imagine is that you have never had a husband and children in a world without children...

Just like a husband and children are not sinful in themselves, work is also not sinful in itself..

And the reason I point this out is that Christian men often refer to the curse of work, which is actually incorrect...

The book of Ecclesiastes calls work a gift of God even in a fallen world..

So the correct way to say this is that man was cursed with hard work..

The work of tending the garden of Eden was breeze in chapter 2 but torture in chapter 3...

In fact, Adam won't ever work intuit beautiful place again...

Instead he will be barred from that good land and be put in the desert of the Middle East and told to grow enough food to survive..

So when we speak of the curse of work, it is more biblical to call it the curse of hard work..

I remind you that work will be a part of heaven, yet that work will be a return to work in a sinless universe..

There is one more thing to consider before we leave the curse on man, and that is his relief from the curse..

In other words, how can he make work less hard...

Well, the Bible gives us two ointments to make the sting of hard work a little easier to bear...

The first is found in Titus 2..

I want you there in your Bibles if you will..

You will notice the flow of this chapter is addressing various groups within the church...

In verse 2, God speaks to the behavior of older men.

In verses 3-6, God speaks to older women, and we look at this in terms of lessening the effect of the curse on women..

Verse 4 instructs older women to teach younger women to love their husbands and their children, which will clearly lessen the curse on them..

In verses 6-8, God gives instruction to younger men..

And the in verses 9-10, God instructs workers..

9 Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not [e]argumentative, 10 not pilfering, but showing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.

And the simple instruction is that workers should first of all submit to the authority of their own masters...

Now this is not an endorsement of slavery as so many people have wrongly said in the past...

This is simple instruction to anyone who works for another person regardless of whether it is voluntary or forced..

And the simple command is to be respectful of their masters..

But not only respectful, continue to follow verse 9...

Well pleasing..

In other words, workers are to do a good job...

Not just enough to get by but even go above and beyond to be pleasing to the employer..

Furthermore, they are called to not be argumentative with their employer...

They are not to pilfer or steal from their employer which include the theft of time as well as money...

In sum, they are to be faithful employees in all respects and notice why workers are called to this standard..

“so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.”

It means that as you work faithfully, honestly, and with respect to your employer, you demonstrate a God who saves..

Now how is that possible?

I will tell you..

Your hard work and loyalty and deification to your job are evidence that God has changed your life by saving you and changing you into something your weren't..

In other words, your work ethic becomes a witness to the world...

When fellow workers ask why you care so much, why you are always on time, why you never steal by staying over your allowed break time...

When they ask why do you take so much time to do a good job and when they ask why you never criticize the boss, you can tell them that God has saved you and called you to obey his Word..

And that you take his Word seriously so you obey it the best you can...

Your work ethic..

Your work attitude..

Your work commitment...

Make conversations about the Lord easier..

And you know why?

Because no one is born with a work ethic like that?

I missed a conversation like that one day with a customer in the restaurant that I worked in..

He came in after work one day and I guess I seemed excite to wait on him one day, and he said, “why you always so happy here at your job.”

I forget what I said but I do know that I should have responded with how the Lord had changed me and made me happy...

You see, unbelievers notice believers who live by the Word of God..

There are plenty of so called believers who never change...

We call them false converts, so when someone is actually changed by what they say they believe, it stands out and becomes a great tool for evangelism...

And there is no greater place to demonstrate a new life than where you go to work each day...

Getting back to the curse of hard work...

You can make work less hard if you see it and use it as a way to win people to Christ..

And when you do that, hard work won't seem nearly as hard because it will be a joy to go and watch God use your work ethic to reach others..

A second bit of relief to the curse of hard work requires us to turn to Colossians 3:22-24..

22 Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. 23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

In Colossians 3, we are in a similar section to what we just look at in the book of Titus...

In verse 18, the Lord addresses wives, then husbands in verse 19, then children in verse 20, then fathers in verse 21..

All of these are relationship oriented commands..

And in verse 22-24, the Lord addresses the relationship between slaves and masters again..

Once again, this is not an endorsement of slavery but an address directed at all who labor for those over them..

Here, the command is similar..

Slaves obey your masters...

But the motivation to obey is different..

In the book of Titus, the motivation and reason to obey is to serve as a witness for the Lord...

But here the motivation to obey is that you work for the Lord...

In short, work is not a way to witness, work is a way to worship..

As you obey your employer..

As you do your job with excellence..

As you respect your boss..

You are worshipping the Lord..

In other words, our work is dedicated to God...

Verse 24...

It is the Lord Christ who you serve..

Yes, you may have an earthly boss, but you have a heavenly king..

Our your obedience to your boss is simply a picture of your obedience to God...

I tell my kids all the time..

When you obey mom and dad, you are really obeying the Lord..

Your obedience passes through us and rises up to the Lord..

The same is true of your work..

As you work to please your boss, it rises beyond your boss to your master in heaven..

Think of it this way...

If you were a builder and Jesus hired you to build a house for him, how much care would you put in that house?

Well in a sense, every house you build is like building it for the Lord..

And that applies to every occupation in the world..

And because we know that we work for the Lord, we should be committed to making every minute of work the best we can..

In terms of the curse of hard work, you can less the sting if you will see every day of work as an act of worship..

I worked as a contractor in a large warehouse for a few years doing the cleaning..

Well, when the VPs of the company were coming to visit, everyone prepares for two days..

They would pay us extra to wax and strip floors..

They would pay us extra to have more employees there on our cleaning staff...

For our part, we didn't do our work much different..

I had two employees who took pride in their work, so while everyone panicked, it was business as usual for us..

Yet the reality is that the boss is with you everyday when you work...

If you wouldn't cut corners when he was around, you shouldn't cut corners anytime..

Look, your work is hard because of the curse, but if you see that work done well is an act of worship, you will lessen the difficulty of work...

And that is blessing of the Lord..

Conclusion

So those are the consequences of Adam and Eve's sin..

One act of disobedience has led to death and years of difficulty for all who came after them..

Yet despite the troubles, there is relief in Christ to remove the penalty of death...

But there is also relief in the curses on Adam and Eve's descendants...

And the relief comes as we simply live in obedience to the Scriptures...

Women, you can find joy in husbands and children if you love by the Word...

And men you can find joy in hard work if you see as a way to witness and worship...

Yet, the greatest promise is that the curse of sin will not last forever..

Take your Bible and turn to the final chapter of the Bible...

Revelation 22...

We are in the new heavens and the new earth, and let me simply read about them beginning in verse 1..

1 Then he showed me a river of the water of life, [a]clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of [b]the Lamb, 2 in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve [c]kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him;

Genesis 3 brought the curse and Revelation 22 declares its removal..

There is coming a day when the curse will leave.

If you are in Christ, you may not be able to go back to what it was like before the curse, but you will know what it is like after the curse..

Let's pray.

