

## TSOG - Week 3 - Redemption

Assorted

April 15, 2022

### Introduction - Where We Left Off

**Pray.**

**Romans 5:6-8 - 6 For while we were still weak** (helpless, sick, without hope), **at the right time** (the time God ordained. Exactly when God wanted) **Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— 8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners** (while we were guilty and corrupted by sin through and through), **Christ died for us.**

This is why we are here celebrating a death on Good Friday. This is Act III of the story.

### **Act III: Redemption - The King Lives and Dies for His Kingdom.**

I want you to hold in your mind Romans 5:6-8. We will get back there. Let me first connect the 30k ft view of the story that takes us from Genesis 3 to its **culmination in John 19** and its **explanation in Romans 5**.

**Recap:**

When we left off in the story of God this past Sunday the situation was not looking too good for humanity. God's original design, as we saw in Creation, was a people for Himself, living and dwelling with Him, sharing in His love, joining Him in His work of ruling and reigning over all the earth.

But it didn't take long for Adam and Eve to really screw things up. They're tempted by the devil, they rebel against God, do the one thing He commanded them not to do - eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They eat. Sin enters the world.

And now, because of the sin of Adam all of us who are born into humanity are born guilty and corrupted. Our souls are bent and crooked away from God and towards ourselves and the world. In the words of our good friend Francis Spufford - we are not passive agents of entropy/chaos/disorder - sin is the human propensity apart from God to mess things up.

Which then leads to the 3rd question - if we're here from God and for God, but sin in us has broken that and separated us from God → **How do we fix the sin problem?**

**In preparing for this sermon I wanted to see how folks thought about this, both their brokenness and how to fix it, so I went to the deep well of scholarly research known as reddit.**

You would be shocked at the number of people who ask some version of this question - "I am broken. I am messed up. How do I fix myself?"

And the majority of responses that I found all centered around a couple of different suggestions:

- Read some books
- Eliminate negative thinking
- Get good sleep, diet, and exercise
- Get a good counselor and some good friends
- Hustle harder and implement these life hacks

Now I'm good with all of those things. Pro-reading, good sleep/diet/exercise, good counselor and friends - I like the occasional life hack or two. Check.

But I found myself scrolling through answer after answer just thinking to myself → **Is that it? Is that the offer?**

Hey, I know something feels completely warped within you, I know you feel the brokenness inside of you → have you thought about just reading some books and having less negative thoughts? (I think about Barney on how 'I Met Your Mother' where he's talking about why Ted is so sad. And he says - "I'm never sad. When I'm sad, I just stop being sad and start being awesome instead.")

"Hey I know you feel broken inside, Why don't you stop being broken and start being awesome instead?"

**We need a better answer.**

How do we fix the brokenness? How does the sin that has bent our souls get fixed and redeemed? To use the language of the Scriptures - How are we to be saved?

### Old Testament Walkthrough

As you move right from Genesis 3 further into the Old Testament this question → "How is the brokenness of humanity going to be fixed?" - is one that plays out quite prominently on the surface.

We saw this last week, you get just a couple of years after the fall and Gen 3, Adam and Eve are kicked out of the Garden. Things immediately go from bad to worse, one of their sons kills the other, violence is all over the land. God starts over with Noah. Noah's not that great either. Humanity keeps proving that sin is in their hearts.

#### **Law**

Fast forward to the book of Exodus. God's people find themselves in slavery in the land of Egypt - oppressed under a foreign ruler. God raises up Moses, delivers His people (10 plagues, it's cool) - calls them to Himself and He gives them **The Law** (think like 10 commandments and then some). This standard and way of living they are to follow as His people.

And as the reader you're thinking - ok, maybe this is the answer. Maybe a good set of rules and how to live, a set of religious instructions and do's and don't-do's that is what humanity needs to be fixed and made right.

But then even while Moses is up on Mount Sinai getting the law from God the people are down at the base pulling together their gold and making it into a statue of a cow to worship. So before they even get the law handed to them - this perfect standard of living from God that's supposed to set them apart as His people - we know, this is not going to fix the human heart. Rules and laws and religious to-do's can't fix what is ultimately wrong.

#### **Sacrifices**

But God's not surprised by this. He knows they won't be able to follow the law. So He sets up in Leviticus (that part of the Bible where reading plans go to die) as part of the law, a system of sacrifices. Where, when God's people rebel and disobey the law (as He knows they will) there is a means by which through the blood of a spotless lamb, a perfect sacrifice, they can be cleansed of their sin, their guilt, their unrighteousness before God.

And again you're thinking - ok cool, sacrificing of animals because we disobey. That is what will fix humanity. They just have to make these sacrifices when they mess up.

#### **Kings**

But this is not enough for God's people. They want to be like all the other nations around them. This people who were supposed to be set apart start complaining because every other nation has a king, and they too want a king. God tells them - you don't need a king, I am the one true King, I am your King. Again - rebellion at the heart of humanity - "No God, we want an earthly King." So God gives them a king.

And we as the reader are now tempted to think - Awesome. They've got the law, they've got a sacrificial system, now they've got an earthly king who can also keep them in check. What could go wrong? Spoiler alert - the kings are also sinful, doesn't go very well for Israel.

And you just keep seeing this pattern over and over and over through the Old Testament and in the story of Israel of mankind's continual heart bent rebellion away from God and towards themselves.

It's Genesis 3 put on display over and over and over again - where they rebel against God, they go their own way, they try to be their own gods.

### You Can't Fix/Save Yourself

And there's so many theological realities behind this broad sweeping narrative of the Old Testament, we could talk about so many things - but one of the overarching themes you just can't get away from in the story of Genesis 3 through Malachi 4 is this → **mankind cannot save himself from sin.**

How do we fix our brokenness? How do we fix our sin? Before I tell you what the answer is, let me tell you what the Bible says clearly the answer is not → **You.**

You. You are **not** the solution. You are **not** the answer. How do **we** fix what is broken? **WE DON'T. WE CANNOT.**

You cannot fix yourself. You cannot save yourself. You cannot fix the problem. Not by more religion, not by more accomplishing. Not by more rules following.

You cannot save yourself and fix your sin. Why? Because **you and your sin are the problem.**

The message of the Old Testament is not that we simply need saving from our guilt, our shame, our sin. It's also that we need saving from ourselves. From our ability, as we said last week, to just keep screwing things up.

The problem is within us, it's inherent within humanity, and we need something or someone from outside of us, outside of humanity to come save us from our sin and from ourselves.

**But if we can't fix our brokenness, who or what can?**

Or to use the language of Paul in **Romans 7 - 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?**

### Promised and Prophesied Messiah

**But there's another thread running through the narrative of the Old Testament as well.**

While we see over and over again that we cannot save ourselves, we also see over and over again God's faithfulness to His people and His promises that one day a Savior will come to fix the sin problem of their hearts.

### **LAW:**

So while God is graciously and faithfully giving His people the law, his standard to set them apart to live as His people - we also see incredible promises that one day someone will come who lives the law perfectly, fulfills it completely, and that through that person's obedience, God will (Jer 31) write His law upon the hearts of His people. They will be as if they are righteous.

### **SACRIFICE:**

While God is graciously giving them this sacrificial system which deals with their sin in the moment and makes them right with Him on an ongoing basis, even then He's telling them about the one true sacrifice who is to come. The spotless lamb who will (Isaiah 53) die as the one-time once and for all sacrifice for sins.

### **KING:**

Even as God mercifully gives them an earthly king, He promises that this is just a foreshadowing, and that one day a king will come from the line of David, the one true King to rule and reign and establish His kingdom among God's people forever.

**These two threads running parallel through the entire Old Testament:**

- 1. Mankind cannot save themselves. They cannot fix their sin problem.**
- 2. God is faithful to His people and will send a Savior to deal with sin once and for all.**

## **John 19**

### **Enter Jesus. Enter Good Friday.**

**24 Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!**

Thousands of years after the Genesis 3:15 promise - of someone coming to crush the head of the serpent Jesus arrives on the scene. Comes to earth. Fully God, God the Son, becomes fully man. He is born in Bethlehem. He grows up. Lives the first 30 years of his life in relative obscurity training as a carpenter. Begins his public ministry, gathers 12 disciples who learn to be with Him and become like Him and carry on His teachings and His work.

He spends two years traveling around, preaching that the Kingdom of God is here. Healing the sick, casting out demons, performing miracles, teaching about how to live in God's Kingdom, urging that men and women would repent of their sins, turn from their wickedness and trust in Him for salvation, for healing, for forgiveness and redemption.

Eventually the fact that He keeps claiming to be God gets him betrayed by one of his 12 disciples, Judas, He's handed over to the religious leaders for 30 pieces of silver, he's unfairly tried and condemned by these men, sentenced to death by crucifixion - which historians say is the most horrific and gruesome and painful ways of torture and death ever used in history.

### **John 19:16-19**

**16 So Pilate delivered him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, 17 and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. 18 There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. 19 Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."**

### **John 19:28-30**

**28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), "I thirst." 29 A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. 30 When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.**

Christ comes. He lives. He dies. And He declares it...is...finished.

### **What Christ Has Accomplished - Romans 5**

**What does all of this mean? Go back to Romans 5. Christ fulfills all of the promises.**

**6 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— 8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood,**

#### **1. Christ justifies us.**

Where we were unable to fulfill the law and standard of God and live by His commands → Christ fulfilled the law perfectly. He never sinned. Never rebelled. Never went outside of the will of God.

So Jesus, who is perfect. Not tainted by either the guilt or corruption of sin, goes to the cross. Sheds his blood. Takes our sin upon Himself.

And the Bible says that because Jesus shed his blood, we are **justified**. It's a legal term - what a judge would pronounce over someone who is not guilty.

It's what is sometimes called "The Great Exchange" - Christ takes our sin, our law breaking, our propensity to mess stuff up upon Himself and gives us His perfect record. Gives us His righteousness.

Because of Jesus shedding his blood on the cross, that (according to Psalm 51) washes us whiter than snow, when God looks at all who are in Christ, all who trust in Jesus:

- He doesn't see us as allowable.
- He doesn't see us as a little bit dirty but like the good outweighs the bad.
- He doesn't declare over us - "You're guilty but I forgive you so go follow me."

**He declares over us - "Not guilty!" He declares over us "Righteous! Holy! Pure!"**

We who live in constant and consistent disobedience get credited with Christ's obedience. The law has been fulfilled through the obedience of Christ.

**But not only that, keep reading...**

**9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.**

#### **2. Christ saves us through His sacrifice.**

Christ fulfills the law through His perfect obedience, but He also fulfills the sacrificial system as well.

When Adam and Eve rebel against God in Genesis 3, God has very real wrath for sin and sinners. God is just and He is holy, and there must be punishment for sin because He cannot dwell with unholiness.

And so part of what God is doing in His OT sacrificial system is He is saying - instead of you getting the just and righteous wrath of a holy God, it is going to be poured out on this sacrifice instead. And they would do this year after year after year clinging to the promise that one day a Messiah would come who would be the one-time sacrifice for sins.

And that is what Jesus does on the cross. He becomes the true and one-time sacrifice. He is the spotless lamb who dies one time, perfectly, for our sins. He takes the wrath of God willingly upon Himself, so that we can be saved.

In the upside down Kingdom, God takes the punishment upon Himself, takes the wrath upon Himself so that we can be saved. We are no longer under the wrath of God because the wrath of God has been satisfied. We are no longer deserving of His judgment - Christ has taken the judgment upon Himself on the cross.

We are saved!!

**10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. 11 More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.**

### **3. Christ reconciles us to God.**

And in case that wasn't enough - to be justified and saved. We are reconciled. In the Garden Adam and Eve had a deep abiding relationship with God. They would walk in His presence. There was intimacy and fellowship. They were meant to live in God's Kingdom, reigning with Him forever.

Sin broke that. Sin separated them and us from God. And the constant desire of the human heart since then has been to have and be our own kings. Without often realizing that in so doing we set ourselves up as enemies of God. In rebellion against Him, because God does not share the throne.

And yet God dies for His enemies. Christ dies to reconcile us back to God. To bring us back to relationship with Him. To bring us back into His presence. To bring us back into intimacy with our Creator. To bring us back into God's right and rightful kingdom and kingship.

### **Act III - The King Dies**

**So here's the answer to the question where we started...**

Why are we here? For God and from God.

What's broken? Sin in us. Our sin - guilty and corrupted.

**How do we fix our sin problem?**

**We don't. Jesus does through His life, death, and resurrection.**

Jesus on the cross declaring - "It is finished."

**John Stott - "God could quite justly have abandoned us to our fate. He could have left us alone to reap the fruit of our wrongdoing and to perish in our sins. It is what we deserved. But he did not. Because he loved us, he came**

**after us in Christ. He pursued us even to the desolate anguish of the cross, where he bore our sins, guilt, judgment and death.”**

This is why we are here tonight! This is what we are celebrating this Easter Weekend.

**God did not leave us in our brokenness!** He did not leave us in our sin. He did not end the story at the Genesis 3 rebellion with humanity lost in sin, with death and brokenness reigning forever. The story doesn't end with - "While we were still sinners."

The King, who was rejected by the kingdom. Who was despised by the very people He created. Who was rejected by the ones He loved from the very beginning. Who has done nothing ever but give, and give, and give.

Christ, the King comes to live and die to rescue His Kingdom.

### **Application for Us**

**And here's why all of this is good news for me today. Here's what I need to remember on Good Friday.**

The bent of my heart is to repeat thousands of years of Israelite history. Here's what I mean by that:

***While I may affirm with everything in me → Christ has died for my sins! I am saved by faith. Grace is a gift.***

The pull of my heart is to live as if in order to get God to love me, I must follow the law. I want to think that I can do enough good deeds, love other people well enough, serve enough, give enough, read my Bible enough, preach well enough, fill in the blank. I think the key to my salvation, or at least to my perseverance in salvation is my ability to follow God's standard.

But with my perfectionism then comes overwhelming guilt. I expect perfection, I live with a system that functions as if God loves me more the more I do, so when I break that I think I need to do some weird twisted version of OT sacrifices.

Now, I'm not cutting up a spotless lamb and laying it on my fire pit. Ok? But I am bargaining. "God, I'm really sorry that I messed up. I'll do better this time and to prove it, I'm going to read my Bible more, pray more, serve more." I create these modern day forms of penance to get God to accept me and love me again.

And then eventually if my heart grows too weary of that I just say - "forget it" and go try to run my life and be my own king and build my own kingdom instead.

And that's just like a typical "Tuesday".

**And Good Friday smacks me in my face and goes Tim - look at the cross!**

Are you not just trying to do the same things the Israelites did for thousands and thousands of years? Don't you see it doesn't work? Don't you see Christ, the fulfillment of all of God's promises. Don't you see the beauty of grace?

- He has lived perfectly, and He offers you His righteousness.
- He has taken your sins, He is the perfect sacrifice, His blood was shed, you don't have to barter for God's forgiveness.
- You don't have to run and be your own king and set up your own kingdom! You, because of grace, are no longer God's enemies, you are God's Son - co-heirs of God's eternal kingdom with Christ..

Don't you see that... **IT IS FINISHED.**

**Would you put down your striving? Would you put down your earning?**

### Surrender

**That is the invitation for all of us tonight. The invitation for us this Good Friday is to surrender.**

To surrender thinking we can save ourselves. To surrender thinking what gets God to love me or keeps God loving me is my rule following, my bargaining, my whatever. And surrender our whole hearts to Jesus and His saving grace.

#### **Christians:**

- Surrender thinking the gospel started your walk with the Lord but now you have to keep yourself in it.
- Surrender living as if you can earn more of God's approval, more of His love, more of His welcome.
- Surrender talking like Jesus died for your sins, and yet living as if you need to still pay for them.

#### **Non-Christians:**

- Surrender your need to save yourself.
- Surrender your life to Jesus.
- Turn from your sin and trust in Him for salvation.
- You cannot save yourself. It's not about being a good person. It doesn't work. That's not the point.

**Surrender.**

**\*\*SILENT PRAYER INVITATION\***

**COMMUNION.**

**PRAY.**