

Genesis—Series Overview

Embarrassing Ancestors and Our Glorious Hope

The book of Genesis is all about God making an extravagantly gorgeous Creation to declare His glory and the horrifying result of our ancestors' rebellion against His kingly rule. It was written to remind us of our good God's promise to undo all the terror that our treason has wrought. It shows us our ancestors' faltering walk of faith and His faithful care for them, all the while paving the way for the coming King who would deliver us from ourselves and all who oppose our good God. The New Heavens and Earth will perfectly declare His praise.

APPLYING GOD'S WORD

Please ask the Holy Spirit to guide you:

Admit Your Rebellion! How do you (we together) continue the sin of our original parents? What are the specific rebellious ways that you need to turn from today? Name them.

Repent! Once we identify ways that we are ignoring or denying God's just authority over us, we need to turn from those sins and instead trust Christ to enable us to obey Him instead.

Call upon His Name! Jesus is the name above every other name. It is to Him that we need to cry out and seek deliverance from the sin that so easily entangles us in the web of death and destruction.

Ezra-Nehemiah—Series Overview

A Community Restored for Worship

The book of Ezra-Nehemiah was written to encourage God's people returning after exile to believe the covenant promises and restore the temple in Jerusalem. God's people were being restored in the place of promise as a worshipping community. The restoration of purpose was far greater than their real estate. The place always has to do with what God promised would happen there.

Sermon Notes and Daily Devotional
First Congregational Church of Woodstock

Pastor Doug Warren
January 27th, 2019

Morning Service:

Genesis 4: 1 – 26

How Did Cain Respond to the Gospel?

1. Cain Inherited a Rebellious Heart (1-16).
2. Cain and His Descendants Compounded Their Own Sin (17-24).
3. Our Only Hope Is God Doing What We Cannot (25-26).

Cain continued in the rebellious ways of his parents and things only got worse. The *dying death* which sin always brings trapped generations in a godless spiral of horror and increasing destruction. Who could deliver them from such futility?! That is the hope only the gospel brings. God provides the Deliverer who conquers death and sets us free. How are you (we) living in the reality of that freedom today?

Evening Service:

Nehemiah 9: 1 – 38

Collective Confession of God's People

1. We Have Nothing to Offer But Fithly Rags (1-4).
2. We Approach God Based on His Covenant Faithfulness (5-37).
3. Confession Affects the Whole Community (38).

As the gospel is properly understood according to God's Word it leads us to admit what we have done wrong and turn from our disobedience to God's loving care. Inherent in all sin is a traitorous idolatry that seeks security from other sources apart from God. Revival brings us to recognize that our only hope is found in God Himself. We see this most clearly in Christ's sacrifice and there find freedom to confess our sins together.

Taking Gathered Worship Home

Adam and Eve's rebellion against the good and holy God of all Creation didn't just affect them. We have seen how it irreparably twisted the very fabric of Creation and brought alienation between God and all humanity. It also pitted husband and wife against one another and now we see between brothers as well.

Please use the devotional material below each day this week to meet with Jesus. Ask Christ to teach us His ways that we may walk in them to accomplish His purposes.

Sunday AM

READ **Genesis 4:1-26; Romans 7:15-25**. DISCUSS: How does sin keep us in bondage? God told Cain to master it, but he couldn't. Why would God tell Cain to do something he couldn't do? How are you turning to God for things you are unable to do? PRAY for God to help us a congregation to more and more depend on Him by faith.

Sunday PM

READ today's passage: **Nehemiah 9:1-38**. What is the role of community in confession and repentance? Why is it necessary? PRAISE God for His mercy. REPENT of ways we ignore Him.

Monday

READ **Genesis 4:1-16; Romans 6:12-18**. DISCUSS: How do we master sin? What does it mean to exchange one slavery for another? Even though we are in Christ, how does death continue to affect us? PRAY for wisdom to understand God's ways. EXTEND Christ's grace to someone you know today.

Tuesday

READ **Genesis 4:1-16; Psalm 16:1-11**. Where does Cain end up in terms of God's presence (v.16)? What leads him there? MEDITATE on this—in God's presence is fullness of Joy! PRAY, "Lord, You have brought us into Your presence completely by grace. It is only through Christ's perfection that we are able to approach You. Thank You!"

Wednesday

READ **Genesis 4:17-24**. DISCUSS: How do we see sin escalate in Cain's descendants? Why is this the case? Why does sin necessarily bring death and destruction? REJOICE if you have been freed from death by Christ's sacrifice. PRAY, "Lord, thank You for the fullness of Your love for us. We praise You for doing what only You could do in making us Your people. Help us proclaim and live out the reality of Your grace together."

Thursday

READ **Genesis 4:25-26; Psalm 116:1-19**. What does it mean to call upon the name of the Lord? REJOICE in the grace of God. PRAY, "I love the Lord, because He hears my voice and my supplications. Because He has inclined His ear to me, Therefore I shall call upon Him as long as I live. To You I shall offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving, And call upon the name of the Lord. Amen."

Friday

READ **Genesis 4:1-26; Romans 7:24-25**. DISCUSS: What have you been learning this week? How does understanding how we got into this mess help us better understand what we have in Christ? REJOICE for Christ has set us free from this body of death. PRAY for your neighbors who are deceived and unable to even see their own sin for what it really is. Pray for their repentance. Pray that God will use you to bring them into His kingdom to the honor and praise of His name.

Saturday

PREPARE today for the gathered worship service tomorrow. READ **Genesis 4-5**. DISCUSS: What parallels and contrasts do you see? PLAN AHEAD: Do what you can today to free you up tomorrow to concentrate on worshipping Christ with His people. INVITE someone you know to join you for the worship service tomorrow. Pray for Christ's love to be more and more manifested in the Woodstock area. Pray that He will use us to extend His grace as we celebrate it together.