

## Day 1 - A Promise within the Curse

This week in our lesson we discussed the gift of suffering. What better place to begin understanding suffering through a Biblical lens than where it all began, in the Garden.

Read through the account of the result of the first sin, the curse. I recommend you turn in your Bible and read through Genesis chapters 2 and 3 first, then make your observations below:

Genesis 3:14-21

<sup>14</sup> The Lord God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this,

Cursed are you more than all cattle,

And more than every beast of the field;

On your belly you will go,

And dust you will eat

All the days of your life;

<sup>15</sup> And I will put enmity

Between you and the woman,

And between your seed and her seed;

He shall bruise you on the head,

And you shall bruise him on the heel.”

<sup>16</sup> To the woman He said,

“I will greatly multiply

Your pain in childbirth,

In pain you will bring forth children;

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Yet your desire will be for your husband,  
And he will rule over you.”

<sup>17</sup> 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 toil you will eat of it

All the days of your life.

<sup>18</sup> “Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you;

And you will eat the plants of the field;

<sup>19</sup> 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.”

<sup>20</sup> Now the man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all *the* living. <sup>21</sup> The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.”

We will close out here for today, end your time reflecting on the goodness of God, did you see it? The promise in the midst of the curse? We will be looking at this tomorrow. End your time today in prayer, thanking God for His goodness.

**Day 2**

Begin today with prayer, confessing your sins and worshipping the Lord for giving us His Word.

Today go back and read through Genesis 3:14-21 making any new observations the Lord might illumine to your heart, then complete the following:

Observe with me:

1. Who does God address first? (vs. 14) \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the Curse for the serpent? (vs. 14)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Who is God addressing in verse 15? \_\_\_\_\_

\*It is important to notice here that while both curses are addressed to the "serpent", verse 14 addresses the physical animal, while 15 is referring to the spiritual serpent, Satan himself.

4. How does this understanding change the way you might understand verse 15?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the difference in bruising the heel and bruising the head?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Copy Romans 16:20:

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\*Verse 15 is the first Gospel proclamation in Scripture...God is sending a Savior who will crush Satan once and for all...a promise in the midst of a curse!

7. The curse of the woman is twofold, list those here: (vs. 16)

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The word used here for “desire” is rooted in “seeking control”, so this phrase could be easier understood as: “you will seek to have control over your husband”. This is the very thing that Eve did in the fall of man, (Gen.2:6). She sought to control her husband. Now, because of her sin her marriage and marriages of all of her daughters after her (you and I) will forever be tainted by this struggle of the will.

8. What was the curse of the man? (vs. 17)

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All of creation was cursed on that day, the animals (vs. 14), satan, (vs. 15), women (vs.16), the earth (vs. 17), the ground and plants (vs. 18), and man (vs. 17-19). Man’s curse involved his work. Men were designed by God to work (pre-fall), but man’s work, his need to provide for his family was made hard through the fall.

9. Where is man cursed to return? (vs. 19)

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This was significant, Adam and Eve had never experienced death, not death of an animal, or a plant...the idea that they would return to the dust of the ground had to be horrifically shocking to them.

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No one in all of time had ever felt such tragic loss. Because their fellowship with God, who they were accustomed to walking through the Garden with had been cut off, God had sent them out of the Garden, their lives would never be the same.

This had to bring about an overwhelming sense of suffering.

But, Adam's response is seen in verse 20, copy that here:

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He had just been sentenced to death, and yet he called his wife: "the mother of all the living."

In the midst of the pain, he relied on the promise of God, professing that what God said in His curse to the serpent, Satan, in verse 15 would indeed be true.

Close out your time today reflecting on the gravity of the change that took place in the lives of Adam and Eve in one day, and the response of Adam. May we, as he did, when everything seems against us, when we are paying the consequences of our sin, or struggling against the groanings of a fallen, cursed world, may we choose to hold fast to the promises of God, allowing our hearts to rest in who He is, not what is going on around us. Spend time in prayer, confessing to God any hardness of heart or lack of faith, asking Him for the faith to fully rely on Him in all circumstances.

### Day 3

Begin today with confession, asking the Lord to illumine His Word to your heart!  
Read the text, making observations as you go!

1 Peter 1:8-9

“<sup>6</sup> In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, <sup>7</sup> so that the proof of your faith, *being* more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; <sup>8</sup> and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,”

#### A little background:

1 Peter was written to encourage believers who were experiencing unimaginable persecution under the evil Emperor Nero. The burning of Rome is a well-known historical event. Many people believed Nero himself was burning the city because of his insatiable desire to build more and make a name for himself. But, he had to get rid of the existing structures in order to be able to build new, bigger ones.

Christians were already outcasts in Rome and the Roman colonies. As the Roman people became more and more angry, as their homes, businesses and places of worship and false gods burned, Nero quickly realized he needed a scape-goat. So, he claimed the Christians were starting the fires. What once was a governmental dislike for Christians quickly became being hated by their entire communities. So, believers had to be careful. Not knowing if their closest neighbor, shopkeeper, or friend would turn them in for their faith to be scourged, devoured by lions at the Roman Games, or burned to light the palace gardens.

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This is the context of 1 Peter. It is horrific. However, we can surely glean incredible understanding and encouragement from this passage.

Observe with me:

1. How long will the trials of this world last? (vs.6) \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is more precious than gold? (vs. 7)  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Fill in the blank: what is being tested by fire? (vs. 7)

“...the \_\_\_\_\_ of your faith...”

\*\*This is not to be understood as us proving our faith to God, He knows everything, but proving our faith to ourselves, assurance always grows our faith and strengthens our relationship with Christ.

4. What is the result? (vs.7)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the result of our believing in Christ? (vs. 8)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Application:

How does this apply to you in your life? Are there any ways you feel your faith is being tested? Are you suffering and feel there is no reason? Meditate on God's Word, remembering that it is only for a short while that we will endure these hardships, and we will be strengthened through them to better bring glory and honor to Christ!

Close out your day today in prayer, confessing your sin and worshipping Him for walking through this momentary affliction with you!

## Day 4

Today we will look at how, being godly and righteous, doesn't necessarily mean we always have laughter in our hearts and a smile on our faces.

Read the following texts, making observations.

2 Corinthians 2:1-4; 7:6

**2** But I determined this for my own sake, that I would not come to you in sorrow again. **2** For if I cause you sorrow, who then makes me glad but the one whom I made sorrowful? **3** This is the very thing I wrote you, so that when I came, I would not have sorrow from those who ought to make me rejoice; having confidence in you all that my joy would be *the joy* of you all. **4** For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears; not so that you would be made sorrowful, but that you might know the love which I have especially for you.”

“But God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus...”

Context is key:

Paul is writing to the church at Corinth after he has had to sternly rebuke them in what is only known as “the harsh letter”, what we can gather from other texts of scripture is that a false teacher had risen up in the church making false claims about Paul, and many people in the congregation had not only believed him, but taken part in the divisive gossip and slander causing great disunity and dissention.

Observe with me:

1. Does Paul try to skirt around the fact that he was having a hard time? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Because of the behavior of the Corinthian church Paul had to admonish them quite sternly, much like a loving Father would a child. What was the purpose of his writing? (vs. 4)

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3. Is God glorified through our suffering? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Who comforts the depressed? \_\_\_\_\_

Job 13:15

“Though He slay me,

I will hope in Him.

Psalm 142

I cry aloud with my voice to the Lord;

I make supplication with my voice to the Lord.

<sup>2</sup> I pour out my complaint before Him;

I declare my trouble before Him.

<sup>3</sup> When my spirit was overwhelmed within me,

You knew my path.

In the way where I walk

They have hidden a trap for me.

<sup>4</sup> Look to the right and see;

For there is no one who regards me;

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There is no escape for me;

No one cares for my soul.

<sup>5</sup> I cried out to You, O Lord;

I said, "You are my refuge,

My portion in the land of the living.

<sup>6</sup> "Give heed to my cry,

For I am brought very low;

Deliver me from my persecutors,

For they are too strong for me.

<sup>7</sup> "Bring my soul out of prison,

So that I may give thanks to Your name;

The righteous will surround me,

For You will deal bountifully with me."

Observe with me:

1. Both Job and the Psalmist above are brutally honest with God. Take note of where their honesty leads. They start out wrapped up in their circumstances, but their honesty with God and turning to Him moves them back to relying on God.

Copy the phrases that demonstrate that here:

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Close out your time today in prayer, be honest with God about your current suffering and struggles, share your heart with Him.

### **Day 5**

As always, begin your time today in prayer confessing your sins and adoring your Savior!

Study Psalm 102, making observations.

Psalm 102

Hear my prayer, O Lord!

And let my cry for help come to You.

<sup>2</sup> Do not hide Your face from me in the day of my distress;

Incline Your ear to me;

In the day when I call answer me quickly.

<sup>3</sup> For my days have been consumed in smoke,

And my bones have been scorched like a hearth.

<sup>4</sup> My heart has been smitten like grass and has withered away,

Indeed, I forget to eat my bread.

<sup>5</sup> Because of the loudness of my groaning

My bones cling to my flesh.

<sup>6</sup> I resemble a pelican of the wilderness;

I have become like an owl of the waste places.

<sup>7</sup> I lie awake,

I have become like a lonely bird on a housetop.

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<sup>8</sup> My enemies have reproached me all day long;

Those who deride me have used my *name* as a curse.

<sup>9</sup> For I have eaten ashes like bread

And mingled my drink with weeping

<sup>10</sup> Because of Your indignation and Your wrath,

For You have lifted me up and cast me away.

<sup>11</sup> My days are like a lengthened shadow,

And I wither away like grass.

<sup>12</sup> But You, O Lord, abide forever,

And Your name to all generations.

<sup>13</sup> You will arise *and* have compassion on Zion;

For it is time to be gracious to her,

For the appointed time has come.

<sup>14</sup> Surely Your servants find pleasure in her stones

And feel pity for her dust.

<sup>15</sup> So the nations will fear the name of the Lord

And all the kings of the earth Your glory.

<sup>16</sup> For the Lord has built up Zion;

He has appeared in His glory.

<sup>17</sup> He has regarded the prayer of the destitute

And has not despised their prayer.

<sup>18</sup> This will be written for the generation to come,

That a people yet to be created may praise the Lord.

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<sup>19</sup> For He looked down from His holy height;  
From heaven the Lord gazed upon the earth,  
<sup>20</sup> To hear the groaning of the prisoner,  
To set free those who were doomed to death,  
<sup>21</sup> That *men* may tell of the name of the Lord in Zion  
And His praise in Jerusalem,  
<sup>22</sup> When the peoples are gathered together,  
And the kingdoms, to serve the Lord.  
<sup>23</sup> He has weakened my strength in the way;  
He has shortened my days.  
<sup>24</sup> I say, "O my God, do not take me away in the midst of my days,  
Your years are throughout all generations.  
<sup>25</sup> "Of old You founded the earth,  
And the heavens are the work of Your hands.  
<sup>26</sup> "Even they will perish, but You endure;  
And all of them will wear out like a garment;  
Like clothing You will change them and they will be changed.  
<sup>27</sup> "But You are the same,  
And Your years will not come to an end.  
<sup>28</sup> "The children of Your servants will continue,  
And their descendants will be established before You."

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Complete the chart below, choosing 8 observations you made from the passages we have studied this week. I would encourage you to do this with each observation you made as time allows.

This chart has been adapted from Fundamentals of the Faith by Dr. John MacArthur.

Observations (what do I see?)	Interpretive Questions Asking questions of each observation.	Interpretations What does it mean? What conclusion can be made?

Now that we have made observations, and used interpretive questions to better understand the text, let’s make some applications, because we all know that without applying the Word to our lives, we will remain unchanged.

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A helpful tool as we seek to apply Scripture to our lives is: SPECS.

- 1. S – Sins to avoid. Are there any sins in this passage that I should be intentional in avoiding?

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- 2. P – Promises to cling to. Are there any promises in this text that I can hold on to?

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- 3. E – Examples to follow. Do I see any examples in this passage that I should follow?

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- 4. C – Commands to obey. Are there any commands to obey?

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- 5. Scriptures to memorize. Are there any verse(s) here that I should hide in my heart to increase my ability to meditate on and further apply the truth to my life?

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As our week comes to a close, spend time praising God for the fullness of His Word and the immense blessing it is!