

Beyond the Daily Grind

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Week 3: Work in a Fallen World

Genesis 3:14-19

Review:

Before we read this text let me take you to the moment it represents in our Jewish/Christian history. God spoke and, as we learned from the original language last week, He created matter, gave energy, created systems and even the laws that all must exist within.

Gravity:

Imagine things at a macro-level beginning to interact with each other. Huge masses of material colliding together and forming into planets.

Electromagnetism:

Imagine things at a micro-level, smaller than what the eye can see, beginning to interact with each other. Atoms and electrons beginning to take form and engage with each other.

Life:

Imagine God drawing his hand through the depths of the ocean and all kinds of creatures spinning off behind in the wake of his movement. Imagine him calling out life from the air as birds begin to take flight. Imagine him drawing up the form of man from the dust and breathing life into him.

God created because that's who He is. He loves to make beauty. He loved making you.

It's in this state of glorious creation that he gives man the job of continuing to sub-create and make things more beautiful. He allows us to participate in His creative work.

Let that sink in – creation was called to create. There was glorious work in our primordial paradise and there will be glorious work in our heavenly paradise again. Moreover, we are called to take spiritual responsibility in light of our origin and destination, which is the love of God.

Work is not the curse, work was cursed.

Authority and leadership are not a curse, they were cursed.

Genesis 3:14-19

14 So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. 15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

16 To the woman he said, "I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."

17 To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through

painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. 18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. 19 By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

- In the fall, what was “natural” changed. Let me offer a few mental pictures. These, I am certain, are flawed at some level but they help bring perspective.
 - Think of this as an unplugging. Imagine your cell phone being unplugged. It is draining. It will ultimately lead to death.
 - Think of a turning away. The posture of all turned away from God, from life.
 - Think of what is natural. If I was to lay out a raw piece of meat and some well steamed broccoli in front of a lion, the lion will choose the raw meat every time. Why? Because it is his nature. Before the fall man didn’t have to work to honor God, it was his nature. After the fall our nature changed. (Romans 5)
- Two things happened to human activity in the fall.
 - Our work became frustrated. Literally, decay is all around us and working against us.

“Because of the fall of the human race, our work is also profoundly frustrating, never as fruitful as we want, and often a complete failure... We mean that, in all our work, we will be able to envision far more than we can accomplish, both because of lack of ability and because of resistance in the environment around us. The experience of work will include pain, conflict, envy, and fatigue, and not all our goals will be met.” -Timothy Keller (Every Good Endeavour, pg. 90,95)
 - Our perspective changed.

To answer this let’s look at what happened to the human heart. Our posture, our attention turned towards self. Fear, shame, blame and a desire for self-protection and promotion seeped into everything.

 - Fear, shame, blame and a desire for self-protection and promotion are sprinkled into your marriage.
 - Fear, shame, blame and a desire for self-protection and promotion are sprinkled into your workplace.
 - Fear, shame, blame and a desire for self-protection and promotion are sprinkled into leadership.
 - Fear, shame, blame and a desire for self-protection and promotion are sprinkled into your money.
 - Fear, shame, blame and a desire for self-protection and promotion are sprinkled into your family.
 - Fear, shame, blame and a desire for self-protection and promotion are sprinkled into your view of yourself.

- In the curse is the solution. When the curse was given, He had already made the answer and promised that He will come into the pain with us (Revelation 13, Matthew 25:34). The Lamb was slain before the foundations of the world. Salvation is in Christ.
 - Let that settle in your heart and mind. Before you struggled with your sin, Christ, before God, said I will go there with them.
- I love redemption stories. I love even more the stories of love and grace that precede redemption. My friend and accountability partner Dave has a heart that works pre-redemptively with people. I consider him a “hound of heaven” to use an old holiness itinerate preacher phrase. He is the guy in our group that is often first to be on someone’s “doorstep” when they have messed up. He loves and calls out to people even before they have turned their life around. He comes to people while they are still broken, still in sin. This I love. Not just stories of redemption but the stories of grace that reach out that happen before someone has turned their life around.

Final Thoughts:

How do we respond?

- Know the relentless love of God. There is no place God won’t go to rescue people. Even before you commit the sinful act, He is waiting.
- Admit that fear, shame, blame and self-obsession are in you too.
- Illustration:
I had an “ah-ha” moment a few days ago. I have been working through the New City Catechism as my daily devotions and I spend time addressing the reality of the state of man. There was a quote that I reflected and journaled on. “Don’t resent God for what He has given others.” -Thabiti Anyabwile As I paused and pondered this it hit me. I am jealous of others. I actually named some of them out loud. The moment I took the time to articulate and lay before God yet another part of my heart that is flawed, it began to lose power. There is so much spiritual healing and power when you are honest with God, yourself, and other believers.
- We made the case last week that spiritual responsibility is the first job given to man. With a humble heart before God take spiritual responsibility.

Next Steps Cards:

What residue of the fall affects your heart? What do you need to confess? What spiritual responsibility do you need to take?

Reference:

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