

Knowing The Message

Week 1 - God is For Us (6/1)

God Is For Us

The Bible begins with the story of creation declaring that it was God who created the heavens and the earth and formed man and woman in his own image. God created man and woman perfect, eternal and free. (Gen 1; Ps 103-4, 121) But people used their freedom to rebel against rather than obey God. Their sin separated them from God. The most amazing part of the story of the Bible is how God has chosen to deal with their sins. The story we see in Genesis announces that “God is for us!” Time after time we find God responding to sinful situations in two ways. First, God punishes sin demonstrating his righteous character. Second, God provides a way for his creation to be in relationship with himself. Four stories in Genesis depict this character of God:

- God creates the world and declares it good. After Adam and Eve sin, God punishes them by removing them from the eternal garden, but then we find that it is God himself who “covers” their shame and sin. (Gen 3:1-11, 21)
- After Cain kills his brother Abel, God punishes Cain forcing him to wander the earth, but then God places a mark on Cain to protect him; it is a mark that says, “Cain belongs to me.” (Gen 4:2-15)
- Humanity spirals into sin once again and God punishes all humanity through a flood. But God spares Noah, providing a way for creation to continue. God demonstrates his continuing love for his creation by personally closing the door of the Ark and by making a promise to never destroy the world by flood again. (Gen 6:5-8; 7:16)
- Humanity once again chooses to honor itself rather than God, organizing themselves to build a tower. The tower was motivated by their desire to have glory for themselves, not for God. God dealt with their sin by confusing their language, spoiling their selfish ambitions. God dealt with the sin, but continued to provide the possibility of a relationship with his creation. (Gen 11:1-9)

In these stories God demonstrates that he is good and his creation was formed for good, not evil. When sin occurs, God deals with the sin, because sin separates God from His creation and sin will keep His creation from enjoying the eternal joy of eternal life. God is for us and continues to work with his creation to bring about His desired goal of eternal perfection.

Discussion (Read Gen 1-11)

- What do these stories tell us about the character of God?
- What do these stories tell us about men, women, and creation?
- What important ideas / lessons does this part of the story offer to people you know?
- How do these stories challenge commonly held misconceptions about Christianity?
- How would you summarize this section of the story of God to someone in 5 minutes?
- Select one scripture from this section that captures the essence of this portion of the message. What scripture would you choose?