

Section One – Blessed

I. The Blessing We Receive

A. Read Genesis 1:20-28 - Pick the true statement(s). Discuss.

1. God blessed the stars and His created universe.
2. God blessed the Creatures and Humans He created. **TRUE**
3. God's blessing requires the one receiving it to earn it by doing good.
4. God's blessing requires certain necessary conditions. **TRUE**
5. God's blessing is an enabling power to fulfill its design. **TRUE**
6. God blessed the 6 days of the week in which we are to work out our salvation.

B. Why are certain days especially blessed by God? **Pastor Winans defined blessing as God's enabling power for His creation to function according to its purpose. God blessed the seventh day (Sabbath) for it to function as a means of trust in His enabling power. God set aside the Sabbath to rest and spend time away from our work and to devote a day to dwell on God's enabling power as an embodied expression of our trust in Him. (See more in the Going Deeper – doctrinal section.)**

C. Explain how doing what we are designed to do is related to God's blessing. **We either do things our way or God's way. We either do things by our power or by God's power. We either do things for our own purposes or for God's glory. God's enabling power is His blessing to accomplish the designs He intends for us to experience.**

II. The Blessing We Lost

A. Explain why coveting prevents God's blessing. **Being truly fulfilled is dependent upon God's blessing. When we covet, we are rejecting God's ways and substituting something else, someone else, or someone else's path as the path to fulfillment. Coveting replaces a desire for God to bless with a desire for blessing elsewhere.**

B. Use the following words to fill in below blanks: covet - decide - saw - take

1. Eve **__saw__** that the fruit of the tree was a delight to the eyes.
2. David **__ saw __** that the woman was very beautiful.
3. We either **__decide__** for ourselves or depend on God's direction.

4. When we ___**covet**___ we will not receive the blessing of God.
5. When we ___**take**___ what we want we expect to be fulfilled.

C. How does Romans 7:7-12 explain the covetousness that led Eve's choice. **Eve was given the law by God to keep her alive. However, she coveted the forbidden fruit and then the Law brought death to her. The law was not given as a means of power to obey, rather it reveals God's will and if rejected our sinfulness. It is only trust in God's enabling power that keeps us from coveting and taking.**

D. Read Romans 1:25. What is the key idea in this verse as related to how we go about trying to be fulfilled? **When we rely on our own desires, we exchange the truth God has revealed to us for the lie that says fulfillment can be obtained from our own ways. Anytime we try and put something else in God's place, it will disappoint us because it cannot bless as God does. Take some time and examine your own life. What do you find as your greatest temptation to replace God's blessing with some other thing?**

III. The Regained Blessing

A. Explain how the story of Noah is an example of God's creative work of renewed blessing. **God destroyed the world through the flood. However, God instructed Noah to build the ark so that Noah and the other occupants of the ark would be kept alive and thus be able to experience the blessings of God again. It follows a similar pattern of life and blessing coming out of waters of chaos.**

B. Explain how the story of Abraham is another example of God's work of renewed blessing. **After Babel, God instructed Abraham, who lived in Ur, the land of the Babylonians, to leave Ur and travel by faith to a new land, where God promised to make a great nation from his offspring and provide the Savior of the World.**

C. How does Galatians 3:7-10 help us understand how God's blessing is experienced. **We can only be justified from our sinfulness by faith. This is the same faith that God justified Abraham. Paul actually writes that God preached the gospel to Abraham! God reveals his purpose to restore His blessing to all people, and that he would do so through human mediators (Israel). Abraham believed God and by faith obeyed. Israel did not fulfill this as a nation, but Jesus does (He is the faithful Israelite). We by faith trust in Him as our Savior, the one who restores our blessing.**

D. Fill in the blanks below.

1. Noah passed through the waters to receive God's blessing.
2. Israel passed through the Red Sea to receive God's blessing.
3. We pass through the waters of baptism to receive God's blessing.

E. Read Ephesians 1:3-14. How is Jesus our means of being blessed by the Father? **Jesus redeems us and is the means of forgiveness for our sins. By God's grace through faith, we are united to Christ and receive all that He is given.** Why do you think Paul refers to God's purposes in these verses about blessing? **Paul ties all of these blessing to God's purpose of humanity to be intimately involved in His purposes for all of Creation. God's purposes cannot be accomplished without His blessing. All that was lost in our rebellion against God and His purpose is regained through the faithfulness of Jesus, and God had a plan for this from the beginning.** How do these verses increase your sense of purpose as it relates to God's blessing and design for your participation in His work of creation and recreation? **Take some time to really reflect on this personally and in your group. There are so many promises in these verses related to our personal, corporate, and universal purposes to reveal the greatness of God once again.**

Section Two – Going Deeper

Apologetics: World View and Design.

What is the best explanation for what is wrong with the world today?

Ask that question of almost anyone, and you are most likely to get some kind of answer because it is clear to most people that there is something terribly wrong with the world. In the sermon today, Chris noted that in Genesis 1:28 God blessed Adam and Eve and that was to "give them power to do that which they were designed to do" (a quote from Phillip Little).

Genesis 3 introduces us to another being involved in the fall of man: the serpent. Satan had already been cast down to earth due to his rebellion against God in heaven (Luke 10:18). Satan came to Eve as a serpent and suggested to the woman that God had not really forbidden the fruit for her good but was rather keeping good from her (Genesis 3:1–4). So, she ate it and gave some to Adam (Genesis 3:5). Adam also ate it, and in that moment everything changed. Sin had entered into God's perfect world (Romans 5:12). Mankind had fallen.

The fall of man was caused by Adam's sin. Sin is any human behavior, word, or thought that is contrary to the perfection of God. (Think God's design and blessing).

We call this episode in human history the fall of man because, in that act of disobedience, Adam brought a curse upon every person yet to be born. The man who was designed to walk with God in unbroken fellowship had fallen from that exalted position. He was doomed to live in a broken state, in a broken world, apart from ongoing communion with a holy God. God promised that the Seed of the woman would one day save them from the eternal consequences of their sin (Genesis 3:15), but the temporary earthly consequences of sin remained.

We all suffer the consequences of the fall of man. Our salvation is in calling upon the name of the Lord and trusting in Jesus' perfect sacrifice for our sin (Romans 5:10–11; 2 Corinthians 5:18). The world groans under the curse, crying out for the relief that will come at the ultimate redemption of God's people when Christ returns (Romans 8:22–23).

So, the ultimate reason for the brokenness of the world is the fallen state of mankind and sin. This describes reality as we know it, because it matches up with the way the world actually is and offers the best explanation.

For more information:

<https://www.gotquestions.org/fall-of-man.html>

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Christian-worldview.html>

Going Deeper in Doctrine

Besides attending a worship service, how biblically observant are you of “remembering the Sabbath day”? Consider how Pastor Winans defined “being blessed” as an enabling power of God and how it relates to our loving God.

Q. 115. Which is the fourth commandment?

A. The fourth commandment is, *Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested in the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath-day and hallowed it.*

The command is two-fold; remember it, and keep it:

- Remember –
 1. Meaning that the Sabbath was an unwritten, yet established, law of God before Sinai. Adam and Eve would have been Sabbath keepers.

2. The pattern of God's Creational Order. In the giving of the 4th Law, God specifically notes that "in six days" he created, and on the seventh day, he rested. The first six days included an evening and a morning, but the seventh day does not. It is different and functions different as an expression of trust in the ongoing enabling power of God's good work.
- Keep –
 1. Meaning there is an action that must be taken. Keeping is an obedience.
 2. The "keeping" persists in the New Covenant.
 3. There is a soft debate within Christianity as to the Sabbath being renewed from the seventh day of the week (before Christ) to the first day (in honor of the resurrection).
 4. Our country honored the sabbath just until the last generation. Stores would be closed, business stopped, organized sports etc. Just like that, it's forgotten.

What about you and me? Where is our heart in the matter? Sometimes I say, "Hey, I'm not going to be legalistic about it." But, trying to push a godly obedience off on the Pharisees is just my cop-out. Spirit led, godly obedience, observes His eternal laws.

Keep in mind that being "blessed of God" is an enabling power lavished upon us. This is grace. It affects our whole being. If you love God, it is because He first loved you. i.e., God lavished his enabling power upon you, gave you cosmic heart surgery, raised you from spiritual death to eternal life and sealed you with persevering faith. Now, that's being blessed of God!