

# A Shared Tragedy: Sin and Its Effects

Genesis 3 – 11

Unity, Diversity and Our Identity in Christ

Part 2 of 14



# Unity, Diversity, and Our Identity in Christ

The American Church:

# Unity, Diversity, and Our Identity in Christ

## The American Church:

- At the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, some researchers tallied the numbers on congregations.
- They defined a racially mixed congregation as one in which no one racial group made up **more than 80%** of the total.
- By that modest standard **only 5.5%** of Christian congregations were racially mixed.<sup>1</sup>

# Unity, Diversity, and Our Identity in Christ

## The American Church:

- Churches are also deeply segregated along generational, socioeconomic, educational and other lines.
- This is not the model the Bible presents to us.

# Unity, Diversity, and Our Identity in Christ

## The American Church:

- In the average American city there is no reason for congregations to remain uni-this, that or the other.
- At least there is no biblical reason.
- From the beginning, the biblical model of the church was to be multi-racial, multi-class, multi-cultural, multi-whatever.

# Unity, Diversity, and Our Identity in Christ

About This Series:

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- **Our identity in Christ** provides the inner motivation that compels us to unite rather than divide.
- In so doing, we still validate our individuality.
- Rather than negating differences, our identity in Christ transcends them, giving us a focal point that all of us share.

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4. To appreciate **biblical diversity as a spiritual strength** that expresses itself in the people and ministries of our church.

# Unity, Diversity, and Our Identity in Christ

- Last week we looked at **our shared origin**.
- **Genesis 1 – 2** teaches us that we all share the same great, great, great ... (?) grandparents in Adam and Eve.
- Therefore, the entire human race is one gigantic extended family, sharing **99.9% of one another's DNA**.<sup>2</sup>

# Unity, Diversity, and Our Identity in Christ

- This reinforces **the biblical model** of a multi-racial, multi-class, multi-cultural, multi-generational church.
- We can happily be exactly who we are and be different.
- Yet our **shared identity in Christ** is bigger than all of those other things that make us who we are.

A Shared Tragedy: Sin and Its Effects

Genesis 3 – 11

# A Shared Tragedy: Sin and Its Effects

## Genesis 3 – 11

- “Why are those people so ...?”
- “How can they just ... ?”
- People have real faults.
- It is often easier to see the faults of others than our own.
- This is especially true when we look at others outside the group(s) to which we belong.

# A Shared Tragedy: Sin and Its Effects

## Genesis 3 – 11

- Sadly, the creation that God called “**very good**” when he completed it did not stay that way.
- The evil in our world and the evil within us can be traced back to the sad story we find in **Genesis 3**.
- Let’s start by reading that chapter.

# The Initial Rebellion    Genesis 3

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- When **the serpent** appears he is already opposed to God.
- He lures the woman into defiance of God.
- She then shares the forbidden fruit with the man.

# The Initial Rebellion      Genesis 3

- An immediate result of their eyes being “opened” is shame at their nakedness.
- This contrasts with the last verse of Genesis 1.
- The man blames the woman and the woman blames the serpent, both minimizing their own part in the transgression.

# The Initial Rebellion    Genesis 3

- The man, the woman and the serpent each receive some form of curse as their punishment.
- In addition, the man and the woman are expelled from Eden.

# The Initial Rebellion      Genesis 3

- Blocking the way back to the tree of life in 3:24 appears to be a protective measure.
- The cherubim and the flaming sword ensure that the first couple will not eat of the tree of life in their fallen state.
- Perhaps If they did, they would have lived forever in their fallen condition – which was not God's desire.

# The Initial Rebellion    Genesis 3

- From the day of that first fall into sin, the close bond that humanity had with God was broken.

# The Initial Rebellion    Genesis 3



And we,  
*Adam's family,*  
became creepy,  
kooky and  
altogether  
ooky in our sin.

# The Initial Rebellion    Genesis 3

- The truth is actually worse than that.
- Human relationships also began to decline.
- In our next passage we will see how quickly things would get as low as they could possibly go.

Brother against Brother

Genesis 4:1-12

# Brother against Brother      Genesis 4:1-12

- Cain's offering was not acceptable to God while Abel's was.
- Cain might have decided to do whatever it would take to make his offering acceptable.
- Instead, his jealousy toward Abel led him to kill his brother.

# Brother against Brother      Genesis 4:1-12

- The **first two brothers** named in the Bible became enemies.
- In the **very first generation** of human brothers, the very first murder was committed.

# Brother against Brother      Genesis 4:1-12

- As of Monday, October 1, there had been some **118 murders** in Indianapolis so far in 2018.<sup>3</sup>
- The good news for us is that it is worse in Chicago, where there had been **469 murders** as of November 3.
- The good news there is that **the rate is down** when compared to the last two years.<sup>4</sup>

# Brother against Brother      Genesis 4:1-12

- We ought to lament the violence in our streets, the murders in the news and the world's endless wars.
- But let's not think this is anything new.
- It started with Cain and Abel.

Earth Filled with Violence    Genesis 6 – 9

# Earth Filled with Violence    Genesis 6 – 9

- **Genesis 6:5**    Humanity has multiplied and this verse shows us the outcome.
- **Genesis 6:9-14**    As the earth's population grew, evil and conflict grew with it.
- God decided to hit the restart button and begin all over again with the family of **Noah**.

# Earth Filled with Violence    Genesis 6 – 9

- **Genesis 6:17-18**    God revealed his plan to Noah and commits to a covenant with him.
- Lets follow the narrative to its conclusion.
- **Genesis 7:1; 8:1, 15-22; 9:1**    The blessing that Noah receives at the end echoes the one in **Genesis 1:28**.

Babel    Genesis 11:1-9

# Babel    Genesis 11:1-9

- We have already seen how humanity was at odds with itself.
- Maybe the easiest way to overcome their differences was to unite in rebellion against God.

# Babel    Genesis 11:1-9

- The separation by languages was God-ordained in order to tame humanity's rebellion against him.
- This separation is tied to the origin of nations that we see in **Genesis 10** and to some extent in the rest of **Genesis 11**.
- Unfortunately, people have used ethnicity as one further way to divide against one another.

Things Begin to Change

# Things Begin to Change

- After Christ's resurrection, the descent of the Holy Spirit on the church in **Acts 2** began the process of reunification.
- The disciples glorified God in many different languages, which validated the individuality of the hearers.
- At the same time, it brought diverse people from diverse places together to form the original church.

A Shared Tragedy      Conclusions

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- “Why are those people so ...?”
- “How can they just ... ?”
- Questions like these should remind us that the effects of sin are deep, real and shared by us all.

# A Shared Tragedy      Conclusions

- The post-fall, post-flood and post-Babel world is the only world we have ever known.
- It is not original the “very good” world of **Genesis 1:31**.

# A Shared Tragedy      Conclusions

- Every culture, society and nation is polluted by sin and its terrible effects.
- No nation, no family, no person is immune to this disease.
- Read **Romans 3:9-20**.

# A Shared Tragedy      Conclusions

- As we all equally share this common infection of sin, we also share a common Savior.
- See **Romans 5:1-11**.

# A Shared Tragedy      Conclusions

- As a church, let's pray for a supernatural ability to:
  1. See ourselves as God sees us – sinners who are the object of his unending love.
  2. See others as God sees them – very much like ourselves.
  3. Look beyond our more superficial outward differences to the to the core issues of sin and salvation.
  4. Unite with other followers of Jesus on the basis of our shared identity in Christ.

Next Week

# A Shared Promise: The Covenant with Abraham

Genesis 12:1-3

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