

April 4, 2021 EASTER SUNDAY - Dennis and James Gallaher
Garden to Grave to Restoration with Jesus

THE PROBLEM. It started in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve rebelled against God and sinned. The result - struggle would be the hallmark of life. Sin is a mankind's chronic illness.

GOD GIVES HOPE. God provided what they could not provide for themselves. God covers the shame of Adam and Eve with a garment from the sacrifice of one of His own creations - an animal.

GOD GIVES PROPHECY. Prophecy is God telling us what will happen so that we don't miss it when it does. All through history the trail to the cross was marked with bloody sacrifices.

- Abel's sacrifice of a lamb that God accepted.
- God's provision to Abraham of a ram (instead of his son, Issac).
- The blood of the Passover lamb on the doors of the Hebrews.
- The blood of animals that would cover the sins of the people.

Why? **Leviticus 17:11** *For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.* In this, God is telling us:

- Just how serious and costly sin is.
- Just how destructive sin is.
- Just how committed He is to remain connected to His broken creation.
- Sin is so devastatingly costly that life, blood, must be shed to cover it.

THE PLAN. That is why Jesus came. If sin would be paid for once and forever then a perfect sacrifice was needed. Jesus came in the likeness of sinful flesh - yet He lived a life that was sinless. He made all the right choices, and therefore could pay and atone for all of the sins of the world. **Romans 8:3. 1 Peter 2:24-25** *And He personally bore our sins in His own body on the cross, so that we might be dead to sin and be alive to all that is good. It was the suffering that He bore which has healed you. You had wandered away like so many sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.*

We are healed of the chronic death grip of sin because of His wounds! What Jesus did was the greatest act of love and understanding that has or will ever take place in the history of the world. Are you hiding from God?

Even in our own lives, it is hard to comprehend how death could be a part of the plan. God created Adam and Eve to live. Sin came in and brought a death that would require a payment in order to be satisfied. For years, the Jews made a temporary blood sacrifice for payment but the debt would not go away. The sin, the separation, so severe that God could not communicate with His people. 400 years of silence without God speaking to His people.

RESTORATION. One dark night, the silence was broken as Jesus, the Savior, was born. God's love so great and so strong for His people, that He sent His Son to satisfy as it was the only thing valuable enough to pay the debt. His precious Son became the sacrifice to restore what was lost in the garden. Together, this Father and Son were both willing because we were worth it. They wanted Heaven to have people - to restore the relationship with people that was lost in the garden. The cost was the death of the willing Son, Jesus.

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life.*

BUT GRIEF. The cross was hope but for the disciples, Jesus dying in such a way dashed their own hope. Jesus was dead. They grieved. Grief clouds our thinking, locks us down, paralyzes us, confines us, steals our hope, leaves us in isolation. On the third day, Jesus was not in the tomb. What? They watched Him die; they saw Him placed in the tomb; they saw the stone rolled in front; so they hid - they isolated.

Matthew 20:17-19 *As Jesus was about to go up to Jerusalem, He took the twelve disciples aside by themselves, and on the road, He said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, and they will hand Him over to the Gentiles to mock and flog and crucify, and on the third day He will be raised up."* Grief could isolate them, but grief could not steal the truth of what would happen on that day. On the third day, the power of sin was taken away. Jesus was alive and proclaimed peace.

THEN PEACE. John 14:27 *Peace I leave you, My peace I give you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, nor fearful.* This peace was addressing their grief. They needed reassuring words. No matter where we are at today or what we are dealing with, Jesus comes suddenly and brings His peace. He will take away our grief with His presence. It is finished. Today, we celebrate a risen Jesus who paid the price so that we can be redeemed. Jesus paid the penalty and He brought this promise of supernatural peace, the promise of life, the promise of a renewed hope, the promise of joy. Do you have this peace? The secret is knowing Jesus who gives it freely.

Romans 10:9 *That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe You are the Son of God. I believe that on that cross You took my guilt, my sin, and my shame, and You died for it. You faced hell for me so I wouldn't have to. You rose again to give me a place in Heaven, a purpose on Earth, and a relationship with the Father. Today, Lord Jesus, I turn from my sins to be born again. Now God is my Father, Jesus is my Savior, the Holy Spirit is my helper, and Heaven is my home. Amen.

How would you explain the grief associated with Jesus' death?

Do you know the kind of supernatural peace that only Jesus gives? one beyond understanding.

What part of your life are you hiding from God or others?

Tell about your day of salvation.