

Session 1

The Kingdom of God from Creation / The “Fall” and the worldwide impact of sin

The Grand Narrative of God

The Lord is sovereign and He is holding the grand narrative in His hands. We can only see a glimpse of all that the Lord is doing. The angels are seeing the unfolding of the grand narrative of God. (*1Pe 1:10-12*).

Our life here on earth is a part of the Grand Narrative of God.

God’s purpose with man and creation

God created us to be in His habitat. We live and move and have our being in God. (*Acts 17:28*). We are not created to be dependent on the material world. Though we are made of matter, the material world is not our provider. If the material world is our provider, then we will worship the material world. We can see that the religions of the world are worshipping the material world. Thus, when we do not depend on the material world but depend on God, then we are a witness to who is our God.

Since man is free from depending on creation but is dependent on God, man is in the right place to be the ruler of creation as a co-ruler with God. This is the purpose of God. We were created to have dominion over God’s creation in the image of God. (*Gen 1:26; Psalms 8:3-6*)

Created to be God-dependent, we were created in His kingdom. Therefore, the understanding of the kingdom began right at the beginning of creation. The Kingdom of God is the rule of God over all of creation and we are co-rulers of God over His creation, in the image of the Triune God. This is the purpose that God has for man.

The ethos of the kingdom of God is the experience of His Shalom

The Shalom of God

"The webbing together of God, humans and all creation in justice, fulfilment, and delight is what the Hebrew prophets call Shalom. We call it peace, but it means more than mere peace of mind or a cease fire between enemies. In the Bible, Shalom means universal flourishing, wholeness and delight- a rich state of affairs in which natural needs are satisfied, and natural gifts fully employed, a state of affairs that inspires joyful wonder as its Creator and Saviour opens doors, and welcomes the creatures in whom He delights. Shalom, in other words, is the way things ought to be." - Cornelius Plantinga

The Shalom of God is four-dimensional. We are to be rightly related to God, rightly related to ourselves, rightly related to one another and rightly related to creation.

Being rightly related to God is about being in the habitat of God. Rightly related within ourselves is about living out our full potential under the authority of God by the Holy Spirit. Rightly related to our neighbours is about seeing that we are interdependent and that we must ensure the good of others, for our own good. Rightly related to the environment is about being responsible for creation, to have dominion, in the image of God.

The Cultural or Creation mandate

To fulfil our task of being co-rulers with God over His creation, God gave us a road map. This road map is known as the Creation or Cultural mandate. This was the blessing that God gave man at creation. *Gen 1:28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and*

subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Be fruitful

A tree does not consume its own fruit. It is others who consume the fruit. Fruit-bearing is essentially about being a blessing to others. In creation, God made us not to be inward-looking but outward-looking. We are here on earth to be concerned for others. Sin has made us inward-looking and self-centred. When Jesus comes into our life, and He enthrones us, we are looking to be a blessing to others.

Fruit-bearing is about having a growing relationship with Jesus (TRUTH). *Jn 15:4* and allowing the fruit of the Holy Spirit to be displayed through us. *Gal 5:22-23*. Again, the fruit of the Holy Spirit is to be a blessing to others and not to boast and glory in our gifts. Our gifts are always for others.

Our talents and gifts are developing to their fullest for the benefit of others *Eph 4:11-13*

Multiply

Multiplication is about multiplying the fruit bearers. We are here to not only be a blessing to others but our mandate is to make disciples of Christ. We are always reaching out to people and investing in the lives of others so that they will bear fruit.

We enable others to reach their full potential. This involves being a mentor, a guide and a coach, and one who is enabling others to grow into all that God has placed in them.

Fill the earth

All fields of work and activity belong to God. We are to occupy positions of responsibility and influence. (stand before kings *Proverbs 22:29*) We are to look at all places of work as sacred and not as secular. Wherever we are, we serve God and our performance is for the glory of God. *Daniel 6:2-4*. We also look at our places and positions of occupation as God's place to accomplish His purposes. *Gen 50:20*

Subdue it / Conquer it

The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. He owns the cattle on a thousand hills the wealth in every mine. *Ps24:1; Ps50:10-12*. God has created a beautiful world, with inbuilt laws and principles. We are to harness these laws and principles and convert them to services for the good of mankind.

We are to harness or conquer our workplaces. We are to be people of excellence in our workplaces since we work to glorify God. (*1 Cor 10:31*)

Have dominion

Made us kings and priests *Rev 1:6/ Ex 19:5-6/1Pet 2:9* We are to take creation out of the control of Satan and bring in the rule of God over creation. We have authority to overrule the activity of Satan and bring in the rule of God – *Eph 1:19-23*

Avodah and Shamah

Our workplaces are places for Avodah and Shamah – *Gen 2:15* – Work is Avodah which is the worship of God in our workplaces and places to serve humanity. Our work is also Shamah which is to bring righteousness to our workplaces and take care of what belongs to God.

This ethos for work is how we are witnesses of God where the Lord keeps us.

Living Souls

When God created us, we were created out of dust and God breathed His breath into the nostrils of man. (*Gen 2:7*). We are alive because we are a combination of matter and the Spirit of God. This is life. Matter alone is not life. Matter must engage with the Spirit of God and that is how we are alive and display the image of God.

We must keep this engagement of matter and Spirit active and thriving if we are to remain alive. If we do not, and neglect the engagement of matter with the Spirit of God then we die. This is why God gave us a commandment. (*Gen 2:16-17*)

It is in being subject to the will of God that we will be alive. Being subject to the will of God is how we engage our matter with the Spirit of God. It is also how we are in His kingdom. (*Matt 7:21*)

Free will and submission to God's will

God gave us free will in creation and also commanded the man. This seems contrary. By giving us free will and at the same time giving us a command to submit to Him, we are given the opportunity to love God. (*John 14:15*). When Adam and Eve went against the command of God they decided not to love God.

Obedience to the command of God is the exercising of our faith. Faith without obedience is not faith at all. God gave us the opportunity to exercise faith in Him by obeying His commandment. Our relationship with God is therefore triangular. **They are obedience, love and faith.** This is the bedrock of our relationship with God.

God is enthroned and we are dethroned

The whole relationship with God is a relationship where God is enthroned and we are dethroned. Enthroning God is the kingdom of God.

We could have continued in this wonderful relationship. We were in His kingdom. We had the experience of His Shalom.

Entry of sin

Sin is the rejection of God. We chose to rebel against God and we chose to enthrone ourselves in the throne of our hearts. Sin is very much a matter of the kingdom of God for we did not want to be in the kingdom of God, but chose to become the enemies of God and enemies of His kingdom.

The result of sin is death. We died in all aspects of Shalom. We died in our relationship with God. We broke our relationship with ourselves. We died in our relationship with one another. We died in our relationship with creation. We also came into the captivity of the devil, who has the power of death. We are surely dead, which is what God said would happen if we disobey God.

Groaning of Creation

Creation is groaning because man, who was to provide leadership to creation, is now a victim, prisoner and slave of the devil. The devil is executing his evil agenda against man and creation through man who is now in his control. *II Tim 2:26*. This is the BAD NEWS. This is why Jesus came to set us free from the bad news and bring us back to reconciliation with God, back to His kingdom, and back to Shalom. (*Heb 2:14-15; Col 1:19-20*)

Conclusion: Summarise the learning from this session.

Session 2

God's Plan of Redemption-1

The call of Abraham.

The Gospel was preached to Abraham (*Gal 3:8*) for in the covenant with Abraham the Lord blessed him to be a blessing to the nations. Nations refers to ethnic groups or families of the earth. The Jews consider Abraham as their father, which is true. Abraham is not only father to the Jews but to all of us. In Christ, all who believe in Christ become the seed of Abraham. (*Gal 3:26-29*) The Lord was reconciling all the nations of the world to Himself and this covenant was given to Abraham.

Christ the seed of Abraham (*Gal 3:16*)

Christ came as the seed of Abraham to reconcile all things in heaven and on earth to God through the blood shed on the cross. On the cross, Jesus died. Jesus shed His blood. Without the shedding of blood, there can be no remission of sin. (*Heb 9:22*) Jesus came to give His body to be the sacrificial lamb for our sin. (*Heb 10:4-5*). In His body there was no sin (*1 Jn 3:5*) By His broken body, Jesus has sanctified us once and for all (*Heb 10:10*).

Our sins incurred God's wrath. On the cross, Jesus took God's wrath on Himself (*Matt 27:45*).

The cost of sin, which is death, paid by Jesus on the cross

The Lord God dealt with our death problem. We are surely dead because we have a broken relationship with God, with ourselves, with one another, and with creation. This is the wages of our sin.

This cost of death has to be paid. Death has to be settled before God. This is how Jesus became our propitiation.

Death of separation from God

Our first death is that we broke our relationship with God. Jesus's relationship with the Father was broken. On the cross, at this point *Matt 27:46*, Jesus could not call God, Father. He had to call Him God, for the relationship of Father and Son was broken. Jesus was the Son of Man and also the Son of God. As the Son of Man, He identified Himself fully with us, our sin came on Him. He became sin for us and He was cut off from the Father. This is the first death that Jesus took on Himself and in doing so He reconciled us to God. (*Rom 5:10*)

Death of separation from ourselves

The second death that came on us was that we were cut off from ourselves. A law of sin and death came on us. (*Rom 7:23-24*). Jesus took this death on Himself and set us free from this law of sin and death. He brought us into a new law which is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. (*Rom 8:2-3*)

Death of separation from one another

We were separated from one another. Jesus took this middle wall of separation on Himself and made us all one. We are all one now in Christ Jesus. (*Eph 2:14-16/ Gal 3:26-29*).

Death of separation from creation

Jesus brought us from death to life and He once again seated us in the heavenlies with Christ Jesus to be co-rulers with God over His creation. (*Eph 2:5-6*). This was the first position that we had in creation. (*Gen 1:26*).

New life in Christ

Now that Jesus had completed this work on the cross. He gave us His resurrected life. He rose again so that we will live out the life of His righteousness in our flesh. (*Rom 8:4, 11*)

The core Gospel

We now have this new life in Christ Jesus. This is the Gospel or the Good News. The non-negotiable Gospel core can be seen in *1 Corinthians 15:1-4*. The Gospel core is the death of Jesus, His burial and His resurrection. To receive the Gospel we must identify with His death, burial and His resurrection. (Rom 6:3-4)

The resurrection of Jesus has also restored us back to the authority that we had in the beginning. (*Eph 1:20-23*).

Redemption and the work of the Holy Spirit

It was the Holy Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead. Through the Holy Spirit, we are restored to the wonderful place that we had in God.

- a. Justification – The righteous requirement of the law is now met in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit of God. (Rom 8:4)
- b. Sanctification – We are now made alive in our mortal bodies through His Holy Spirit who works in us. (Rom 8:11). We were dead because of the law of sin and death that was active in our members. The Law of the Spirit has set us free from the law of sin and death so that we can please God in our flesh.
- c. Adoption – Through the Holy Spirit we are made to be children of God. (Rom 8:14) We are no more in the flesh but now in the Spirit of God. We thus belong to Him. Without the Spirit of God, we are not His. (Rom 8:9)
- d. Glorification – The Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. If children then we are joint heirs with Christ. As joint heirs, we must suffer with Christ, to be glorified with Him. (Rom 8:16-17)

Conclusion: In this session, we have understood the core of the Gospel message. We must know what Jesus has done for us on the cross, His burial and His resurrection. We have also seen the work of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel.

Session 3

God's Plan of Redemption-2

Why only Jesus?

This is a question for which we must have a clear and definitive answer. There can be no ambiguity here as to why Jesus is the only way for man and creation to be reconciled with God. *1 Tim 2:3-6*. There is only one mediator between God and man and that is Jesus Christ.

The law could not make us righteous before God. The law is good. (*Rom 7:12*) but the law was powerless to enable and empower us to have victory over sin. We have, operating in us, the law of sin and death. (*Rom 7:23-24*). All of us stand guilty before God. (*Rom 3:19-20*)

Faith in Jesus has made us righteous before God. (*Acts 13:38-39/ Rom 10:4*)

Jesus did for us what we could not do for ourselves

Jesus took on flesh and came in the same flesh that Adam had before the fall so that He could be the second Adam. He had to be identified with us to be our appeasement before God. (*Heb 2:17*). The first Adam failed to win over sin, but the second Adam was tempted at all points but was victorious over sin. (*Heb 4:15*). Jesus fulfilled His Father's will and thus condemned sin in the flesh. (*Rom 8:3/1 Jn 3:5*)

Jesus became sin for us

The entire sin of the entire human race from the beginning of time to the end of time was laid on Him who knew no sin. Jesus became sin for us. He thus paid the full price of sin, which is death, on the cross. (*11 Cor 5:21*)

This is what Jesus has done for us. This work of God for our reconciliation with Him and salvation needs to be received by us.

How do we receive God's gift of Salvation?

Salvation is free, but not cheap. To receive and embrace the gift of God's salvation in Jesus Christ we must identify with His death, burial and His resurrection.

The core Gospel message

The core Gospel message is found in *1 Cor 15:1-4*. There are three parts to the core Gospel message. They are the death, burial and the resurrection of Jesus.

Identifying with the death of Jesus

To receive and embrace the gift of God's salvation, we must die with Christ. We know that Jesus died our death and so to die with Him by faith is reasonable. (*Gal 2:20*). We have understood that man's primary problem is the self. The self in us must die with Christ. (*11 Tim 2:11*). It is only when we die with Christ that we will live with Christ.

We repent of our rebellion against God and we surrender to His authority over us. This is repentance, and we surrender to have His rule over us. It is no more us, but it is Christ. He has to be our all in all. We die when we come to Christ. (*Col 3:3*). This is the conversion experience. Lordship to Christ is the first step in experiencing salvation.

Identifying with the burial of Christ

Death leads to burial. We must be buried with Christ. Once a person dies, the body of the dead person is buried. Once death and burial have happened that is the end of the person. We carry much baggage

that pertains to the old Adamic nature. All of these need to be buried when we come to Christ. (*Rom 6:3-4*)

Identifying with the resurrection of Jesus

We now rise with Christ. The life that we now live is not ours but Christ's. He lives in us and through us. The Holy Spirit raised Jesus from the dead. The Holy Spirit is now alive in us. (*Rom 8:10-11*). This life in the Spirit of God is righteousness before God. We are not only clothed with the righteousness of Christ but we are also enabled to live the righteous life of Christ in our mortal bodies through the Holy Spirit.

Baptism

The Great Commission mandates us to baptise people. We enable people to go through the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. This is the significance of baptism. This is how we make people to be disciples of Christ. Yes, it is the work of the Holy Spirit, but we are instruments in the hands of the Holy Spirit.

Discipled into the church

Jesus defeated the devil and his forces on the cross. The devil was holding the document of the law against us and proving us to be guilty before God. Jesus took the requirement of the law and nailed it to the cross. When we repent and receive by faith what Jesus has done for us on the cross, we receive forgiveness and reconciliation with God. The accusation of the devil against us is thrown out. (*Col 2:14-15*)

The devil has not only been defeated on the cross, he has been put to open shame, and made a public spectacle. This is the sweet victory that Jesus has given for us on the cross.

The church must bring the kingdom rule of God here on earth

The church is now given the mandate to bring the kingdom rule of God here on earth. The gates, which represent authority, of hades, cannot prevail against the church. The keys of the kingdom of God have been entrusted with the church. What we bind on earth will be bound in heaven and what we loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. (*Matt 16:18-19*).

If the devil is executing his authority now on earth it implies that we, the church, are not binding the powers of darkness, and we are not bringing in the kingdom rule of God here on earth. (*Eph 3:10/ II Cor 10:3-6*)

The entire authority of Jesus has been given to the church. We are the fullness of Christ. (*Eph 1:20-23*). We are made to sit with Christ not only in this age but also in that which is to come. (*Eph 2:5-7*). Sitting with Christ indicates rule and authority. We are being prepared now to rule with Christ for eternity as His church.

The Great Commission is about setting up the authority of Jesus. It is a commission of His kingdom by making disciples of all nations. (*Matt 24:14*)

Conclusion

In this session, we have seen that the scope of the Gospel is to bring His kingdom here on earth.

Session 4

The Gospel Mandate

The Gospel mandate is given for us in the Great Commission in *Matt 28:18-20*. We have also considered the Creation Mandate in *Gen 1:28*. Let us look at the comparison and contrast between the two. We will see how both are closely aligned. They also enrich each other so that our mandate and the way we are to fulfil the mandate become clear and exciting.

Comparison and contrast between the Creation Mandate and the Great Commission	
Creation Mandate	Great Commission
<i>Gen 1:28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."</i>	<i>Mat 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. (19) Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.</i>
God blessed them	Lo, I am with you always, <i>even to the end of the age</i> . Amen.
God said...	Jesus came and spoke to them, saying...
Be fruitful	Go therefore ... all the nations
Multiply	Make disciples
Fill the earth	All the nations (people groups)
Subdue it	Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you
Have dominion	All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth...
...	Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

The unique part of the Great Commission that is not seen in the Creation Mandate is the core Gospel message which is baptism. Baptism is to die with Christ, be buried, and rise with Christ. This is unique because, in the Creation Mandate, man had not fallen into sin. Whereas, the Great Commission is for the disciples of Christ, who have been reconciled with God through the blood of Christ.

When we combine the Creation Mandate with the Great Commission we see such a rich and powerful understanding of the Mandate for the Gospel.

Where and how do we fulfil the Gospel Mandate?

1. The gathered and scattered church

We are all familiar with the gathered church. Worship, Word, Prayer and Nurture happen in the gathered church. God's Mission is the fifth part of the church. It is only in mission and in the light of mission that the church is understood.

What are the dimensions of the scattered church?

Prophetical process

The church must be the prophetical voice of God in the community. We must be engaged in all that is happening in the culture and society and bring the light of the knowledge of God in these spheres. We

cannot disengage ourselves from the life of society and people around us and expect to fulfil the Gospel Mandate.

Personal process

Our life must communicate the character of Christ. There can be no compromise with the ways of the world. So, we are distinct yet engaged with the world.

Professional process

We must be people of excellence in our places of work and professions. We do all things for the glory of God and His name. There can be no excuse for sloppy and half-hearted performance for we serve the Lord Christ.

Public process

We must actively participate in nation-building.

2. The eight spheres of Influence

These are 1. Religion 2. Family 3. Education 4. Government 5. Internet and Media 6. Arts, Entertainment and Sports 7. Economics and Business 8. Neighbourhood (Integral Mission)

3. Public Theology

Public theology considers worship at the core of our lives. From the core of worship, we influence and expand in four directions. The areas are 1. Nurture which is family 2. Imagination which is art 3. Justice which is Government 4. Opportunity which is economics.

The Creation Mandate and the Great Commission is our basic road map to fulfilling the Gospel Mandate

Role of the Holy Spirit in fulfilling the Gospel Mandate

It is the Holy Spirit who enables us to fulfil the Gospel Mandate (*Acts 1:8*) The kingdom of God is in the fullness of the Holy Spirit. (*Rom 14:17*) The church is empowered through the Holy Spirit to bring the rule of Christ and bring others into the Kingdom of God (*Eph 1:18-23*)

Barriers to fulfilling the Gospel Mandate

After having a good understanding of the Gospel Mandate, let us look within and identify the barriers that come in the way for us to fulfil the Gospel Mandate.

Overcoming the barriers

Set in place an action plan of how to overcome the barriers and fulfil the Gospel Mandate.

Conclusion:

Feedback on the whole course.