



CHRIST'S COMMISSION FELLOWSHIP

Los Angeles

Dgroup Discussion Guide
June 14, 2014

Word:

Scripture: Genesis 3:1-15; 20-24

Breaking the Fall: A Tale of Two Fathers

The Villain:

He is known as Lucifer, the deceiver, the father of lies, the destroyer, and the father of the fallen. In Scripture, Lucifer is described as being immensely beautiful and that is why in everything he uses to tempt us are all enticing. In Genesis 3:6, this is what he used to tempt Eve – Eve saw that the fruit was a delight to the eyes and was good to eat. . . and she desired to become wise. This shows our true nature as human beings, we are easily drawn to anything that will satisfy us, things that appeal to us, things that we see are attractive – this is part of our vanity, part of our self pride, which is our downfall. This too was Lucifer's source of downfall.

The Father of Lies

Jesus says ***"Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. ⁴⁴ You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies."*** (John 8:43-44) This is Satan, the father of lies. Even in the Old Testament, we see that he used deceit to instill doubt in Eve. He goes on to tell Eve ***"surely you will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."*** Here we can see Satan injecting his true desires, which is to be like God, in order to tempt us. All his lies are designed to do just one thing – which is to destroy.

The Destroyer

He aims to destroy – destroy what? REALATIONSHIPS. This is what he did in the Garden of Eden – destroy the relationship between God and man. In Genesis 3:8-13 ***"And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."*** This is the Destroyer's handiwork – he pits us against each other and in the process destroys the relationship that has been built. In this particular passage, we see that he did not only break our relationship with others, but he broke our relationship with God. It was at this moment that he severed our ties from the most important relationship of our existence.

Before the sin, man walked alongside God. We could hear His voice. When God said that we would die, he did not mean it literally – but the moment Adam and Eve took a bite from that fruit, their hearts died. That was the same moment we lost our first love. Instead of being naturally draw near to God, our hearts became callous and we developed this new affection for the things of this world. That was this villian's masterplan, his main agenda --- to keep us separated from God's intended love for us, to keep our hearts dead. 1 John 2:16 says ***"for all that is in the world – the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and the pride of life – is not from the Father but is from the world."***

But this is not where the story ends. This story is not about fear or defeat. This is a story of victory, a better and more perfect masterplan. The point of looking at the character of the villain is not to understand how sinister or terrible he is but rather it is being told for us to better understand our hero – to see how beautiful, how powerful, how gracious, how merciful our God is.

The Hero

If the villain clothed himself with pride, our hero was draped in humility. Philippians 2:6-11 ***who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.***

When Jesus died on the cross, He re-defined what winning meant. It may have been an extremely painful process, but it made a lot of sense. Because if you are fighting for something, it usually is painful – and He was fighting for something. Something very important and something very close to His heart. And that moment He was receiving all that lashes, when He was carrying that cross --- He was fighting for us.

The villain arms himself with lies, but Jesus says ***“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also. From now on you do know Him and have seen Him.”***

The villain came to divide and destroy. Jesus Christ came to rebuild and restore. Romans 5:10-11 ***For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.*** Clearly, this was God’s masterplan in our rescue. Jesus is the hero.

Excerpt from the Story of *The Terrible Lie*, Jesus Storybook Bible

His children hadn't just broken the one rule; they had broken God's heart. They had broken their wonderful relationship with Him. And now he knew everything else would break. God's creation would start to unravel, and come undone. And go wrong. From now on everything would die – even though it was all supposed to last forever.

You see, sin had come into God's perfect world. And it would never leave. God's children would always be running away from Him and hiding in the dark. Their hearts would break now, and never work properly again.

God couldn't let His children forever; not in such pain, not without Him. There was only one way to protect them. “You will have to leave the garden now”, God told His children, His eyes filling with tears. “This is no longer your true home, it's not the place for you anymore.” But before they left the garden, God made clothes for his children, to cover them. He gently clothed them and then sent them away on a long, long journey – out of the garden, out of their home.

Well, in another story, it would all be over and that would have been “The End”. But not in this story.

God loved his children too much to let the story end there. Even though He knew He would suffer, God had a plan – a magnificent dream. One day, He would get His children back. One day, He would make the world perfect again. And one day, He would wipe away every tear from their eyes.

You see no matter what, in spite of everything, God would love His children with a never stopping, never giving up, unbreakable, always and forever love. And although they would forget Him, and run from Him, deep in their hearts, God's children would miss Him always, and long for Him. . . lost children yearning for their home.

Before they left the garden, God whispered a promise to Adam and Eve; "it will not always be so. I will come to rescue. And when I do, I'm going to do battle against the snake. I'll get rid of the sin and the dark and the sadness you let in here. I'm coming back for you."

And he would. One day, God Himself would come.

And that is what exactly happened. Jesus Christ came to battle the darkness, the sadness. He came to battle sin. And He won. And now we can all claim to be children of God through Jesus Christ.

But the sad truth is that in our everyday life we insist to live as if we were the heroes and God was just our sidekick. We go about our day sprinkling a dash of Jesus everywhere we see fit. We insist on doing the heavy lifting. . . forgetting that all that has already been done. We often think that we can take care of our own problems, not bothering to bring them to God.

So where are we in this story?

We are not the heroes. Far from it. We are Adam and Eve. We are in fact, the damsels in distress. . . the one needing the rescuing. It was so easy for Adam and Eve to choose to partake of the fruit. . . just as it is so easy for us to choose the world over Jesus. Is that not an accurate picture of how we are now?

When we first choose to disobey, our hearts die . . . our intended affection for God dies. . . and our affections for this world grow stronger. And yet we are never truly satisfied with what we have.

Then just like Adam and Eve, we realize that we are naked – and try to cover up our nakedness with so many things . . . material wealth, power, position. In the story, Adam and Eve sew fig leaves to cover themselves up, in the same way that we try to save ourselves on our own efforts. This desire to save ourselves then becomes natural for us. We turn to self-salvation projects in order to find fulfillment in covering our guilt and shame thinking that this makes us more presentable, more acceptable.

It was God who found a way to clothe Adam and Eve. . . and to do that an animal had to shed his blood, so that they could have his skin for garments. Later on, the Father would have to shed blood of another innocent lamb again in order to cover our guilt and shame. John 1:29 says **"the next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world."**

We are not the heroes of our story. We can't save ourselves, and we sure can't save others. We are incapable of fulfilling the demands of sin. We are incapable of covering up our shame, of redeeming ourselves. We need to realize that we need an unfailing hero to defeat an unrelenting villain.

Falling up

The villain uses beauty to hide his empty promises, but our Hero's humility bears true power. The villain feed us nothing but lies, but our Hero declares truth in our lives. The villain came to divide and destroy, the Father sent His Son to rebuild and restore us to Himself. The Bible in essence is a story of a loving Father fighting for and winning back His rebelling children. And that is the purpose of grace – to win back our hardened and lost hearts. It reminds us that more than anything this world can offer us, Christ is more beautiful and more valuable. . . and infinitely more desirable.

Works: Journaling task

Go back to the story excerpt. . . . what part of the story opened your eyes? Go back to the day you first experienced the impact of God's mercy and love in your life – how did you feel then? What were the things you told yourself then?

Today, do you continue to feel the same way. Is the impact of God's love and mercy in your life increasing or diminishing? Is His presence in your life manifesting or being covered up? Are you living a victorious life or a defeated life?

Remind yourself: Who is your greatest hero? What has he done in your life?