

"You are God's Favored/Favorite"

God's Story from CREATION to NEW CREATION

Sara Wildermuth

Ice Breaker: What does your family like to do to fill up spare time?

In Genesis 1 and 2, our loving God created a perfect world and every living thing in it. He made humanity in His image and likeness to have a loving relationship with Him. But in Chapter 3 of Genesis, the first couple, Adam and Eve, questioned God's authority as the response to the serpent's deceitful question, "Did God really say?" They rejected God's Word and Him as the source of life. This resulted in sin, darkness and separation from God. (Genesis 3:1-6)

Genesis 3:1-6 *1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" 2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, 3 but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.' " 4 "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. 5 "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.*

1. How do we hear this voice of deception today? What is the result of rejecting God and his Word for us today? (Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23a)

Romans 3:23 *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*

Romans 6:23a *For the wages of sin is death,*

Our God is a relational God. This relationship was broken when Adam and Eve rebelled against God in the garden of Eden. Immediately God began working out his big picture to restore this relationship.

Genesis 3:15 *And I will put enmity (hostility) between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers (her Seed); he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”*

2. What do you think is the meaning of this verse, and what does it indicate about the “Big Picture” of God’s plan? (Hebrews 2:14-15, Colossians 2:15, 1 John 3:8)

Hebrews 2:14-15 *14Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.*

Colossians 2:15 *And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.*

1 John 3:8 *The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.*

Luke 1:26-45 *26 In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. 28 The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.” 29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30 But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. 31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.” 34 “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?” 35 The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called [b] the Son of God. 36 Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. 37 For no word from God will ever fail.” 38 “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.*

From the Sermon: We may think God favored Mary because of something she had done to earn it. But God’s grace is a GIFT. He extends His Favor. **You’re God’s favorite.**

3. How has God shown his favor (grace) to us? (Colossians 1:13-14, Romans 3:24-26)

Colossians 1:13-14 *13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

Romans 3:24-26 *24 and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. 25 God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed*

beforehand unpunished—26 he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

4. Mary’s reaction to the news brought by the angel was to say, “I am the Lord’s servant, may your word to me be fulfilled.” How is Mary’s response different than Adam and Eve’s response to God’s Word?

5. How can we cultivate in ourselves this spirit of obedience and willing cooperation with God’s plan, when we do not see the big picture? (2 Corinthians 5:7)

2 Corinthians 5:7 *For we live by faith, not by sight.*

6. What do you think Deuteronomy 29:29 and 1 Corinthians 13:12 indicate about our ability to see the big picture of God?

Deuteronomy 29:29 *The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.*

1 Corinthians 13:12 *For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.*

7. Sara spoke of the pieces of a puzzle and lack of ability to see the big picture. In puzzles, the box top helps us see the big picture. How does the Gospel and the Bible help us to see God’s Big Picture? How do they help us see how we fit into the Big Picture of God?

8. Sara quoted Luke 2:19,51, “Mary treasured up these things in her heart” Why do you suppose Mary did this; what do you suppose was her purpose?

9. What are God moments that you are treasuring up in your heart? What do they indicate for the Big Picture of God?

10. What are you doing to improve your ability to share the gospel (God’s Big Picture) with others? (1 Peter 3:15)

1 Peter 3:15 *But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,*

11. In Luke 1:34 Mary asked the angel, “how could this be?” What are the questions you have for God regarding what He is doing in your life? In faith, how can we look for the answers to these questions?

12. God was able to use Mary because she was willing to step out in faith and trust God when His plan for her was revealed. How can we be ready to be used by God when He reveals His next step of faith for us?