THE BIBLICAL THEME OF SHALOM

SHALOM STORY

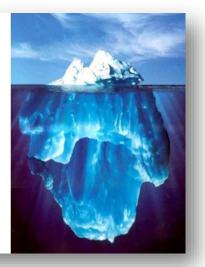
Session 1

A note on the presentation slides: All of the art that you will see in the slides has been compiled by my students over the past two decades as they have engaged with this content. I have included them here to hopefully enhance your learning process as well.

These slides will be displayed throughout the video and are included here to aid your note taking and avoid having to scribble down everything you see on the screen.

"Peace" is one of the most important Biblical terms.

- OT shalom (noun), shalem (verb)
- · Adjective & adverb forms
- NT eirene
- 550 x Peace = 550 x Love



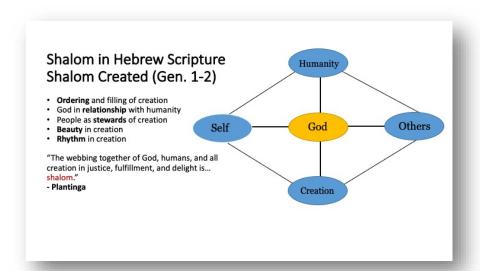
Do We Remember?

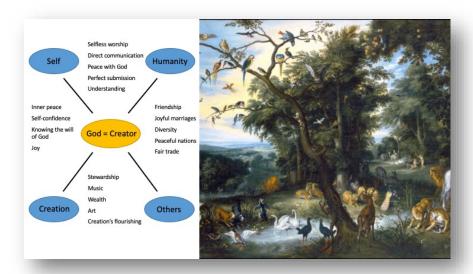
"The world is changed. I feel it in the air. I feel it in the earth. I smell it in the air. Much that once was, is lost, for none now live who remember is "

- Galadriel, Lord of the Rings

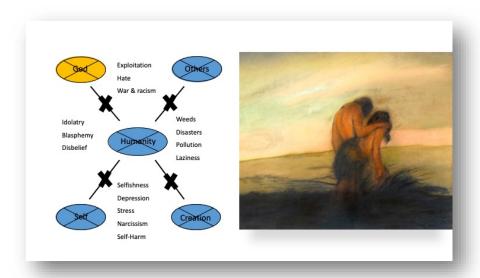
(see John Franke's preface to *Generous* Orthodoxy by Brian McClaren, p. 9)









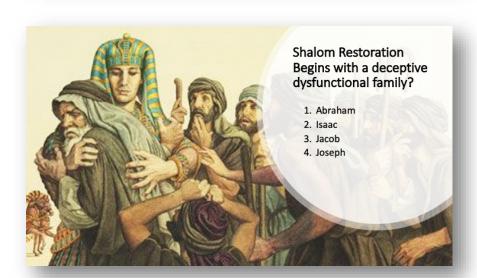


God's Intervention to Restore Shalom

"From the day our first parents walked out of the garden, estranged from God, each other, and the earth itself, God has been at work redeeming the fallen creation, its people, and its social systems. God's goal is to restore us to our original identity, as children reflecting God's image, and to our original vocation as productive stewards living together in just and peaceful relationships."

- Bryant Myers, Walking With the Poor, p. 42





God Intervenes to Save the Nation

- Moses leads Israel out of Egyptian slavery (Ex. 1-14)
- God sets up laws to embed shalom in the community (Ex. 20 Deut.)





God Establishes the Nation of Israel in Their Own Land

People must care for the land and each other

King as Steward of God's Shalom

- People reject God by asking for King
 King fails in his responsibility to keep *shalom*Nation splits over taxation and slavery





Shalom in Christian Scripture

- Jesus, God incarnate, "pitches his tent" with us
 Matthew, Mark, Luke, John
- · Jesus restores order through miracles (Mark)
- Jesus restores inclusive relationships (Luke)
- Jesus restores stewardship (Matthew)
- Jesus restores beauty (John's grace and truth)
- · Jesus restores rhythm (Sabbath)

Acts and Paul: Living Jesus' Shalom

- Word (kerygma), community (koinonia), and service (diakonia)
- · Relational barriers of race, class, and gender transcended
- God's people engage politics, philosophy, and marketplace



Revelation

- · Shalom in persecution
- Empire vs. church's witness to Jesus
- 7 worship services praising God as creator, redeemer, re-creator of shalom: "Who you
- Christian courage to persevere (hupomone)
- · Final vision of creation's shalom restoration





Summary of Biblical Shalom

- Creation God creates a flourishing state of shalom
- Fall Creation experiences a holistic and lasting perversion of shalom
- Redemption Christ and his followers initiate the incarnational work of shalom
- Restoration Christ returns to restore shalom

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INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

Use the prompts below to guide your personal reflection. You don't have to work through *all* of them, they just starting points. This first presentation provides an overview of where we are going as we move quickly across the biblical landscape. There are four themes that weave in and out of the 66 books of the Bible. They are:

- 1. Creation
- 2. Fall, brokenness, sin & injustice
- 3. Redemption & salvation
- 4. Restoration & healing

Do not view these themes as sequential. Rather, each one is a necessary thread in the biblical story of shalom. It is important to remember that the Bible is a narrative of God's presence and work in the entire created order. Nothing in the universe lies outside of God's creative and redemptive activity.

Pay attention to your responses to the content and the visuals the presentation slides. Also monitor your reflections on ways that the biblical story connects with your story. The following questions can be used to guide your biblical, theological and personal reflections:

- 1. I love the part about...
- 2. This part of the presentation makes me think about...
- 3. This makes me wonder about...
- 4. This makes me feel like...

- 5. I especially liked this part because...
- 6. Now that I know more about shalom, I think I will do...
- 7. Because of these scriptures, maybe I need to change my thinking about...
- 8. I want to know more about...
- 9. After seeing this presentation, I need to speak to...about...

There are many other responses that you may have as a result of each presentation. Feel free to add to this list and share with others in your group.

SUGGESTED READING

We owe a deep debt of gratitude to those who have gone before us as followers of Jesus. Some have given everything, including their lives, in their service to God and God's people as they have lived gospel-centered shalom. One of the people who has inspired me is Dietrich Bonhoeffer. He spent the troubled years during the rise of the Third Reich in Germany, and the propagation of the worst kinds of evil by the Nazis, living between the vision of God's shalom in Jesus and the unimaginable brokenness he saw daily in the world. He spent the last two years of his life in Nazi prisons before he was executed less than a month before World War II ended.

During his imprisonment, he wrote extensively, and those writings are compiled in a book entitled *Letters and Papers from Prison*. One of the selections in that volume is a poem entitled "Who Am I." Go online to find that poem and read it several times before the group gathers. In that poem, Bonhoeffer connects God's story and the theme of shalom with his own story. I think you will find his reflections helpful as we begin our studies together on shalom.

PSALM & PRAYER PARTNER

Studying the scriptures is never an exercise in pure theology. The biblical story also encompasses our stories. I do not mean that each of us is mentioned in the Bible, because we are not. What I do mean is that the biblical story is so honest in its description of the way our world is and how we navigate in this world, that surely our minds and hearts will make connections with some parts of the biblical story.

In order to enhance those connections, I will include at least one Psalm in each study guide in order to prompt personal reflection in the biblical material. To connect your life with the overview in this first presentation, I am suggesting that you take the next 7-10 days and daily pray, read, reflect and discuss **Psalm 139**.

This prayer reminds us of God's intimate awareness of each of our stories. Read the Psalm in several different translations or paraphrases, and allow your memory to connect your life story to the four big themes: creation, fall, redemption and restoration. Journal your personal reflections using the questions provided above. As appropriate, share some your thoughts and feeling with your prayer partner and with your small group when you gather.

GROUP DISCUSSION

As you gather, make sure you take time to develop personal connections. Gathering over a meal provides both the setting and the leisure for the group experience to be transformative over the next several weeks. Use your initial gathering to explore these prompts:

- 1. After seeing this overview of the biblical story of shalom, I am looking forward to...
- 2. The theme that most intrigues me here at the beginning is...
- 3. Praying through Psalm 139 helps me realize that God...
- 4. In this group I am eager to explore how [pick one of the themes] applies to our church.
- 5. How can we together in this small group & church community live out shalom in such a way that people in our community will see Jesus?
- 6. What is our responsibility to be the incarnation of Jesus' grace, truth and light in our world? How do we do that together?

HOMEWORK

Before viewing session 2, Shalom Created, read Genesis 1-2 several times.