

MAN'S NEED – GOD'S FUTURE INTENTIONS

Overview statement:

Sinful man's condition is hopeless without God. God's compassionate and glorious intentions for broken man include forgiveness of sin, restoration of the relationship between man and God and restoration of the broken creation. He has made a perfect provision for our redemption and has promised a wonderful future at Jesus' return.

Main ideas:

1. Sin has broken the relationship between man and God and man and creation.
2. Sinful man is hopeless and headed for God's wrath.
3. Through Jesus' death man can be forgiven, and a way is opened to restore man's relationship with both God and creation.
4. God promises complete renewal of all things in the future – at Jesus' second coming.
5. We are to participate in the restoration of what has been broken and proclaim this good news until Jesus returns.

Outcomes:

1. Now:
 - a. To grasp and express the main ideas of the lesson in their own words.
 - b. To plan and carry out one new step in response to a main idea of this lesson to participate in the restoration of what has been broken by man's disobedience/sin.
2. Beyond:
 - a. To recognize that it is the plan of God for man to participate with Him in restoring broken relationships between man and God, between man and man and between man and creation until He returns.
 - b. To work as leaders to communicate God's intentions to reconcile all of the broken relationships, and to activate believers to participate with God in this purpose until the return of Christ.

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Participant Outline

I. Review

II. Introduction

III. Key Verse: Romans 1:21

- A. What changed God's evaluation of "very good" (Genesis 1:31) to his grief over making man (Genesis 6:6)?

- B. Which of the two evaluations do you think reflects the human condition today?

IV. What do these passages say about man's condition without God?

- Genesis 6:5

- Romans 3:23

- Ephesians 2:1

- Romans 2:5

V. What is God's attitude toward broken man?

- John 3:17
- Philippians 2:5-11

VI. What are God's intentions for the future?

- Isaiah 11:4-9
- Isaiah 61:1-4
- John 14:1-4
- Romans 8:21
- Revelations 21:1-4
- Matthew 19:28

VII. Key Idea Reinforcement

VIII. Application

A. Personal Reflection

- What brokenness can you see around you and your community?

- How well do we, as individuals and in our churches, share the good news of God's future intentions with those who are hurting in our community?

- How can you represent God's intentions for the future with these people?

- What relevance does this good news have for those who are suffering now?

B. Commitment and Plan - Make a specific action plan to help someone in your community in one of these areas to see God's future intentions by serving them.

- New
- Realistic
- Specific (What, Who, When, Where)
- Shared

<i>Circle area</i>	
Wisdom	What:
Physical	Who:
Spiritual	When:
Social	Where:

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Lesson Narrative

Man's Brokenness

What examples of human brokenness have you seen, heard about, or encountered this week? What physical problems have you seen? What sickness, death, or poverty? What spiritual problems have you encountered? What evil, idolatry, or corruption? What social problems have you noticed? What broken personal relationships? What social injustices? What else? Evidence of brokenness is everywhere! When we read the newspaper, watch television, or look at what is happening around us, we see many, many example of brokenness.

Romans 1:21 helps us understand the brokenness of the human race:

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

This passage paints a very bleak picture of broken people. This is quite a different view than we saw in Genesis 1:31, when God looked at His creation and said that it was very good. But a few chapters later, in Genesis 6:6, the Bible tells us that God *grieved* that He had ever made us! What changed God's evaluation? It was disobedience—the human race was not living as God intended.

This is true—and not only in Genesis. All through the Bible, the people of God's Creation have rebelled against His ways. If we are honest with ourselves, we know that this is the condition of our world today. We are disobedient. We do not live as God designed and calls us to live.

Man's condition without God is bleak. We see that as we look around us or read the news—and Scripture confirms it. Genesis 6:5 tells us that all of the inclinations of the human hearts are evil. Romans 3:23 reminds us that all of us have sinned and fallen short of God's will. Ephesians 2:1 says we were dead—hopeless in our trespasses and sins without God. Finally, Romans 2:5 tells us that, without God's intervention, we would be headed for His wrath.

When teaching this lesson, we look at these Scriptures and then ask the participants to divide into small groups. The small groups each take a piece of paper, and draw a picture on the bottom half representing man's condition without God. We encourage them to think creatively. We must fully understand the broken nature of the human race. How would you illustrate man's broken condition without God?

Yes, mankind's condition without God is desperately broken—but God does not want us to remain broken. In John 3:17, we learn that Jesus came to save, not to condemn broken people. Philippians 2:5-11 reminds us that Christ was a servant who willingly emptied Himself and came to die on behalf of broken people. Our God is amazing. He has a plan to redeem our brokenness. This is definitely good news for all of mankind.

God's Intentions for the Future

Scripture also affirms that God has wonderful plans for the future. In Isaiah 11:4-9, there is a vision of peace and plenty. In Isaiah 61:1-4, we are told that we are going to participate in the restoration of creation. In John 14:1-4, we hear that Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us. Romans 8:21 assures us that all creation is going to be liberated from the bondage that occurred in the Fall. In Revelations 21:1-4,

we read of a beautiful future—with no death, no tears, and no pain. Finally, Matthew 19:28 tells us that Jesus will return as King. God has a plan for the future, and it is better than we could imagine!

When teaching this lesson, after we have looked at these Scriptures, the participants are asked to return to their small groups to illustrate what they have seen in scripture regarding God's plan for the future. Returning to the paper with the first drawing, on the top half of the paper, participants draw another illustration to represent what these verses say about God's intentions for the future. What would you draw? Many groups have produced intricate illustrations to depict God's intentions for the future. One simple illustration for this a three-dimensional oval, containing these words that describe God's plan for the future—No Death, Peace, Plenty, and God Lives with Us.

These completed illustrations highlight the striking contrast between man's broken condition without God and God's wonderful intentions for the future. In our broken condition, every inclination of man's heart is evil, all have sinned and come short of God's will. Man, without God, is hopeless. In fact, unrepentant man is headed for God's wrath.

But . . . God sent Jesus to save us, not to condemn us. There will be peace and plenty. We will participate in the restoration of all that is broken. Jesus is preparing a place for us. All creation will one day be completely liberated from its brokenness. God not only loves the people He created, but His future intentions include the healing of all creation. His now-broken creation will one day be fully liberated from its bondage, and Romans 8:19-20 tells us that this liberation will be tied to the "glorious freedom" of the children of God. There will be no death, pain, or tears. Jesus will return as King of Kings! The nations will see, abide by, and enjoy the blessings of God's glory. Revelations 21:24 tells us that "the nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it." God's agenda encompasses the complete healing of broken people and the broken creation, including nations!

Is this good news? Yes, it is wonderful news! But what we do with this good news is of utmost importance. We can live under the dark cloud of brokenness and wait for future deliverance—or we can participate in God's vision for the future.

Here is a story to illustrate what this means. A few years ago, Bob Moffitt was visiting in Lima, Peru. He met a young man named Rudy. Rudy had recently become a believer, and his life had been radically transformed. Rudy was a middle-class young man who had compassion for the poor, and he wanted desperately to share this good news of the Gospel with them.

He decided to do something so one day He got on a bus and rode to the slums at the edge of Lima, carrying a pocket filled with tracts. He got off the bus and walked up to the first young man he saw. Rudy said, "Hello, I'm Rudy. What is your name?" The man replied, "I'm Juan." Rudy asked, "What are you doing here?" Juan said: "I'm unemployed. I don't have a job. I'm hungry. I've got all kinds of problems." Rudy took a tract out of his pocket and said, "Here! This tract will tell you about a solution to your problems." The young man said, "I don't need your tract. I know what it talks about. It talks about Jesus. I don't need your Jesus!" Rudy replied, "But Jesus can solve your problems! He wants you to be with Him for all of eternity." Juan said, "I need bread now." Rudy told Juan, "Jesus *is* the bread of life! Read this tract. It will really help you." Finally, Juan said, "I want to show you what I think of your Jesus." He took the tract, he ripped it up in little pieces, and he put it in his mouth. While a stunned Rudy watched, Juan slowly chewed the tract and swallowed it. He told Rudy, "I told you! I don't need your Jesus. I need bread!"

As Rudy told Bob this story, tears were streaming down his face. He said, "I realized I could never tell the poor about Jesus unless I could also take bread." So Rudy organized his friends, and they started a bakery. They sold bread. With their profits, they took bread to the slums. They gave bread away and told the

people about Jesus. I think Juan has a message that many of us need to hear. The world is broken, very broken. And the broken people are saying, “I know you have good news for the future—but isn’t there any good news for me, now?”

Yes, there is! Sin interrupted God’s good intentions for the world, but God’s plan is to fully reestablish His intentions. Future healing is yet to come, but there is also reason to offer hope for substantial healing and restoration in the present. God calls His people to be a present expression of the future reign of Christ. Full restoration will follow Christ’s return—but now—God’s people are charged with the responsibility to carry out His will here “on earth as it is in heaven”—to extend His reign on earth and “occupy” the territory¹ until He returns.

God has given His people the opportunity to participate in the grandest purpose in history. He allows us to be stewards. Our actions impact eternity. Nothing we do in accordance with His will is insignificant. The widow who gave her two coins at the temple never imagined the 2000-year impact her gift would have. We, too, make an impact that will reach into future generations, far beyond what we can know or see at this time. If the people of our churches could understand the relationship between their lives and the wonderful intentions God has for mankind—both in the present and the future—they would see that there is no greater cause for which they could live or die.²

By Bob Moffitt, Harvest Foundation
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¹ Luke 19:13 KJV

² Several remarks in this narrative have been taken directly from *If Jesus Were Mayor*, also written by Bob Moffitt. Used by permission.

Suggested Resources:

Harvest Website www.harvestfoundation.org Sections: ??

Disciple Nations Alliance online course: www.disciplenations.org/resources/course. Section: Wholistic Ministry

If Jesus Were Mayor, Bob Moffitt and Karla Tesch, Chapter 5 pp. 31-34; 75-86.

On Earth?

Background papers?