



## THORNS AND THISTLES

Week Two



### Look Back

Would anyone like to share about how God showed up in the last week?

### Read Along

*Genesis 3:8-19*

### Head, Heart, & Hands

The old testament is always pointing to Jesus. In this text it is describing both sin and the redemption of sin.

It is worth noting, that there are both vertical and horizontal aspects to sin:

- Vertical: Sin is putting yourself in the place of God. The cost of which is separation from God.
- Horizontal: Sin is justifying yourself at the expense of others. The cost of which is selfishness/blame: your life to enhance mine rather than servanthood: my life to enhance yours.

Here in Genesis 3 we see the earth cursed because of humanity's lack of trust in God and disastrous events are set into motion. The effects of this sin go far beyond human relationship with God and one another; they impact the entirety of the globe, as well. Creation, perfectly designed by God, goes from a lush paradise to a 'cursed ground' that will now produce thorns and thistles.

**Genesis 3:17:** *The ground is cursed because of you. You will eat from it by means of painful labor all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. You will eat bread by the sweat of your brow until you return to the ground, since you were taken from it. For you are dust, and you will return to dust.*

One author's perspective is worth pondering together: 'It's interesting God speaks of thorns and thistles when He's describing the curse to Adam. God could have chosen to reveal the damaging effects hurricanes and earthquakes would now have on the world or foretold droughts and pandemics. Instead, God decides to focus on three things: thorns, thistles, and sweat.'

We see that the earth is cursed because of humanity's lack of trust in God. We also know that at the heart of the gospel is the reversal of the Fall. In Christ's life, death, and resurrection all things are restored to the right order. We see again the pattern from Genesis 1 and 2; out of nothing God creates order which offers both form and function. Order | | Disorder | | Order

- In what ways does the imagery of thorns, thistles, and sweat connect to Jesus' journey to the cross? Jesus' sweat falls like drops of blood hitting the ground (see Luke 22:44); a crown of thorns is placed on Jesus' head (Matthew 27:29).

Take in the weight of this image. Before Jesus hangs on a cross to absorb the wrath of God, the curse literally hangs on His head as thorns and drips from His body as blood-soaked sweat.

The thorns, thistles, and sweat we endure in this life are redeemed by our Savior.

- Where in your life are you experiencing the painful toil and ground (or circumstances) that are creating thorns, thistles, and sweat for you?

Thankfully, we now live on the other side of the cross where Jesus still wears a crown, but one that is no longer a symbol of the curse. Jesus is now crowned with glory and honor because of His suffering, having tasted death for everyone who puts their trust in Him (Hebrews 2:9).

Jesus once wore your curse; you now wear His righteousness. Because of this, a resurrected world, one without thorns, awaits.

### **Growing in Your Relationship with God**

- Living in the light of Jesus' gift of life, how might you express your gratitude to God this week?

### **Growing in Your Relationship with Others**

- We are people of hope; how will the good news of Jesus impact your conversations with others this week?