

Gospel in Chairs A

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and humankind. God loved us, and wanted to be in relationship with us. But love cannot be forced, so God gave us the choice to return that love or not. In our limited worldview, we turned away from God, and chose sin and separation from God. We chose to turn our backs on God.

And God, who is perfect and holy and *merciful and just*, *could not bear to look upon our sin, and so turned from us.*

When Adam and Eve ate the Forbidden Fruit, *God expelled them from the garden and made them mortal.*

When Cain killed Abel, *God put a mark on Cain so everyone would know he was a murderer.*

When the Israelites grumbled against God in the wilderness after being rescued in Egypt, *God said not one member of that generation would live to see the Promised Land.*

But God still desired to have a relationship with us.

So God sent prophets to warn Israel of their impending doom.

God sent armies to conquer and subjugate and punish Israel.

And finally, God came to us in Jesus Christ, to walk with us and demonstrate what a perfect relationship between God and humanity would look like.

But we, in our limited worldview, rejected Jesus.

We rejected the idea that we were all equal before God, because clearly someone had to be more favoured.

We rejected the idea that God didn't care what the relationship with us looked like, because we couldn't grasp the idea that arbitrary rules were unnecessary.

We rejected the idea that God loved us, because we had seen too much evidence to the contrary.

And so, we crucified Jesus on the cross.

And in that event, *the Son took on our sin and the Father poured out the wrath that was meant for us upon Jesus, who died and yet rose.*

In doing this, Jesus was able to put the wrath aside, changing not only our hearts but the Father's heart as well.

So now, we limited and imperfect humans, still marked by sin, can turn to look at God, and God, who is holy and perfect and merciful and just, can turn to look at us as well. And we can be cleansed and welcomed into heaven.

And this is the Good News in Chairs.

Gospel in Chairs B

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and humankind. God loved us, and wanted to be in relationship with us. But love cannot be forced, so God gave us the choice to return that love or not. In our limited worldview, we turned away from God, and chose sin and separation from God. We chose to turn our backs on God.

And God, who is perfect and holy and *just and merciful*, followed us because God could not bear that we were separated.

When Adam and Eve ate the Forbidden Fruit, *God came searching for them in the garden.*

When Cain killed Abel, *God promised to protect Cain from anyone who tried to harm him.*

When the Israelites grumbled against God in the wilderness after being rescued in Egypt, *God sent quails and manna until they got to the Promised Land.*

You see, God still desired to have a relationship with us.

So God sent prophets to bring us back into relationship.

God sent dreams to foreign kings so that Israel could return to Jerusalem.

And finally, God came to us in Jesus Christ, to walk with us and demonstrate what a perfect relationship between God and humanity would look like.

But we, in our limited worldview, *were afraid*.

We were afraid that we were all equals, because that meant that centuries of segregation, privileged status, and injustice would have to be addressed.

We were afraid that we could meet face-to-face with the transcendent and immanent God, because then we'd have to own up for our actions.

We were afraid of God's love, because it meant that we needed to love each other, and really loving people is really hard.

And so, we crucified Jesus on the cross.

And in Jesus' whole life, He showed that sin was not part of what it meant to be fully human.

And because He lived without sin, his death was not final; He was resurrected in a new body.

So now, we limited and imperfect humans, still tempted by sin, can chose to follow the Spirit into a life that is centred on God, and be transformed by the graceful example and teachings of Jesus into who God meant for us to be.

And this is the Good News in Chairs.