

Pastoral Application of Genesis  
Pr. Alfonso O. Espinosa, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2001

1. Slight Introduction and Prayer
2. I will use the following outline for three, mini-lectures for a pastoral application of Genesis:

Mini-Lecture #1: Chap. 1-11, Early History  
Mini-Lecture #2: Chap. 12-36, Patriarchal History  
Mini-Lecture #3: Chap. 37-50, Joseph

3. Mini-Lecture #1: Chap. 1-11, Early History

3.1 Genesis 1, Creation:

3.11 *Creatio ex nihilo* is important for practical ministry.

3.12 Note the QAL (simple active) perfect (completed) of *bara* (Gen. 1:1) means creation from nothing (finite not infinite; infinite would grammatically allow for theistic macro/organic evolution, but the finite verb will not permit this view).

3.121 Be cognizant, however, that the liberal view would reduce the faith to become so unsubstantial so as to only apply to realm of morals and ethics. Even these, however, will soon succumb to relativistic thought since evolution gives way to moral relativism and situation ethics. All of this comes out of a compromised view of the book of Genesis.

3.13 Note that the Lord's creating activity in Genesis is attached to His speaking (Word). God speaks and creation occurs (throughout the creation account of Genesis 1).

3.14 Note that the result is God's description: "It was very good." (Gen. 1:31).

3.15 What we draw from this is that the power for ministry is fully dependent upon God's Word and His creating what is good. (Here, we appreciate the completed fiat of creation in the heavens and earth...the Lord does not continue to create the physical realm. Though His preservation continues to reveal His omnipotence. However, the Lord does continue to create faith in spiritually dead sinners. This creative aspect in spiritual context is our power for ministry).

- 3.16 Divine monergism as opposed to synergism are not ivory-tower theological concepts, but empower practical ministry.
- 3.17 If your pastoral practice (your preaching, teaching, calling/visitation, pastoral counsel/private confession & absolution, and outreach) is not based on and dependent on the Word of God, then there will be nothing good or God-pleasing coming out of your ministry (I use “your” ministry in the sense of your serving as instrument...if the Word is not present, then “your” ministry is an empty one, devoid of God’s power).
- 3.18 Consider the ramifications of this. How will you help families in crisis as a pastor? Will you resort to psychology or will you resort to the Word? Will you call on people to find psychological causes to their problems or will you call them to repentance? Do you firmly believe that a struggling marriage can be helped and led to healing through the Word of God? How will you comfort the grieving? Will you use the Word or offer humanistic platitudes? I know that theologically we all believe in power of God through His Word, but it is for us to **practice** what we believe, teach and confess!
- 3.181: Employ private confession and absolution
- 3.182: Strive to apply the Word of God to life issues in private counsel and visitation
- 3.183: Draw the people in your parish to take their struggles to the Sacraments of Christ.
- 3.1831: Give the depressed the Sacrament more often, not less often.
- 3.1832: Teach those who struggle with anger or lust to live in their baptism more and more.
- 3.1833: Lead those with addictions to private confession more frequently.
- 3.19 But all the while we are living in the theology of Genesis, fully dependent on God’s power through His Word:
- 3.191: He spoke the heavens and the earth into being.
- 3.192: He spoke Lazarus out of the tomb.
- 3.193: He spoke faith in Christ in our dead hearts.
- 3.194: He will speak in your ministry for your **every need!**

3.2 Genesis 2, Personhood:

3.21 A fundamental problem in the parish and the world today is realizing identity. Who are we? What is the relationship between man and woman? Why are we here? What is our relationship to the world?

3.22 Genesis 2 presents a high anthropology for relationships:

3.221: Early Church explanation: Because God is Triune and in order for man to be in the image of God, there needed to be someone besides the man. Man needed a relational existence (Matt. 19 reminds us of other possibilities):

3.2211: Notice “form” for man (2:7) and “fashioned” for woman (2:22).

3.2212: Man is formed as a potter would form a pot, woman is built/constructed from the man.

3.2213: Woman is defined in relation to man, this has bearing on marriage and other issues. Society interprets this as an issue of power and rights, while the church sees an issue of placement and order in love.

3.2214: Husbands are to crucify themselves (parallel Christ). C.S. Lewis said that husbands have a CROWN of thorns. Sacrifice and submission is taught, not hunger for and seeking after power. Headship is costly.

3.23: Genesis 2 presents a high anthropology for personal identity:

3.231: We are the creature, not the Creator.

3.232: Inherently against hedonism.

3.233: We must lead our people to a theology of vocation:

3.2331: We worship in the public D.S.

3.2332: We worship in living in our baptism, personal prayer.

3.2333: We worship in our families and in our vocations.

3.234: Man, not woman; woman, not man, clear sexuality. We can never go along with the confusion of sexual identity (make it clear that homosexuality is a sin in your

preaching and teaching; while being compassionate to the person seeking Christ and battling homosexuality).

- 3.235: Caretaker of the world, not destroyer or perverter. We are to have dominion, but this is not a crack-the-whip mentality, but an ordering with love and responsibility.
- 3.236: Gen. 2:15 QAL infinitive construct means to constantly care and watch over it (work and serve).
- 3.237: Excurses: We see how Genesis is really the foundation of all that the Proverbs say about the wisdom of hard work.

#1: Celebrate the vocations of your people. If someone is searching for one, then remind yourself of how important it is that they have support in finding one. Remember that all three articles of the Creed tell of the gifts of God. We do not reduce the gifts of God to the exceptional spiritual ones. Lead people to celebrate how they serve the Lord in the workplace; seek a strong sense of vocation.

#2: Genesis 2:15 is also our springboard for the special gifts as well (Romans 12, I Cor. 12, Ephesians 4, 1 Peter 4). How will each and every member serve the Church? Make this a burning priority. If a person is living in the Genesis plan they will have a strong sense of belonging, contribution. If a person has nothing to contribute, they will be a strong candidate to become a back door loss. Discover the gifts, pray for these discoveries and put the people to work in the parish, rejoicing in their gifts.

3.238: Who are we? God's good creation, male or female.

3.239: Why are we here? To constantly care for God's creation.

### 3.3 Genesis 3, The Whole of Scripture Is On Christ

3.31 Genesis 3:15 is the first Gospel (first Messianic prophecy)

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3.32 This sets the pace for the emphasis of the *zarah*

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3.33 This becomes quite evident in the ensuing Patriarchal History as finding the right mate, the alarm over barrenness, the joy over perpetuating the line are key themes. All the while, the Israelites realize that the Lord is keeping His promise.

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3.34 I don't have time to get into further theological analysis, but the reason I bring this up is that in the realm of Bible Study, Bible inquiry (questions that continually come to you in the parish, Bible application, etc.), the emphasis is ALWAYS Christ.

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3.35 The Old Testament is about Christ as much as the New Testament is about Christ. Messiah is everywhere. The Bible is not a "how to" book, it is book on our Master and King. Genesis 3:15 sets the pace for this, not to mention the Holy Trinity already inferred through the Name *Eloheim* in the creation account and the majestic plurals (e.g. Gen. 1:26).

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#### 4. Mini Lecture #2: Chap. 12-36, Patriarchal History

##### 4.1: Abraham who pleads before the Lord (Genesis 18)

4.11: He is a priest, prays before the Lord on behalf of the people.

4.12: It is a serious enterprise and approaches the Lord in deep reverence and humility.

4.13: And yet Abraham is bold.

4.14: It is an amazing revelation that the Lord seeming adjusts His intentions (from 50 to 45 to 40 to 30 to 20 to 10)!

4.15: Application for ministry:

4.16: Will you take seriously your call to pray for your people?

4.17: This is probably the most easy thing to neglect. It is one thing to prepare a sermon or attend a meeting, but what about your private prayer before the Lord for each and every one of your flock?

4.2: Abraham faithful no matter what (Genesis 22)

4.21: What if your faithfulness to Word and Sacrament doesn't seem to be "working out" the way you expected?

4.22: Abraham was simply obedient. The Lord does not call you to such and such empirical achievement; He calls you to be faithful. Period. Be faithful and trust Him to do the rest.

4.3: Nothing against Isaac, but we move on to Jacob (Genesis 32)

4.31: This is an elaboration of both 4.1 and 4.2 above.

4.32: How would you describe Jacob praying to the Lord besides the obvious "wrestling"?

4.33: How is it that Jacob can be so bold?

4.34: Not only is this for your ministry, but also for your teaching your people. Through Messiah – in the context of Gospel – God is truly Father. Yes, we reverence Him, but look at the rest of the relationship in Jacob. We are fantastically bold; in fact we may and do say ABBA (Rom. 8). And like little children can be "demanding" in the sense of having supreme confidence in the love of their parent, so may we when it is according to what God has promised!!!

5. Mini-Lecture #3: Chap. 37-50, Joseph

5.1: Genesis 37: Joseph's family sins against him.

5.11: Lack of peace, jealousy, etc. even within the parish.

5.12: Apply Galatians 5, to counter the flesh through the Law used to put us in the position of serving one another in love (3<sup>rd</sup> use of the Law). The holy kiss in D.S. used for reconciliation. Don't allow division to stew. Attack the division.

5.13: However, keep in mind that the Lord is ultimately in control of all conflict that may occur within the parish. Genesis 50:20: "And as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result..."

5.2: Genesis 39: Potiphar's Wife

5.21: Note Joseph's reaction to the temptation at vs. 12. What did he do?

5.22: This is for you. Ephesians 6 makes clear the battle that rages. Your flesh, the world and the devil seek to remove you from the ministry. What will you do with temptation? This is the Biblical answer: Flee. Do not analyze it.

5.23: This is for your future parishioners. Don't play with fire. Lead them to remove themselves from unsafe situations.