

- (Also read Genesis 2:8-17, 3:17-19)
- Final one in four part series on Poverty from the perspective of the four relationships - with God, with self, with others and with the created order
- Sophia Johnston's dedication was also in this service...

## Recap

- What are the three stages in the life of the world that we've explored for each of the relationships - with God, with self, with others - that we've looked at so far?
  - (looking for creation, fall, redemption)
  - reiterate those for each - created to be in relationship with God, fallen from that relationship, redeemed into a renewed/restored relationship
  - created to be at peace with ourselves, to know who we are in relation to God, fallen from that relationship, lacking in self-esteem or filled with pride, redeemed into our sonship, as God's beloved children
  - created to relate to others, fallen from those relationships into distrust, selfishness, anger, bitterness..., redeemed into loving one another
- We are **poor** when those relationships are out of kilter, away from life in all its fullness, away from **shalom**
  - and we are rich, not when we have loads of money, but when the relationships are redeemed...

## Created

- The cultural mandate of Gen 1:28-30 teaches that God created us to be **stewards**:
  - people who understand, protect, subdue and manage the world that God has created in order to preserve it and produce bounty
  - note that while God made the world **perfect**, He left it **incomplete**
  - this means that while the world was created to be without defect, God called humans to interact with creation, to make possibilities into realities and to be able to sustain ourselves via the fruits of our stewardship
  - there is plenty in the world - enough - but it doesn't come to us "on a plate", but through honest labour, creative toil, our care and protection...

## Fallen

- Fallen - some have not enough, some have too much
- And our relationship with "stuff" is now not a stewardship one:
  - Lottery - if only I have enough money I will escape from my current life, I will be rich, money is my **saviour....**
  - desperation - **money rules** my life, getting enough (to feed the family, to pay back my debts, whatever) is what I think about, focus on, am beholden to...
  - money or food or clothes or other things allow me to escape, to obtain those snippets of satisfaction that I crave - **stuff is what I use to satisfy my soul...**
  - **money gives me significance and purpose** - I can measure my success by how much I have, or I can feel a sense of achievement and superiority as I give it away...
- Ferengi - money, money - dangerous for the kids running after us, but also deeply dangerous to us who might be tempted to give, entering a distorted relationship with money!

## Redeemed

- Work that doesn't become a god
- Generosity that doesn't foster dependence
- Thankfulness that doesn't drift into indulgence