A World of Beauty and Pain, Judgment and Mercy

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Date: 23 April 2017

Preacher: Rev. George Sinclair

[0:00] Father, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us. Father, deliver us from the ways that we think you are and the ways that we think you behave, and help us, Father, to listen to how you describe yourself in terms of what you do and what you don't do. Father, you know how wounded our hearts and our minds are and how easily we twist things. So, Father, we ask that you would calm and still our heart like a young child with his mother. May you calm and still our hearts so that your word might go deeply into who we are. And we ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen.

Please be seated. So, a couple of months ago, once again, I was in a coffee shop and one of my regular conversation partners came up with to me and he said, I have the perfect quote which really encapsulates why I'm not a Christian. In fact, why I don't like religion, period, exclamation mark, and a couple of extra exclamation marks. And he, in fact, I tried to find it, but I couldn't find it. But he showed me a quote from a well-known American speaker and writer. And the effect, the quote in effect said, I cannot believe in a God that would send anyone to hell. And in fact, a God that sends and condemns people to hell is a completely and utterly terrible being. Even if he granted me a pass to not go to hell, I would refuse to go for the mere fact that he would send others to hell. It was something to that effect. And more eloquent, but to that effect. And I didn't make it harder or lighter to that effect.

And then my friend said, this is unanswerable. And waited for my answer. Well, the scripture text that Nora read actually fits with how I tried to answer my friend. That very odd text from Genesis. So, it would be a great help to me and to you if you open your Bibles and turn to Genesis chapter 3, the second half of Genesis 3, verses 14 and following. And just before I start reading Genesis chapter 3, verse 14, just a little bit of a context as you turn to it. Some of you who are a bit familiar with the Bible would know this, but maybe some of us don't. Basically, the first two chapters of Genesis give two different accounts of God creating everything out of nothing. The first text sort of gives you more of the 20,000 feet in the air view with other types of imagery. The second text focuses more particularly on the creation of man and woman and the institution of marriage.

And then in Genesis 3, just a bit before we had this, we have the beginning of evil. How did evil and sin and pain come into our world? And there's the conversation between the serpent and between Eve.

There is Adam and Eve. God said, you know, there's thousands and thousands of trees in this paradise on earth. You can eat all of the fruit you want whenever you want, all the different types. [3:16] It's unbelievably delicious, unbelievably nutritious. You'll never put on weight. And you can eat to your heart's content. I only ask that there's this one tree that you don't eat of it.

And if you eat of it, you'll die. And Genesis 3, just before this, describes the process whereby Adam and Eve decide they want to be like God and they want to make their own rules and they eat of the fruit. And as a result of that, well, God, they fall. That's the beginning of the breaking of the created order. And in the part just before this, God's first words to fallen human beings, rebellious human beings who want to, in a sense, dethrone God and be like God, he asked them four questions.

And now we come to after those questions have been answered, revealing really a lot about God's heart and what the human heart was. We now come to God speaking to first the serpent, then the woman, and then the man. So that's where we are. Here's what happens. Verse 14. The Lord God said to the serpent, because you have done this, his role in clarifying that Adam and Eve wanted to be like God.

Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field. On your belly you shall go and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed. He shall bruise your head and you shall

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bruise his heel. Now, like right off the bat, I mean, some of you might have very serious questions about it, but it's also very easy to make fun of this text. Okay, George, so this is like a story of why snakes don't run around with tiny little legs like a centipede? Like, it's pretty ridiculous, George. That's apart from the fact that the snake is a talking snake, George. And don't you think it's just sort of completely and utterly, you know, ridiculous that the snake is going to eat dust?
[5:31] Like, come on, George, how can you even begin to take this text seriously? So it's easy to look at the text. It's very easy to make fun of it. But let's just, you know, sort of take a bit of a time out and look at the text and try to listen to it and see what it is that it's trying to say.

And the first thing is, just so you know, if you're a guest here this morning, we had Easter Sunday and the Palm Sunday before that. But before that, I've done a whole series of sermons before this in Genesis, talked about evolution and creation. I've talked about historical Adam, talked about serpents talking. I'm not going to repeat it. You can go back and listen to some of the serpents, sermons. Don't listen to the serpent. Listen to the sermons. In fact, you know, a big task for Christians is distinguish the hissing of the serpent from the whisper of the Holy Spirit. But there you go.
That's a free sermon note just for you because you're here. And so listen to the other sermons. Just for now, understand that the serpent is really a way of talking about the devil, Satan.
You can listen to earlier sermons in terms of how I talk about this and help us to understand it. And so the serpent, in a sense, is a symbol, a slithering symbol for the devil, for Satan, our ancient adversary.
So here's the thing about this. You know, in a few weeks, we're going to talk about Noah and the flood. And just so you know, there were rainbows before the flood. Okay? I mean, rainbows are a natural phenomenon.
[7:02] It wasn't as if there were no rainbows and all of a sudden God created a rainbow. That's not how it is. What's going on here, both with the serpent and this description of on your belly and everything like that, in some ways, God takes a natural phenomenon and becomes something that has significance in terms of who God is and who human beings are and how he relates to them.

That just as in Noah's case with the rainbow, when we see a rainbow, one of the things we can remember every time we see a rainbow is that God will not destroy the earth. And when we see a snake, one of the things we can remember is that God has humbled, God has humbled the devil. That he is completely and utterly humbled. Still powerful, but profoundly humbled. You know, if you look at it from that thing, look at what he does.
Because you have done this, curse it are you above all livestock and above all the beasts of the field. On your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. You know this phrase, dust? You know, what's a very common expression even today?
You can see it in movies or something like that. Maybe, you know, somebody's in a race and they're beating the person, and in their mind you can hear, or if you're watching this in a movie, you can hear, eat my dust, loser.
[8:29] Right? Eat my dust. In fact, usually in Hollywood it would be a whole pile of swear words, which I'm not allowed to say from the pulpit. And shouldn't say anywhere else, by the way, just for the record. I don't want to say, oh boy, George said if you're not on the pulpit you can say these bad words.

Not. Okay? So, but you know, we're familiar with that expression, right? Eat my dust, loser. Right? It's the same type of thing. It's a description of a profound humbling.
When we see a snake, we're to be reminded that the devil has been completely and utterly humbled. In fact, one of the, a couple of weeks ago I suggested that if you like reading novels, and if you haven't done it, there's three spectacular novels by C.S. Lewis, a science fiction trilogy.
And the first one is, I think, called Out of the Silent Planet, then it's Perilandra, or Voyage to Venus, and then That Hideous Strength. And one of the interesting things that C.S. Lewis does playing with this imagery is that he imagines that part of the way that God humbled the devil was to limit him to earth, in a sense where he has to eat dust.
Whereas before he could roam, now he's in a sense tied to this planet as part of his defeat and his humbling. That's just, you know, a bit of a side. They're books that are really worth reading.
[9:49] But some of you might say, but George, cursing? Like God's up there cursing? Ah, come on. I mean, George, you just got up here. You just said, by the way, you know, you could say, eat my dust, and in Hollywood they'd say, bleepity, bleepity, bleepity, bleep.

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And you just said, don't say bleepity, bleepity, bleep. But, I mean, God's doing that. Like, what's going on? God's doing that. Well, here's the first big thing about this whole text.
If you could put up the point. I have a human problem. And if I have a human problem, human problems mean every human being has the problem. I imagine gods.
Actually, there should be no apostrophe there. I imagine gods in my own image. I'm sorry, my own likeness. That's my problem. I imagine gods.
It's hard for me to hear God describe himself, and for me to actually just listen to that and understand how he reveals himself. because my mind and my heart are constantly imagining what God is like.
[10:56] You see, what happens to me is... See, one of the things that happens in the earlier part of this story is that human beings who used to be able to see God face-to-face, they hide from him.

And because I like to hide from God, I imagine that God hides from me. Because I'm elusive, I imagine that God's elusive.
Because I get angry, I imagine that God gets angry. Because I curse in a certain way, I imagine that that means what it says about God, that he curses in a certain way.
Because I have a problem with hatred, I imagine that God has a problem with hatred. And it's a human problem. I think it was Calvin who said that the human mind is a factory to create idols.
And I probably got the quote a little bit wrong. But I have a human problem. So it comes right out.
Cursing. Well, what do I think of when I think of cursing? I think of, you know, I'm in...
[12:02] Well, just the other... Just leaving church last Sunday. I come and the bicycle lane has, you know, lines on it. I'm following it. I'm not going into the bicycle lane.

But I come to the corner that allows me to get into the intersection and cross the bicycle lane. And a cyclist who was well, well behind me. I was stopped. I was stopped like 80 yards before him.
Didn't cut him off. I was waiting for pedestrians to go. But as he went, he cursed me. Very colorfully. Very loudly. He cursed me.
So that's what we think of, right? But what's going on here in the text? What's going on here in the text is this. So just all the way through this text, this text is going to constantly challenge our hearts to make us think twice if we're willing to have the text confront us to see how we sort of are imagining God.
And so because we imagine God in certain ways, we hear the text in certain ways, but it's not the way the text is actually describing God. In the Bible, a curse is the opposite of a blessing.
[13:11] And what a curse is, is a God consigning or making something impotent. He makes something impotent.

Is this a bad thing? Who wouldn't like North Korea to become more impotent? I mean, other than the crazy little family and clique that run that terrible country.
And so what the text is saying here is, because you have done this, I am going to make you impotent. I'm going to really and utterly, completely cut your power.
That's what God does for us in his dealing with the devil. So it's not that God is angry and hostile and loses control.
So this text is going to constantly reveal my heart. It's going to reveal my fear, my pride. It's going to reveal to me who I am in God's sight and how I don't want to, I want to constantly imagine that God is less generous than he is, that he's less loving than he is, that he's less just than he is, that he's less holy than he is, that he has human problems.
[14:30] This text is going to constantly reveal this tendency in my heart and yours. But God acts to make the serpent's power basically very powerless.

That's what he does. So remember, I have a human problem. I imagine God's in my own likeness. And so it means I'm going to keep on like sort of misunderstanding the text.
So for instance, like this whole seed language, which is really weird. Like as someone you might say, okay, is God just saying that, I don't know, seed of the serpent. Like look down here about the seed of the serpent. I will put, verse 15, I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed.
He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel. Is this just talking about little baby snakes that go wiggling around? There's, one of the places I go for a run is on the Cross Canada Trail. And there's a spot along the Cross Canada Trail where there's obviously some type of a nest.

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I don't know if snakes have nests. Last Sunday, you all laughed, or you should have laughed, as I tried to describe flowers, revealing the lack of my knowledge of botany. But I, anyway, at this time, soon when you go for a run, I have to keep my eye open for garter snakes and little baby garter snakes.
[15:52] You know, because the last thing you want to do when you're out for a run, just sort of trying to make it through is to come close to stepping on a snake because all of a sudden, I'm doing high jump, not running, if what I thought was a stick moves.

Okay? I'm just telling you, you hear a yelp from George and all of a sudden, you see how high George's vertical leap can be when the stick wiggles and moves out of the way.
Anyway, so what's going on here with the seed language? Is it just describing baby seeds? No, it's describing, and this is going to actually maybe be a little bit frightening to us, it's describing human beings.
The seed of the serpent is human beings. And the seed of Eve in this particular case is also human beings. And it's beginning to introduce an idea as a result of the fall.
And by the way, this is going to be a terrifying idea to us that in the sense that there are two types of humanity, there is a human, there are human beings that are the seed of the serpent, and there are human beings that are a seed of life, ultimately of Eve, of the woman, of God, who's a source of life.
[17:08] Now, some of you might say, oh, George, time out, time out. Is this, in fact, giving divine sanction and permission for describing certain others as being like demons, that we can do whatever we want with them?

Not at all. It would be if this was the only text in the Bible that referred to it. It would be a real problem, because we know there's a human problem, right? We know there's a human problem. We see it right now. What is it? There's a constant problem going on. Many of the elite universities in the United States and here in Canada, where we demonize, and there's a complete attack on freedom of speech.
That in places that should be devoted to the freedom of expression and the interchange of ideas, that there's an increasing problem in these places of shutting down and shouting down and using the third of violence to stop people who don't have the right views from speaking.
It's a problem in our society. And so, is this text trying to describe... No, if this was the only text in the Bible, but this is the beginning of a story, if you have your Bibles, I mean, here we are.
[18:19] Here's the beginning. Here's what goes on. And the text is going to develop this idea, and in the Old Testament, it's going to make it a bit more complicated. It starts to have the idea of how individuals, in a sense, the line between good and evil runs not between human beings, but down the middle of each human being.

And it's eventually going to be culminated in this understanding that Jesus dies upon the cross, and when he dies upon the cross, all what he's doing is revealing that God is going to provide a completely new way for human beings to be made right with him, and it's going to reveal in a way that would be too depressing to reveal until the Messiah himself has come and died upon the cross, that in a sense, every human being is the seed of the serpent, in a sense, and that every human being needs to be transferred from this to be reconciled and made right with God, and only God's power can do that.
It's the beginning of this idea of the depth of a rebellion against God that the rest of the scriptures are going to make clear. And at the same time, it has this profound problem that God is going to use a particular, I mean, seed is something that men produce, not women.
It doesn't require the virgin birth, but for Christians who read the Gospels, all of a sudden, you see that, in a sense, it's a prophecy or prediction of the virgin birth, that God will provide the means by which the serpent is killed, and sin is dealt with, and people are made right with God.
It's the beginning of promise that's in the Bible. But some of you might say, so it's not at all a divine justification of there being two types of people, but some of you might say, okay, George, well, that's all very interesting, but there's this really problem.
[20:19] You know, Nora was overcome when she read this text, and she was overcome for good reason. You know, when you read the text very carefully and slowly and try to bring emphasis, and doesn't this text seem to say that God all of a sudden created pain in childbearing?

Doesn't this text sort of say that men are able to rule over their wives? Like, George, this is a very... In fact, just imagine, look at verse 16.

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To the woman, he said, I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing. In pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.
Imagine for a second that I said there's a gathering of women executives, and I'd like you to read that text to them. Imagine for a second if there was a gathering of all the women who were in parliament, and they're bringing women from all across the country to have a big session in parliament, and I said, could you read that text to them?
I would be really... Nobody would want to do that. Very few would want to do that. It sounds like a terrible, terrible text. So just remember again, what is it I say? I have a human problem.
[21:34] I imagine God's in my own likeness. So, before I try to bring out what this text is saying, it's still going to be a bit controversial, but I'm going to make it worse rather than before I make it better.

Because when it says here, I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing, what it's actually saying is this. The word pain here means both physical pain and psychological and emotional and spiritual and intellectual pain.
It means pain in the most broadly understood term. And what it's talking about here is that there's going to be pain connected to children from the moment of conception till the moment either that the child dies, and then if the mother obviously still is alive, it will continue on after the child has died because no mother wants, every mother, I mean, nobody wants to die, but everybody wants to outlive their, to have their children outlive them.
So, this text is actually saying that there will be a multiplication of pain for the woman from the moment of conception until her death around children. And the text is also then saying your desire shall be for your husband and it's a very, very interesting thing in the original language.
What it's saying is that both there's this almost an inordinate desire that will sometimes happen for at least women towards the husband or a man to be the husband, but there's also this other sense which is actually far more important is that there's a desire for the woman to rule or master the husband.
[23:09] And at the same time it's saying that the man will act in a ruling type of hard way towards his wife.

So, I've made it worse, haven't I? But now you've heard it. So, well, here's, if you could put up the next point, Andrew.
This is, I really just have two big ideas in this text and this is the other idea. God's word, it's long and I don't really like the grammar, but it's the best I could do.
God's word reveals that I am made in his image. In other words, that means I'm beautiful and I'm glorious and every human being is. But I am bent. His word also reveals that I am bent, broken, and twisted.
So, I bend, break, and twist. His word also reveals that God is good, merciful, and sovereign. So, he limits evil, warns of evil, and delivers from sin.
[24:14] That's what you have to know when you read this text. Both the thing which I just read a few moments ago about the serpent, but also as we're going to talk about the next things in the text, God's word reveals that I am made in his image.

At no point in time does the Bible say that because of our sin and rebellion that God removes us being made in his image. It never says that. We're always made in his image. But we are now bent and broken and twisted and so I bend, break, and twist.
His word also reveals that God is good, merciful, and sovereign. God doesn't say, oh gosh, because human beings have fallen, I'm no longer sovereign. No, he's sovereign in a different context.
God is sovereign in the context of human rebellion and human beings' addiction to be like God. God. And in a context in a world where human beings are addicted to the desire to be God, he's still sovereign, he's still good, he's still merciful.
And because of that, he limits evil, warns of evil, and delivers from sin. So let's look at this text. And remember I said at the beginning about this story at my coffee shop and the fellow giving me this unanswerable objection to a God who casts people into hell.
[25:32] And here's the first thing I said to him. The Bible actually is a bit more subtle than that. What if I said to you that it's not that God takes somebody like George Sinclair and I'm running away from God and he finally catches me, grabs me by the scruff of my neck and I'm wiggling and I'm fighting and I'm twisting and I'm punching at God but God keeps me in his grip and he opens the

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door to hell and he throws me far enough into hell so that he can close the door and lock it.

That's the image. But I said what if it, what if I choose to go into hell and when I go into hell the only lock on the door is a lock on the inside not the outside.
This actually made my friend really mad. and when I tried to press it on him he just eventually threw up his arms and refused to talk to me anymore about it because I guess he thought I had an unanswerable position and he never thought there might be an answer.
But the fact of the matter is that all the way through the Bible it's far more complicated in these things. That there's this odd mixture of God always being sovereign and right in his judgment but at the same time human beings freely choosing.
And the reason this is going to be very very significant is because in all of these things here that God says there's a mixture of prediction and proclamation about what God's going to do.
[27:07] If you go back you listen to the sermon about what happens immediately after the fall if you remember that immediately after the fall God does nothing but what's the first thing that God does nothing but what's the first thing that happens they recognize that they're naked.

The next thing that happens with God having done nothing is they hide from God. What's the next thing that happens even though God has still done nothing is the very very first thing they do is they begin to have a breakdown of their relationship with the created order and with themselves and with God.
They pass the buck. They say it's not my fault it's your fault. It's his fault. No it's her fault. It's her fault.
It's the first thing that happens. We've bent and broken and twisted ourselves and now we look bent and broken and twisted. And so in all this speech the interesting thing is to listen far more carefully to not just to remember that we make God's in our own imaginings and to listen how in many parts of this God's just now predicting what's going to happen.
And in other things he says something specifically he's going to do. So one of the things specifically he's going to do make the devil impotent. So let's look here the second thing. Okay.
[28:23] Look at it again. Verse 16 I will surely multiply your pain and childbearing now that you understand what it means. In pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you. So here's the second thing.

I'm going to put the Bible down. I'm just going to ask you a question. Is that true? As a prediction. No. Nobody has complicated relationship with their parents.
Nobody has complicated relationships with their children. No marriage is ever in trouble. No husband and wife ever struggle for power and control.
that's not happened anywhere. No, it's true, isn't it? Like it's a very, very, very, you know what, this is an inconvenient truth, but this is a perfect description.
Go to family court, go to marriage counselors, go to family counselors. This is true. And God doesn't, he does one particular thing in this, doesn't he?
[29:33] Multiply your pain. How on earth could he multiply your pain? Well, remember, what was my very, very first point? My very, very, you don't have to put it up, and you can leave this one here, but I have a human problem.

I imagine God's in my own likeness. So here's the thing. Quite a few years ago when I was still in the parish of Eganville, a little rural church, I think I was driving from Eganville to Tweed down these country roads.
And anybody who's driven through country roads in the province of Ontario and that type of area, there's not very many passing lanes. And I have to confess, I am not always, I'm growing, I'm becoming more sanctified, but I am not always the most patient driver.
And so I was behind a person who when the road you couldn't pass, they went 75 in an 80 zone. And when it was nice and straight and you could pass, they went 120 or 110. And this was not teaching me patience. This was making me very upset.
[30:38] And this went on, it seemed like for about three years, but it was actually probably only for about 20 minutes. Then there was a sign announcing that we were coming into a village.

Now I've been driving on country roads for a long time and so I know two things about country roads that if the police are going to try to capture you for speeding they love it to go from when it goes from an 80 to a 60 to a 40 really quick and they like being where it says 40.
This person kept driving 75. Police pulled her over. Yes! I'm sorry! I am not sharing my holiness.

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I rejoiced in that person's pain. I did. I thought to myself all sorts of terrible thoughts. Some of you you know who you are who are impatient drivers.
you can imagine the rest of the thing that went on in my head. I was glad they got the ticket. I am not proud of this. Don't do what I say that I just did. This is an example of my sinfulness.
[31:42] So here's the thing. Does God look down at women and say I'm going to have pain? Yes! Is there ever a time when we want people to experience pain?

Don't you wish that the head of North Korea wasn't so callous and he felt some pain about what he's doing to his people? Don't you know brutal husbands with their wives and don't you wish that they actually felt some pain about what they did?
One of the aspects of the disease of leprosy that happens is that one of the aspects of one of the symptoms of leprosy is that parts of the body and then more and more parts of the body no longer feel pain so it means that you could be at my house and you're making yourself a cup of coffee with my stove top espresso machine without realizing it you put your hand on a burner that's on and you don't know maybe God's increasing pain has something to do with the callousness that can come with hurting others maybe it has something to do so that we would repent not only to God but to other people and change our ways maybe God is not like us and his actions are just the whole thing here about marriage
I'm going to have to be running out of time the whole thing here about marriage you know one of the things that might really I'm old not quite ancient of days but I'm old and one of the things I maybe hope for those of you who are in your 20s or your 30s is that you'll start to be able to after feminism and after patriarchy that you'll start to be able to just listen to the Bible text and just listen to it and not be frightened and bent out of shape by the murmurings of patriarchy and by the murmurings and paranoia of feminism and the murmurings and paranoia of patriarchy and just be able to listen to the text is that on one hand in the first and second creation account in two cases in the most powerful imagery and language possible the full complete equality of men and women is very powerfully stated but when it comes to the marriage relationship it's very interesting that the task for the husband in the marriage relationship and the task for the wife in the marriage relationship the tasks have some similarities but they fundamentally have different tasks and
I'm looking forward to the day maybe when I'm 90 and I still haven't lost my mind and I'm going along my walk or that I'll hear that one of you people here or maybe one of the kids in Sunday school because you're a poet and you're a philosopher and you're a theologian and you're psychologist and you're just that's required and deserved and the fact that there can be somehow or another different tasks for a husband and a wife in the relationship of marriage see it's very very interesting in the second creation account the woman is described as the helper fit for the man and in some ways and I don't know what it means I can give you a bit of idea but I don't entirely know what it means but it describes in a sense the woman it doesn't say that the man the husband is to be the helper of the woman and this is very troublesome it's not demeaning by the way in quite a few places in the Old Testament God is described as the helper so if this text is dissing women it's dissing
[35:44] God and it's not dissing God but for somehow there's this text the other side of it men are given two tasks that women aren't given it says if you go back in Genesis that the man is to leave his family never says for the woman to leave her family it's not interesting eh and it also says that the man has to hold fast to his wife it doesn't say actually that the wife has to hold fast to her husband isn't that very interesting like is it possible that all of a sudden we can just stop making God in our own image and just to try to puzzle on that and to meditate upon it and to see it in light of Jesus and his death upon the cross and the knowledge that see at the end of the day all the way I read it in understanding that God is not cruel he's not harsh he's he's warning me about certain types of things he's he's creating a situation where I want to call out to him for mercy everything is to be seen in the light of what

Jesus does for me on the cross and so it's very interesting and I'm going to use this in illustration I'm not making any political point whatsoever I really am not I really truly am nah nothing against Louise or me but nah it means many many things but one of the things what Genesis text says is the task of the man is to the fact that being a Trudeau matters means that your family matters in terms of power it means prestige in accomplishing things in having people treat you a certain way and what is it saying it's saying that the constant task of the man is that he has to renounce power means other things too but it means that and what does it mean about holding fast it means putting her first

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it means putting her first holding fast to her and for the woman in that context there's this different task that the woman doesn't have which
I'm hoping that in generations to come after the paranoia of patriarchy and the paranoia of feminism and I know that alone could cause me gazillion twitter things to make people mad and in biblical manhood and womanhood saying things about patriarchy could make them really mad and all that but here I'm longing and praying for the day when we can just listen to the Bible and try to understand how equality in these different tasks go and you see how given this helper leaving your power and says he comes home and says you know what all day long people say nice things to me I'm the boss and I don't know they all say way to go boss and I say you know jump and they say how high and I come home and little woman I want you to do that greet me with a smile and I say jump and you say that's what happens to men relate it's a text about marriage but how marriage goes really affects our culture and this text is not
God giving men the power to rule it's a prediction about what happens in an equal relationship with different tasks when it's bent and broken and twisted and it's there because marriages need grace and there's common grace for Muslim marriages and Hindu marriages and secular marriages it's not the case that Christians have the best marriages that's definitely not the case there's common grace and I need to call out that the Lord Jesus Christ would be the Savior and Lord of my marriage and of my life and Louise needs to call that out for us because we know that grace has a name just very quickly my time's going up let's just look at these last things there's something I want to make sure that I cover before we end look at verse 17 because you have listened to the voice of your wife Adam and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you you shall not eat of it curse it as the ground because of you one of the things that's very interesting is that
God does not curse Adam and Eve he curses the land why might God make the land more impotent who wants North Korea to have more power I didn't think anybody would put their hand up I was just doing that as an illustration by the way I don't want them to have more power just for the record okay it's a good thing for fallen human beings to have their power limited curse it is ground because of you in pain you shall eat of it it's the same word as earlier psychological etc or in toil or travail is another way to translate it you shall eat of it all the days of your life thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you you will no longer in a sense the earth starts to subdue you rather than you the earth you shall eat of the plants of the field by the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground for out of it you are taken for you are dust and to dust you shall return and if you're interested about this on good fry on Palm Sunday I preached about basically this idea about how sin causes death and what that means you can go and listen to the sermon but here's the way remember
[41:19] I said that it's a matter of if you look at this point that God is good merciful and sovereign so he limits evil warns of evil and delivers from sin Adam understands that what God has said especially around the crushing of the serpent and even this odd thing of the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman God Adam understands and hears that God is giving him hope and we know because of how he names the woman the man called his wife's name Eve because she was the mother of all living there's judgment here but there's also mercy and hope and then we see this powerful image another sermon and the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of sin and clothed skins and clothed them this beginning of this idea that God will provide a means by which we can stand in his presence but here's the part then the Lord

God said behold the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil now lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat and live forever therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken here's another and he drives Adam and Eve out of the garden verse 24 he drove out man out of the man we know in the next chapter by the way that Eve went with him as well just so you know he drove out the man and at the east of the garden of eating he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life so here's a couple of things just in closing if God can bar the way to the tree of life then he can provide a way to the tree of life for
Jewish people before the time of Jesus for anybody who's reading this text the text asks us a question will we call out to God and ask that he provides a way to the tree of life Andrew could you put up the last point please the first tree of life was in an earthly paradise because of our sin the new tree of life was on a lonely hill Jesus Christ dying on a cross between two thieves while his enemies mocked the women grieved and his disciples hid this tree of life still beckons with saving

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power two things make me say that those of you who know your Bible what happens after Jesus dies on the cross in the temple those of you who know the holy of holies which has the the the ark the holy of holies where God most fully is where the mercy seat is there's a curtain there which keeps it so that nobody but the high priest can go in once a year and only with shed blood and there's a curtain that separates the holy of holies and the mercy seat from human beings and what is what is embroidered on that curtain cherubim and that curtain of the cherubim is ripped from top to bottom so people know that it's only
God who does it and what is it that Jesus says to one of the thieves on the cross one of the thieves who begins the day mocking him at the end of the day he says he realizes that there's something special about Jesus and he says Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom and Jesus doesn't answer with kingdom language he says today you will be with me in paradise and the word for paradise in the original language is the word for Hebrew for the garden of Eden and shortly after he says that the temple curtain with the cherubim is removed Jesus Christ dying on a cross between two thieves while his enemies mocked and the woman grieved and his disciples hid is the tree of life that still beckons and has saving power for us to eat of its fruit Jesus is the way the truth and the life his fruit is that he is the way to
God that he is the truth about God that he is everlasting life he is the truth that our sins can be forgiven he is the truth that the serpent has been defeated he is the truth he is his fruit is that there is now God's eternal life can begin to be in our lives it is the truth that we can be clothed with his righteousness it is the truth that the cross is real and that as we think upon these things and eat of the fruit by meditating upon the tree of life Jesus dying upon the cross that as we are gripped by this it changes the command center of our lives to live us is the tree of life which beckons to us still which beckons to us this morning which we can be gripped by and feed by as we do our jobs and live as single people or live as married people and deal with our children that there is a tree of life that beckons that we can go to time and time and time again if you've never come to the tree of life come to the tree of life
[46:59] Jesus will not turn you away please stand let's bow our heads in prayer father we we confess before you that we keep imagining that you are meaner and you're not mean that you're miserly you're generous that you're elusive but father we're the ones who are elusive that you're stupid and say stupid things in your word but father you're not stupid and your word is not stupid father we confess before you that we keep making god's after own likeness to either be like or to despise and we keep thinking that's you father we ask that your holy spirit would take your word and apply it to our heart so that we will die day by day to the different ways we misrepresent and misunderstand you and father that your holy spirit would move in our hearts and minds that your holy spirit would would lead us us life as we deal with our marriages or with our singleness or with our children or with our grandchildren father may we go may be gripped by the tree of life and and eat of its fruit and live in its shade father we ask that you would do this wonderful continue to do this wonderful work in the lives of your children and all

God's people said Amen

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