

Creation: Gifts to Man

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- [0 : 00] If you would, open your copy of the Scriptures to Genesis chapter 2. Genesis chapter 2, and we will eventually read all of chapter 2 this morning.
- So I want, instead of beginning with Scripture reading, what I would normally do, I want to just begin with a word of prayer and just launch right in.
- Alright? Good with you? Alright. So, let's go to the Lord in prayer. Father, you are exalted above all things.
- And Lord, as we come to this time and we approach your word, we confess that your word is inerrant, infallible, that it is the breathed out word that you have given to us.
- And it is profitable for doctrine. It's profitable for teaching and for training and for correction. And it helps us to think right, to feel right, and even to do right.
- [1 : 14] It's sharper than any two-edged sword, and it will divide us under and show us our motivations, our intentions. And with that confession, Lord, we pray that your word would not return void, but that you would use your word in us, convict us of sin, change us where we are thinking wrong thoughts of you, and show us what is our duty towards you today.
- In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen. Amen. It is really bad to hope in the wrong thing. It's really bad to hope in the wrong thing.
- I have an older brother who's about two and a half years older than me, and, you know, I just always thought that my older brother had my best interest at heart. Right?
- I thought my older brother was there to protect me and keep me safe, because that's what older siblings do, right? Yeah.
- Well, some, maybe. So I grew up around Beaumont, Texas, and so close to the coast, but not as close as this, but close enough that when you dig a hole, it fills with water.
- [2 : 35] You know what I'm saying? And so the church that my grandparents had given land to to start, they needed a septic system, and so they were digging this big old hole to drop a septic tank into, and they had gotten the hole about six feet deep, and it was full of water from rain and whatever else, and my brother and I were told very clearly not to play around the hole, and we did not listen.
- And we were there at the hole, and we were playing, and my older brother thought it would be great to introduce me to surfing. And he said, Brady, if I'm going to throw this board on top of the water, and if you will stand on that board, it'll hold you up, and you can surf, and I'll make some waves.
- Okay. So without hesitation, because, you know, I hope my brother had my best interest at heart.
- You know, that's what I thought. And it wasn't just a little toe at first. It was both feet. You know what I'm saying? Just, boom! Well, my mother, who had been, I don't know, probably about 100 yards from us up at the house outside with my grandmother, saw what happened.

And, you know, I am clawing at the mud on the side, taking in all of this water, and the next thing I know, I feel a hand that grabs me, pulls me out, and because I didn't listen, guess what happens next?

[4 : 06] Absolutely. You know, I'm choking to death, and I'm getting a blister, you know. But that kind of thing happens all the time physically, but also happens spiritually.

We get our hope put on the wrong thing. We say to ourselves sometimes, if only this could happen, if only I could have this take place in my life, if I could have that blessing like somebody else, if I could have that benefit like someone else, or if I had that person's gifting, then everything would be okay, or I would be happy, or things would be where they need to be, or my children would turn out the right way, or my marriage would be whatever.

And to me, chapter 2 of the book of Genesis screams at us to not say that. And the reason is, is because there's a chapter 3.

We know what happens in chapter 3, right? We know that there's the fall. We know that there's sin in this world. But chapter 2 is like this discussion of these gifts, these benefits, these blessings that God has given to man, to the very first man and woman.

And what I want us to see is that man didn't ask for these gifts. He didn't say, I'd like to have these gifts. God just sort of put them on him. So these gifts are sovereign gifts to man.

[5 : 37] And there are five of them. And we're going to run through them just real quick, because I think that this will help us understand a little bit better where our hope ought to be.

So beginning in chapter 2, verse 4, it reads, it says, these are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.

When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground.

Let me pause for a second. It almost sounds like a repeat of chapter 1, right? In chapter 1, we saw how everything came about. It was by the word of the Lord. But then in chapter 2, we see this thing that almost looks like a repeat, but it's not a repeat.

If you read it closely, let's go back to that, because I want you to understand, because a lot of people will say, well, see there, I mean, Genesis has got two creation accounts. It doesn't. It has one. When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up.

[6 : 48] You see, when God created, He created trees that had seeds, right? I mean, you go back in Genesis 1 and you can look at that, and they had seeds that they would bear after their kind.

And so the whole point of creation was creating that first initial tree, that first initial thing that was going to take place and then fall to the ground and be rooted there and grow.

And He created man who was going to have dominion over this world. Well, in chapter 2, nothing had sprung up yet. Okay? So it's not that there's nothing there.

It's just that nothing has sprung up. Nothing has planted from a seed and grown from that yet, because there's been no rain, and we find out that there's no man to cultivate the ground.

So what we have is we have, as God has created the world, He's created this beginning part of everything, but He also has man there to till the soil and to plant, because man, and we're going to get to this here in a little bit, man, before sin, is supposed to work.

[7 : 52] Okay? That's one of our purposes. That's one of the ways that we glorify God is by working. So before man has a chance to really get going, before he's even created, the earth has places that are barren, because God is waiting for man to begin to work.

Does that make sense? Okay. All right. So you're with me. All right. Verse 7. Then the Lord God formed the man of the dust from the ground.

Now that form is just like my daughters. The other day we went out to, where was it? We went to Aransas Pass to the beach, and we grabbed the sand, and we put it in the buckets and smash it down and turn it over.

Bam! Like that. We walked down the beach, and this guy, you know, we had these nasty-looking sort of half-towers that came out, right? You know, matter of fact, after Haley got through doing hers, she says, mine are the ruins.

You know? And it's like, well, they look better than mine, because mine would turn out worse than that. But this guy down the beach, he's made this bridge, an arch bridge with bricks all in it, you know?

[8 : 57] He's formed that from the dust of the ground. That's what God did. God took the dust and formed this first man. And he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

Now, here's the first gift. God has sovereignly given to man life. He has sovereignly given man life.

You can go back to chapter 1, verse 26 and 27, say virtually the same thing. It says, And the Lord God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the sea, the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, over the livestock, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

So God created man in his own image. In the image of God, he created him. Male and female, he created him. So this is the gift.

This is the gift of life. It's the gift of being in the image of God. And a couple of things about that, okay? First of all, being in the image of God is something that both male and female have.

[10 : 09] It's not just the males, not just Adam who was in the image of God, and Eve wasn't. They both equally share the image of God. This is their life.

What exactly is this image, though? I mean, if we go to the New Testament, we're going to see how Jesus restores the image of God that's been torn down.

And we can see some things there. But I just want us to stay right here. What can we tell from just the book of Genesis, just from chapter 1 and 2, that's it. That's all we get to look at. What can we tell about this image that man has?

Well, God talks to man. So man has to be able to hear. Man has to be able to reason and understand what's being communicated to him.

He's been given the job to have dominion over the whole earth, to subdue it. So he has to be able to have decision-making power. He has to be able to have execution power, planning power to do all of these things.

[11 : 14] So man has this gift of life. He's the perfect man. She's the perfect woman. And they are alive in God's perfect garden.

Remember, don't we say to ourselves sometimes, well then, why did they eat the fruit? I mean, look at us now.

Look at where we are. Why did she grab the fruit and eat it? Why did God even put the tree there? Couldn't He have just let it go along its merry little way? I mean, they could have been perfect forever without having to, you know, have the fruit, and they could have had godly offspring, and produced Christ-like character, right?

Isn't that true? No, it's not. Because they were missing something very vital. They were missing something very vital.

Even though they were perfect, even though they were righteous, there was something missing. There was something not fully there, not fully developed in them. But just like when I was a kid, and I would sit on the front steps of the church with my 14-year-old friend, and we would say to ourselves, man, I just can't wait until I get my license.

[12 : 32] When I get my license, man, everything's going to be great. And then we would say, man, if we could just graduate. Once I graduate, everything's going to be great. When I get married, God just, I used to pray, Lord, just don't come back until I get married.

You know, when that happens, then everything's fine. We think that if we could be in the situation that Adam and Eve were in, where there was no sin in that moment, we think we would have it made.

But in reality, there's something missing. So what is that? And then, what happened to that? So what does it tell us then that we're made in His image?

And I just want to hit a couple of things. You've got to remember that if we think like this, if we think that if we could just be sin-free like Adam and Eve were, okay, I'm not talking about later on.

If we think we could be sin-free, if I could just be like Adam and Eve and have the breath of God breathe into me, if I could have been created like Adam, which, by the way, none of us were, right?

[13 : 43] Go to chapter 5, and we're made after the likeness of Adam fallen, okay? But we think to ourselves, well, if I could have just been created like Adam was.

You know, that whole thing, the whole image of God, that's the basis, and this is controversial, and so I hope you'll take it, but that's the basis for why abortion is a sin and homosexuality is a sin.

The image of God is male and female. The whole reason murder is wrong is because of the image of God. What happened? Why can't we be like that now? What's going on?

If I could just, what's missing? Well, let's keep reading. Go to verse 8. And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there He put the man.

Notice, He didn't ask the man. He just put the man, okay? He put the man whom He had formed, and out of the ground the Lord made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food.

[14 : 50] There's the gift. God gave man food. He's given man perfect food. It's not just any food, but the trees are pleasant to look at. I mean, you know, how many of you have thought about this?

You know, take an apple, take a whatever, and I mean, you got the red apple, you got the orange, orange. Why don't they call it something else besides orange? Anyway, you got the red apple, you got the orange, orange, you got yellow bananas, you got all of these things.

God could have made fruit to look like gray cubes and have no taste. We could have had a little cube slot right here like a little child's toy and said, oh, it's time to eat.

And there's no pleasure, no joy in that whatsoever. But God made the trees pleasant to look at. Why? Because He's a creative God.

He is good. I mean, just think about the tastes of food. I mean, just think about the wonders that are there. I mean, we have chocolate. Right? We have salsa.

[15 : 55] You know? Cilantro. I love the taste of cilantro. We have all of these different flavors that are out there and God created all things good and He's given them to be pleasant to look at.

He's given it to us for food. And here's Adam. He's been given this wonderful gift from God.

Perfect food. So perfect, He probably isn't even gaining weight with it. And we think to ourselves, man, if I could just lose a few pounds or if I could just...

Let me get to the third one too because I want to put this together. Look at verse 15. Well, actually, let me finish reading verse 9. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Now, we're going to come to that in just a second. Okay? Two trees in the middle of the garden. Verse 10. A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden and there it divided and became four rivers and the name of the first is Pishon.

[17:04] It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Haviland. There was gold where there is gold and the gold of that land is good. Bedlam and Onyxstone are there and the name of the second river is Gion.

It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush and the name of the third river is the Tigris which flows east of Assyria and the fourth river is the Euphrates. So, here's how God who's planted the garden is watering the garden with these rivers and they flow out of there but they water the whole thing.

It goes all the way around and in throughout the garden. And so, you have this garden. Verse 15. The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and to keep it.

Okay, so, has man sinned yet? No. But God has given him his purpose, his task. He is supposed to work. He is supposed to work.

Again, the sovereign gift of God, the gift of work. It is our task to work. It's what we were created to do.

[18:12] As a matter of fact, if you follow God's pattern, six days of work and one day of rest and yet, here in America, it's five days work, two days rest. And if you go to Australia, it's more like four days work and three days rest.

You know, everybody says, sign me up, let's go. So, see, here's what's happening. You've got this perfect man who's had the breath of God breathed on him.

He's been given the perfect food, the perfect gift to nourish his life. It's his physical needs that are being met, right? He has the perfect job.

Anybody have the perfect job? Yeah, I mean, it's such a pleasure. Everyone that you work with never irritates you. Everyone does exactly what you want them to, when you want them to do it, how you want them to do it, right?

It's like having clones of yourself working for you. You have, right? No, we don't. None of us. We don't have the perfect job. But how many times have people said, you know, if I could just get that job, man, everything would be all right.

[19:15] or if I could just get a job, man, I would really be where I needed to be. And what happens is that because we're saying if only, we're making excuse after excuse after excuse not to have godly character, Christ-like character.

And we're saying to ourselves, well, Adam and Eve, they had it easy there in the garden. And if we could just have things like they had it, then everything would be okay. I would be able to live.

God had given Adam the best food ever and the best job ever. There's never been anything more perfect. And who messed it up?

Adam. Having perfection without being perfect ourselves all the way is nothing more than a mirage in the distance.

It's something you and I constantly looking at saying, if only, then everything would be all right. The last two gifts.

[20 : 33] Now this is, I've rushed through those three to get to these two because all the story begins to kind of culminate here. God has given a fourth gift and that is the gift of revelation.

So they've had life, they have had food, they've had work, and now they have revelation. What do I mean by revelation? What I mean by revelation is God speaking.

That's what I mean. God speaks to them. We have what we call the Bible. We call the Bible special revelation. God speaks in creation as well, but creation is called general revelation.

The Bible, in creation, we can see that there is a God, but we don't know exactly how to get to Him. But in the Bible, we know exactly how to come to Christ, right? We know.

God has given him a revelation. You say, where has He given him a revelation? Look at verse 16. In verse 16, and the Lord God commanded the man saying, and everything following is the special revelation God gave to Adam.

[21 : 35] Okay? He says, you may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.

Now, before we get into understanding what he's saying, I want you to think about this. Before man has sinned, before man has taken the big old juicy bite of the apple and rebelled against God to try to get his own wisdom, because that's what we're going to see, before he does that, there's something not quite fully right with man because God has to give him instructions.

You see? He's righteous, but he's not perfect in the sense that he needs nothing. He is a dependent being because that's the way he was made.

God made him dependent upon him. And so God has to give this righteous man without any sin instructions because we still need God's instructions no matter what happens.

No matter what happens, we need God's instructions. But what were these instructions? You can eat from any tree. And I want you to think about that because when we get to next week, you've got to remember, look back at verse 17, verse 16, you may surely eat of every tree in the garden.

[23 : 01] you know what's going to happen in chapter 3. Chapter 3, we're going to hear them say, we can't eat from this tree.

You know, you've got the positive side of the command and the negative side. You can eat from all the trees, but this one. And then you're going to hear in chapter 3, you can't eat from all the trees, can you?

That's Satan talking. Okay? Do you see how positive that is? I mean, how many trees must have been in the garden? There's at least two in the middle of the garden, but there's all these other trees, and God has said you can eat from all of them.

Every single one of them. You can eat from all of them. There's no poison in these trees. They're pleasant to look at. Go after every single tree you want to, except this one, which means that the other one you can have as well.

Do you see how gracious, you see how merciful that is of God to give such a beautiful gift of all of that food, and then God is commanding them with these words?

[24 : 12] We live by the word of God. We don't live by bread alone. Take an example. You can see this situation play out. I've seen it happen time and time again. You go to Walmart, you're sitting there in line ready to check out.

Standing right behind you is a mother with her teenage daughter. And you know what's fixing to happen, right? Mom's going to say no about something and the teenage daughter just begins to rail on her mother.

I'm not talking about getting huffy and mad and getting silent or saying something under her breath. I'm talking rails on her mom about how stupid she is, railing on her mom about how horrible.

I mean, just showing utter disrespect for her mom. And you look at that situation and you think to yourself, you know, do you see, do you mother think to yourself, if only I had the perfect life and the perfect food and the perfect job, living in the perfect garden, everything would be okay.

Or do you realize that what's missing in your life is the revelation of God? Because there is a way to deal and handle with the situation that you're struggling with. I mean, we needed God's word before we sinned.

[25 : 20] Now, as we do sin, how much more do we need God's word? And he's given this gift. But he has this probation in this revelation.

You can't eat from this one tree. I mean, you know, you're in a candy store and all the candy is available to you.

You have anything you want. Just don't pull out of this one jar. Here's the perfect man. Here's the perfect woman. Why would they go after that?

We say to ourselves, oh, if only I could have been there. I would not have done that. I mean, I'd have eaten from all these other trees. Really? You really think you would have?

Here's kind of trying to pull this together for us a little bit. what's missing for Adam. What's missing for him is what the rest of the scriptures are about.

[26 : 30] That the Holy Son of God would take on flesh and would come to this earth and would die on the cross and his death, his death would purchase the Spirit of God who in chapter 1 hovers over the face of the deep.

If the Spirit of God hadn't hovered over the face of the deep in chapter 1, then as God spoke, nothing would have happened because the Trinity created.

And what's missing for man here is the fact that Christ hasn't come and purchased the Holy Spirit to work in his life. Man left on his own can't do it.

We're dependent. we need God. He's given him the gift of revelation. And the last gift, beginning in verse 18, what's the one thing in creation not good?

Yeah, man's not, man's alone. Listen to this in verse 18, then the Lord God said, it is not good that man should be alone. I will make him a helper fit for him.

[27 : 45] So out of the ground, the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man!

nothing!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

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reality, we don't need to be this way. And in these verses, the mission God was on was to make it so that Adam was not alone.

He wanted Adam to have a suitable helper, a compliment, a perfect match. It's like taking a sock and putting it on your foot, a glove and putting it on your hand.

[29 : 51] It perfectly fits. This is the one who was made for Adam. They were able to work together. He named the animals.

He also named Eve, didn't he? You see, here's what we think. We think that with the fall, that's when husbands became head of households and women subject to their husbands.

But that's not the truth. It was right there in creation. Both are equally in the image of God, but Adam named Eve. So here's the perfect universe.

with the perfect earth, where there's a perfect garden, with perfect food, with a perfect man, being given a perfect wife for a perfect relationship so that this one not good thing could be dealt with.

And they were both naked. And they were both naked. And they weren't ashamed. There was no shame between the two of them.

[31 : 04] Do you get the sense of what's going on here with this whole creation of man? You've got this whole scenario being set up. And honestly, you really got to come back next week to get kind of the punchline to this.

This is really like the setup. Because if you don't see how perfect all of this is, and how we long for that kind of perfection, how we are always saying to ourselves, if I just had this job, or if I could eat this way, or have this food, or lose weight, or if I could have this kind of marriage, or that kind of marriage, if I had the blessings of really having the breath of God blown on me that way, or if I could really understand the Scriptures and go all of these things.

We say to ourselves, if we have all of these same benefits that Adam had, then I would be okay. But there is something missing in that. Even the Pharisees, Jesus said to them, you search the Scriptures because in them you think you have eternal life.

But you've missed it. Because they speak of me. Because all of this stuff isn't just about the details of my life, but it's about the fact that I need Christ.

Even with all of these blessings, Adam is still so dependent upon God. So dependent upon God. He is going to need Christ.

[32 : 25] And we're going to see next week how Christ comes to him. Let me, before I finish that thought, I've kind of jumped ahead of myself today, and I'm sorry about that.

But I want you to think about marriage for a second. Let's just hammer it for a second. I want you to understand that because of the fall, there is no one in here, no one in here, who has a perfect marriage.

None. None. There is no one in here who is a perfect marriage partner. Amen or oh me?

Yeah? Okay. So if we can hold on to that, when we look at what we see God doing with Adam and Eve, it really begs for a couple of things.

It begs us to say that even in the most pristine situation, we still are needy in our marriages and relationships.

[33 : 38] Even in the greatest relationships that are there, there is still need. Don't be poking each other.

Because, because, too late, my ribs hurt. Because here's, here's, here's the thing. Paul, Paul David Tripp does a marriage seminar, and he has everyone repeat after him this phrase.

And I want to say it to you. I want to say it to you in love. Okay? I don't know what your situations are. I just don't. But I do know how I respond to things.

And this is very true for me. And every, every person who's married ought to say these words to themselves. I am the biggest problem in my marriage.

Do you know why? Because we're sinners. And I can't control when my wife sins against me. But I can control not sinning back.

[34 : 46] Because, again, quote Paul David Tripp, sinful people respond sinfully to being sinned against. Listen, when you say, I'm the worst problem in my marriage, I'm not, you're not admitting that the other party is perfect.

But you're taking your eyes off of them and putting your eyes on yourself and doing what you can do. What you can do. And you do what you can do.

And what they do, that's between them and God in terms of judging that. It's not my place to judge that. It's God's place. But I want you to understand that even if, even if everything all of a sudden turned around and everything was pristine and the way you wanted it, it would still be messed up.

And I can't hope that I get a good job and I can't hope that I can have all my physical needs met and I can't hope to have some spiritual experience out there that makes me feel the goosebumps and I love it, but I can't hope on that and I can't hope that my marriage turns out right and I can't hope that my kids turn out right.

All of this presses me to a place of saying, then where should my hope be? Jesus Christ and Him alone.

[36 : 19] Listen, there have been some things that have happened in my heart and my life and things that have gone on and one day I'll tell you some of the stories of things and they're hard. They're probably not hard like the things you've been through, but they're hard and they hurt and I've wept and I've cried and so many times I've wanted to say, well, I want that situation fixed because it hurts.

I don't like it. And while we pray, like Nehemiah, okay, Nehemiah, they're working on the wall and they're supposed to, you know, build this wall, but the surrounding nations are trying to come against them.

They work on the wall with a trowel in hand and with a sword in hand, working on the wall and defending it at the same time. And they pray and they ask God, but ultimately, as they pray and they ask God and they trust, they get their focus off of, I've got to fix the problem to, I need Jesus to fix me.

I need Jesus to fix me. Here's the story. Here's the story of a man who's been given every single benefit that most of us would fight for.

The perfect wife, the perfect marriage, the perfect job, where they're never separated from each other. They're working together. He doesn't go off and she go off.

[37 : 51] They're working together in the garden. They live in a perfect paradise, eating perfect food on a perfect earth in a perfect universe.

They get to visit with a perfect God. God. So what happened?

We sinned. And our only hope is Jesus. And I pray today that you would take whatever your struggle is and the problem that needs to be fixed in your life, don't stop praying and asking and seeking the scriptures about how to fix the problem.

Don't stop that. That's not what I'm saying. I'm not saying be passive. But I am saying don't hope that your happiness and joy will come from the problem being fixed.

Hope that Jesus makes you happy. That he fills you all in all. Let's pray.