

The God Who Creates Work and Marriage

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 05 July 2009

Preacher: Wayne Schuller

[0 : 00] Please be seated. I'll lead us in prayer. Lord Jesus, we praise you that you endure the cross so that we could be redeemed and all the glory could be to you.

Lord God, there's nothing we can boast in in creation or in redemption. It's all the work of you through your Son. And so we bend the knee and we confess him now as Lord and pray that we may live according to this word for your glory. Amen.

Well, friends, we enter chapter 2 of these important foundational chapters of the Bible and therefore of the Christian outlook or the Christian worldview, the Christian way of life.

Last week we saw that God, who is the creator of all things, is a Trinitarian God. He's God, the Father, the Word, the Spirit. And he created all things and he is separate from his creation.

And yet we, the universe, people, depend on our creator for everything. And we saw last week, I hope you saw with me, that God really enjoyed the act of creation and God enjoys, in an ongoing way, the universe, his creation.

[1 : 12] It's very good to him. He declared it such. Genesis 1, you could say, is the overture to the rest of the Bible. If it were kind of an opera or something, it would be the overture.

And the first few verses of chapter 2 really belong in chapter 1. And here, you know, we're victims of the fact that the chapters and verses aren't part of the original text.

So just read with me verses 1, 2 and 3 of chapter 2 as the conclusion of the overture. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all their multitude.

And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done. And he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

So again, you see God loving this thing he's made. He's blessing it. He's sanctifying part of it. He really cares about creation. And a very important theme there of the theme of rest or of Sabbath on the seventh day.

[2 : 17] Not least because we know there's an important commandment in the Ten Commandments about God commanding Israel to not rest on the seventh day. And I think often overlooked is the fact that rest itself is an image of redemption in the whole Bible.

It's an image of salvation. So for example, God promised Israel in the wilderness, well earlier than that he said, when you get to the land I've promised you, the land flowing with milk and honey, that will be a place of rest.

And then when the wilderness generation disobeyed, God said, you will not enter that rest, your children will enter that rest. So rest was meant to be an image of being under God's rule, in God's place, at God's time, with God as the king.

Rest is an image of salvation. And ultimately I think the new heavens and the new earth are the place of rest, the eternal Sabbath rest that we're looking forward to.

And of course Jesus, he knew about this and he himself said, you who are weary and burdened and heavy laden, come to me, come to me, I will give you rest.

[3 : 24] And speaking about our salvation, rest is an image of salvation. And I think in a way in Genesis chapter 2, God is really preparing us to hunger for that moment of rest.

Because, I mean, what does it mean for God to take the seventh day off? Was he tired? Well, clearly not. And Jesus himself said that God has always been working and that's why Jesus says he can work on the Sabbath because God has to sustain everything.

God never tires. In fact, God needs to work all the time to keep the universe going and flowing. So what is God doing on the seventh day? Well, this is my solution.

I'm going to appeal, as I did last week, to human analogy. I suspect as the artist, when you do something creative, the consummation of the joy of the creative act is just a sit back and soak it in. So I think that's what God is doing. He's had his joyful, majestically playful, creative work over six days to consummate his own joy in what he's done.

[4 : 33] He has a day just to look at it and relish it. That's what God is doing on the seventh day, pausing just to complete the joy of the creative act. And if you...

Just think about what you do when you create stuff. It's school holidays in my house and we're all making cards this holidays. It's the new fad in the Shuler house. Everyone is making cards. And Helen has a whole room full of all the ribbons and coloured paper and stamps and everything you could possibly want to make any kind of card.

And this is where the computer is in our house. And even I, I was, you know, surfing the net and I was drawn into all these children in my room, all their friends. I was, I made a card this week.

And so I've got it here to show you actually. Very proud of this. You might laugh. So if you have a birthday soon, I might give you this card.

And see what we did in our house, when we made the cards, we just put them away. We put them on display and we all sat back and enjoyed them. And so yeah, I made this card of, it's supposed to be grass and that's a boy walking a dinosaur.

[5 : 41] Okay, so it's kind of clever and postmodern. So anyway. We'd been to the museum, so had dinosaurs on the brain. So what is God doing? He's majestically, playfully, creatively made this wonderful universe.

You consummate the creative act just by having a day to rest and enjoy it. And I think in a way, that's sort of what heaven will be like. We'll just be enjoying the new heavens and the new earth with God, worshipping him forever in a place of rest.

Now, there's a bridge then in verse 4 to a second creation account which looks at the act of creation with more focus on humanity.

And so it's a sort of different version of creation. I think it complements it very, very well and you need to read them both together. So here's what Moses says in verse 4. There's a bridge. 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 heaven when there was no plant and no shrub and it goes on to the second account. So often in the book of Genesis, there is a line like that where it says, these are the generations of.

[6 : 49] They mark off, Moses marks off the sections of Genesis with that line. So that's how he says, these are the generations of Noah. These are the generations of Terah and Abraham.

These are the generations of Jacob. And so it's God's own or Moses' own way of sort of showing us the sections of the book. And this new section of the book, Genesis 2, I'm going to sort of try and teach it to you under four headings, a garden, a man, a command and a helper.

So just four very simple ones, a garden, a man, a command and a helper. So let's think about first this place, this garden of Eden. It's described in this way, on the day the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, verse 5, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth, no herb of the field had yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth and there was no one to till the ground.

But a stream would rise from the earth and water the whole face of the ground. We've got a description here of a creation that's inadequate. And there are two things it needs. It needs God's sustenance in terms of rain to bring forth life and it needs somebody to work it, it needs someone to till the ground.

And we'll get to that person in a minute. In fact, let's do it now. Verse 8 to 9, The Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.

[8 : 16] So God has this beautiful garden. You can imagine it sort of walled off with a hedge, a very huge place. And in it he places a man. So this garden is for humanity.

It's a special place on the earth, on the creation for God's image bearers who have this unique role in creation. And you get this sense that it's a very good place.

For example, verse 9, Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. So it's an aesthetically marvellous place.

It's great to look at. It looks awesome. And everything you could want for food is growing on the tree. So it's a beautiful, abundant place. God loves to give gifts to creation.

And this looks like a very happy place to be. And also it mentions there's the tree of life in the midst of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

[9 : 18] We'll get to that in a minute. Moses goes on and talks about the bounty of this place. And he talks about it in terms of the four great rivers of the ancient world coming out of this place.

You know, the river Tigris, the river Euphrates, and a couple of others. And also it mentions there's lots of gold there and precious stones. Biddallium, onyx stone are there.

So you get this sense of there's a lot of resources here in Eden. It's really abundant in everything you could ever need. And for Adam to live there and Eve to live there, they'll live like kings and queens of creation.

There'll be nothing that they will need in this place. It's a great, great place. And even though it has these two trees, and let's think about that for a minute, it has the tree of life in the midst of the garden, maybe a sense of the tree of life in the centre, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

I suspect they're real trees, but what's important is what they represent in terms of God's creation and your relationship with God in the garden.

[10 : 26] And so they're kind of, they're external symbols to represent spiritual realities, though they're literally there. So I think that the tree of life, it's something about the abundant life that God is offering in this place that it represents all the trees in a way and all the life that God wants to give Adam and Eve that they could, obeying, trusting, loving God, they could be here indefinitely.

They could be here in perpetuity. There's life here in this place. And the other tree is a bit more subtle, isn't it? The tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Well, we'll see more of this next week as they eat from it wrongly, but I suspect that tree's there to remind Adam to not go his own way, to not seek autonomy, to not trust himself over trusting God, to not seek a kind of wrong knowledge of everything apart from the knowledge that God is giving him.

So it's a tree that represents that sort of sin that Adam may take of seeking autonomy from God, going his own way, not trusting God's word, which is exactly what happens next week.

But overall, I mean, you're not meant to think, well, there's a really spooky tree. You're meant to think, this is an amazing place and all they have to do is love and trust and follow God and it will be great and God will bless them and it's marvellous.

[11 : 58] It's a marvellous place. You should want to go to this place. That's the garden. Now, the garden, as I've already said, it's not just there for its own sake. It's there for people.

It's a special garden and custody of the garden is given to one man and it's already described in verse 5. One of the problems was that there's no one to till the ground.

It's been made to be worked and it's been made for Adam, it seems. And so in verse 7 and 8, I skipped it before, but you hear the formation of Adam from the dust. The Lord God formed man, or Adam, from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living being.

This is the care God takes to create one of his own image bearers and I suspect to humble us so that we don't think because we're made in God's image, we're above the rest of creation.

We're made from dirt. We're made from the stuff of creation and we're glorious but earthly. We're breathed with the divine life of God and yet we live in the garden.

[13 : 10] We're kind of part of this place of earth. And it's very clear the purpose of Adam's existence in our verse 15. The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden.

What for? To till it and to keep it. This is very significant. There are so many themes in Genesis 2 that relate to the world today and the way we live in the world today.

And what we're seeing here in Genesis 2 is the creation of work. The goodness of work in God's good creation. It's actually part of our design by God is to work.

And so it's not true to say that work is just a means to an end, that I live for the weekend or that the ultimate thing would be to win a lottery and just play golf all day.

We are made to work. We will find happiness in living as God has wired us to be and that is to work.

Now, we need to define work, I think, because God is not an economic rationalist as our society is.

[14 : 20] We do not value work just on what an income is. Work can be much unpaid work. So being a student is work. Retired people do many acts of service and that is work, isn't it?

That is good work. Unemployed people work, even if their work is finding work. That's their work. And so there is much work for all of us to do.

Even our children are made to work. I don't think it's healthy for our children to be parked in front of a television all the time. You know, we need to involve them in the life of the household and such things and in their studies.

We're not made to sort of tinker in a shed all day or play on a computer all day or watch TV all day or flitter from hobby to hobby. We are made to work.

And so, you know, you see that. And I think the best hobbies are the ones where actually they make us work and serve and help other people with even our hobbies. So here's a quote from Bishop J.C. Ryle, who was a great bishop in the 18th century or 19th century.

[15 : 30] He said, No created being was ever made to be idle. No created being was ever made or meant to be idle. Service and work are the appointed portion of every creature of God.

And that's what we are. We are creatures of God. We are made to work. And I think some of us are in danger of not working hard enough. For example, we have paid jobs, but we are lazy in them.

We muck around and we can get away with it, but we are essentially idle in God's eyes and we dishonor him by our lack of discipline in the workplace. Whatever stage of life you are in, whatever health you have, there is always some work to be done.

You know, the Christians should not be known for slacking off or laziness or cutting corners or wasting time, especially in light of the return of Christ. I mean, there are just so many things to be praying for.

That's all you can do is pray. There's so much work of prayer to be done, but so much work to be done in the church and in the ministries of this church and in evangelism. We should have no excuse for idleness that really pervades the Western world.

[16 : 44] And I think the other danger, of course, is, and I don't know how to describe this, but you know that it's a typical man of, he works, he focuses too much on his career and neglects his family and his wife, those sort of things.

I don't think that's overworking. I think that's a foolish view of work because Adam's job, we'll see, part of his work will be to care for his wife and eventually care for his children.

So we ought to see our responsibilities of work as being our career, but also our homes and households and not have one element of our work overshadow the rest.

That's imbalanced and foolish. Humans are created to fulfil responsibility. We're created to work hard and help others and serve God.

And so in this sense, work is worship. For Adam in the garden to till it and keep it, God speaks to him. God's powerful word which created the universe now dignifies this man and says, work.

[17 : 49] And so that is going to be part of his worship of God to work. So you're going to be worshipping God when you wake up tomorrow morning and get on the train and go to the city or whatever. That is worship of God and you ought to worship God in how you work.

It's a part of who we're made to be. The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and to keep it. So we've got a garden and we've got a man for the garden who's working it. And then we've got a very, very important command.

And I want to focus on this a little bit more. In verse 16 and 17, God addresses the man. Having got him to work, he says, here are the sort of rules of the garden.

You may freely eat of every tree of the garden, but the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat. From the day that you eat of it, you shall die. God is the boss, isn't he?

If this is his world, he ought to set the morals, they ought to reflect his character, he ought to set the rules and the commandments that we must follow without wavering, without questioning, without reasoning with, without being wise in our own eyes.

[18 : 58] We ought to just follow and obey this God. And actually, if you think about it, it's a very good command. It's got a positive aspect and a negative aspect. And the positive part's not often heard.

God says, you can freely eat of every tree of the garden. He's saying, he's commanding, bog in. It's yours. Enjoy it. Look at it. But, of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat.

Don't touch that one tree, which really just represents seeking the independence from God. Don't do that. Just trust me, love me, depend on me, and it's all yours.

Have it. What I love about this is that it's just one rule. It's a simple rule. People think, if I'm going to become a Christian, oh, there's going to be so many rules.

It's not true. Actually, the reverse is true. In our secular world, there are so many more rules. As people try and self-legislate, apart from God, it's actually much more complicated.

[20 : 06] You think about all the policies of your workplace and all the rules of your workplace. Let me give an example of this from a Christian hero of mine called Russian Alexander Solzhenitsyn.

He lived 12 years in a Russian gulag prison camp after World War II. Very, very hard time. Then he was exiled to America and he was very popular in the 70s.

Everyone wanted him to say, welcome to America. Isn't the West so much better than Russia because we're in the Cold War and there's a lot of propaganda about who's got the best society? Well, he came to America and he actually offended the West because he said, well, actually, this West isn't that great. He says, I've been in a prison camp. He says, you and the West have become so legalistic.

He says, you have a lawyer for everything. He said, nobody shows any voluntary self-restraint. They only do things if they're compelled by some law and so you have to have a law for everything.

[21 : 10] Do you see how that is in our society? Let me give you a quote from him from a very famous speech he gave to graduates of Harvard University. This is a great speech.

It's called A World Split Apart and this is what he says. He says, a society with no other scale but the legal one is not quite worthy of man.

Do you see that? We need to have a moral, God-centered scale that transcends the legal scale. He says, a society which is based on the letter of the law and never reaches any higher is not taking advantage of the high level of human possibility.

The letter of the law is too cold and formal to have a beneficial influence on society. Whenever the tissue of life is woven with legalistic relations, there is an atmosphere of moral mediocrity paralyzing man's noblest thoughts.

And he goes on to explain in that speech to this secular university that we need to appeal to God. We actually need to come back and have our accountability to God.

[22 : 17] I mean, you think about there's a discussion going now in Victoria and other states of Australia about a Bill of Rights. And again, it's just adding, you know, handing over to lawyers the whole moral realm and adding so many layers of complexity to try and make people be moral.

When actually, when you have God and you're in a relationship with God and you want to love and please God, you don't need many laws. You just need one law. Just donate to that tree.

See how simple it is? People came to Jesus. A lawyer, and not all lawyers are bad. We do need them, but they've just become inflated. You know, and the lawyer comes to Jesus and says, well, what's the greatest commandment?

Trying to trip him? He just says, well, there's only two. You know, just love God, love your neighbour. And that's a way to crush a lawyer. You don't need a lawyer if you've only got two laws. It's simple, isn't it? That's Christianity.

You're in a relationship with God. You want to serve and know and love God. It's the same for the Christian home. The Christian home ought not be marked by millions of rules. Don't do this.

[23 : 20] Don't do that. In my house, there are two rules. Worship Jesus. Obey your parents. It's pretty simple and there's a lot of freedom within those two rules and it's not hard to be in a Christian home.

You think about all your workplace policies and rules on rules and, you know, I've visited many schools and the walls of schools are plastered in moralisms because that's all secular society can come up with is legalisms and moralisms but we've got to actually call our world back to God and actually, it's part of the beauty of Christianity that you enter into a relationship with God.

It's actually quite simple and there aren't heaps of rules. You just, I want to know and love and please your God and having God in the centre means less legalism and less rules and the Garden of Eden reflects that.

There is one commandment, a serious one. If you don't eat of it, you will die. It will lead to death.

The wages of sin is death but it's straightforward. It's my point.

Now, finally, there's a helper and this is really the fun part because where the sex comes in and the marriage and this is really a text that, again, has been foundational to Christianised Western culture but now it's been forgotten and we are really paying the price for it in terms of our broken relationships and it depends on how old you are or whether you've been affected by this personally, how damaging you realise it is.

[24 : 54] If you are, say, under 40, if you are part of Generation X or Generation Y who have grown up in the aftermath of the catastrophe of failed marriages and failed relationships, you will see, you will know the pain that this causes.

I mean, I'm good friends with one family where they live in another city where there's three generations of women who are sort of all in de facto relationships and they're very pained, hurting people and it's just become cyclical in this family and that's the future of Australia of turning your back on marriage.

Let's just go into the marriage and see what happens. Here's the drama of the garden that God says it's not good for the man to be alone. I'll make a helper for him as his partner.

That's a stunning thing for God to say that, hang on a minute, Adam's in God's garden, there's no sin, he's with God, God walks in the garden and yet God is not enough for him.

He's actually missing something. It's actually quite stunning of God to say that God is not enough for him and God says he needs a helper, he needs a partner, he needs someone to help him with this task of working the garden and so I think what that's saying is that God has wired people generally speaking for marriage and this is not the world we live in now and for various reasons, partly because of sin, partly because of the cause of the kingdom and just partly because it's how things fall out.

[26 : 34] Not everyone is to be married but that desire is generally there and that design is stamped on all of us even if we aren't married. I think this explains why singleness can be so painful for so many people because God has stamped on us this need to be married but it's not always God's will.

And then there's a little sort of game that God plays with Adam okay, you need a helper let's go and find you one and John took us through that where he brings forward all the animals and Adam in sort of leadership of the garden names them all, names them all and he can't find a creature for which he has an affinity and a kind of a connection with.

And then so God, you know, God carefully orchestrates all of this. There's the first anaesthetic a few thousand years before it was sort of properly invented. The Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man.

He took one of his ribs and from that he made into a woman and he brought her to the man. This is a really beautiful scene of the first marriage God.

God, again, he's generous, giving gifts, giving this man a beautiful naked woman to be his wife.

He's a wonderful God, isn't he? And finally Adam can say, yes, here is someone who is my equal.

[27 : 54] Here is someone who can help me with my task of caring for this garden. And there really is a lot of science that backs this up, this sort of view of the importance of marriage.

One study that was published on the BBC website that I read, and I may have used this before, but apparently there are so many health benefits for being married and staying married, especially if you are a man.

If you are a man, you have to love your wife and keep your marriage strong. Apparently the health benefits for men are greater than quitting smoking. So that's what they've worked out, that you live longer.

It's better to actually keep a strong marriage and stay smoking than it is to quit smoking and get divorced. Think of all the money we spend on the quit campaigns.

Do you know what I mean? We should spend that much money strengthening marriages, promoting marriages. I think in this marriage, it comes out in a few ways and more next week, but there is an order within the relationship as well as an equality.

[29 : 03] So Eve is very clearly his associate. She's very clearly his helper. The task is primarily his. He's sort of the head of this garden and she's to work with him in that.

I suspect this is where we get our men are from Mars, women are from Venus. There's a biblical truth to that view of men and women that Adam is primarily task oriented.

God gave him the task of the garden and Eve was formed in the context of relationship. She's more relationally oriented. I think that's broadly where we get our male-female generalizations of men being task oriented, women being relational.

It's sort of here in the beginnings. In fact, we even have from Adam the first song of the Bible, not directed to God, but directed to this beautiful wife.

He says, And that works exactly the same in the Hebrew.

[30 : 05] Woman, man, isha, ish. And so, he's named to be his complement, his equal. And this is the first song of the Bible. And if I can quote that awful man, Tom Cruise, if you've seen that movie, Jerry Maguire, at the end where he says, you complete me, pretty corny line.

But it's true here of Adam and Eve. He's saying to her, you complete me, you were made for me. And it's a great thing, the first marriage. And then Moses gives us sort of this summary conclusion about what marriage is.

And this is sort of really what's been forgotten today. A man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife and they become one flesh. That's what God does to a married couple. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. And here, this is God's mandate for sex. This is God's blessing of sex in God's good creation.

Sex is not inherently sinful. Within a marriage, it's blessed by God. And there's this view that God is the author of marriage and that God does an amazing thing in a marriage.

[31 : 12] He makes a man and a woman one flesh, which explains why it is so painful if you have, I pray God spares you, but if you've been through it, it's so painful to be divorced and the pain goes on for decades and decades because you've torn apart what God has made one flesh.

And so you need a lot of love and care and support from God's family if that's your situation. And I think here also about my own marriage counselling that I've done where I've tried to encourage couples who are struggling in their marriage.

So often in a marriage there are issues with parents interfering and you can sort of see God anticipating that here in Genesis 2. In the beginning, a man leaves his father and mother and they become a new family unit.

And so many marriages are hamstrung by parents interfering, especially say, you know, trying to come between the couple or manipulate their child and not respect them as a new unit, as a new family.

So if you have children who are married, please uphold them as a marriage, support their marriage, don't do anything to divide them but relate to them and honour them as a married couple. People came to Jesus again and he quoted this asking him about divorce and he kind of didn't answer the question in one sense but he just gave this general principle, what God has joined together, let no one separate.

[32 : 42] It's so easy to think the grass is greener on the other side but it never is if you're talking about giving up on a marriage. I think Genesis 2 is telling us marriage is to be honoured.

If you are married, let me encourage you, never give up, never give up and trust yourself to God's care. no matter how hard it is, never ever give up for God's honour, for God's sake, not because your spouse deserves it but for God's honour, don't give up and trust yourself to God's care. Now if you are deserted or they run off, you can't control that. I'm not saying that's your fault but as best as it is in your power, do not give up on what God has made one flesh.

Let me conclude. At this stage in the story, sin has not entered. It is all good. The world is good. It's his world. Work is good.

It's hardwired into our design. Marriage is good to be celebrated and enjoyed by most of us. Sex is good to be received with thanks in marriage and regularly exercised as part of an expression of being one flesh.

[33 : 53] Your gender is a gift from God, being man or being a woman. Complementary, equal but different. That's a gift from God. I know that that's not quite the world we live in.

I know that in our world, work is frustrating and painful. Marriages and relationships become war zones of much hurt. That's because next week we'll see Adam sought autonomy from God.

Rebellion entered our world and that rebellion, we pay the price for it today. Sin spoils everything. As we'll see next week. But let me just reiterate that there is still goodness in the world.

There's still goodness in marriage, still goodness in work and God's standards should be followed out of honour of him, out of respect for him. We are in his world, we are made in his image.

And finally I just want to conclude with this last puzzle from putting Genesis 2 and 1 together.

Because Adam is actually there in Genesis 1. I don't know if you noticed him but he's actually there.

[34 : 54] It's not just Genesis 2 where you get Adam. Adam is there in chapter 1 in verse 27 where it says, let us make humanity in our image.

The Hebrew for that is let us make Adam in our image. And so Adam is there in chapter 1 and chapter 2. He's there in chapter 1. His name means mankind kind or all humanity.

Adam. And there in chapter 2 he's there I think as the head of humanity being entrusted with the garden, being entrusted with the commands of God and he'll pass them on to his wife and to his children.

Adam is there in chapter 1 and 2 of Genesis as the head of the human race, as our first parent. And you see actually again in chapter 5 of Genesis, if you want to look this up at home, Genesis 5 verse 2 says, male and female God created them, he blessed them and he named them Adam when they were created.

And our translation has humankind, footnote Adam. Why does Adam have the name of humanity? Why does Adam become the representative head of the race?

[36 : 07] Why would one man do that? The answer, this garden, this creation is going to be a stage for the glory of the Son of God.

This creation is going to be a theatre by which in the story of the Bible the Son of God can enter and die and be raised as the king of this world, of this universe.

This whole thing, this whole set up of Genesis 1 and 2 and 3 is preparing us for Jesus Christ to be the head of a new humanity. So if you are a Christian, you are not just a child of Adam, you are a child of the new Adam, Jesus Christ who is fully God and fully man forever.

Do you see how significant that is? That in you, in this group, in this room, you are a new creation and through you, you'll be part of the new heavens and the new earth. You'll be workers in the kingdom of God forever as part of what God is doing to transform this world from the old to the new. So it's a very precious thing and we ought to delight in the fact that even in Genesis 1 and 2 we can see God setting us up for the reign of Jesus Christ, the new head, the new Adam, the new one who represents and will be a new humanity.

[37 : 31] He's a great God, isn't he? He's marvellous. Let's praise him now. Please bow your heads. Lord God, we love you and we praise you and we express our thanks to you for all these good gifts of work, of marriage, of relationships, of community.

We thank you for your creation and we pray, Father, that we will live in your world trusting you, trusting your design, being faithful to you and not seeking to question you or reinterpret it or help us to honour our marriages.

We pray for our dear friends who have been hurt by the effects of divorce. We pray for your healing and we pray that as we are all being made in the image of Christ here that that would bring healing to many who have been affected by that, whether children or parents or those involved.

Lord Jesus, we honour and worship you that this is your world, that you entered it to redeem us and to live forever as our Saviour King, as our new Adam.

And so we bow the knee to you now, Lord Jesus, and pray that we may live showing the world what you are doing in it and loving this world that you have made. Amen. Thank you. Thank you.

[38 : 50] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.