

Two Ways to Live

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Preacher: Cedric Moss

[0 : 00] Please turn your Bible to Genesis chapter 2. And as we continue our extended series through the book of Genesis, we come this morning to Genesis chapter 2.

! And as we continue our extended series through the book of Genesis chapter 2. And then we'll also be reading Psalm 1. Genesis chapter 2, beginning in verse 4.

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, and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground.

Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the earth, from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

And the man became a living creature. And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.

[1 : 36] And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there divided and became four rivers. The name of the first is Pishon.

It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilla, where there is gold. And the gold of that land is good.

Bidallium and onyx stone are there. The name of the second river is the Gihon. 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. The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.

[2 : 47] And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 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. If you turn over to Psalm 1, if you have a church Bible, that's on page 488.

Psalm 1. Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers, but his delight is in the law of the Lord.

And on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither.

In all that he does he prospers. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

[4 : 11] For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

Would you pray with me? Father, we bow our hearts this morning, and we thank you for your word. Lord, we ask that you would speak to our hearts.

God, would you open our eyes and grant us illumination that we might see what we would not otherwise see, and cause us to hear what you would say to us, and that we would respond to your voice.

God, I ask for your grace and your Holy Spirit to come, that I might be able to be faithful to proclaim your word with unction and power, with clarity, that these who are gathered this morning may profit from your word, and that you, in the preaching of your word, will build your church and strengthen your people and save the lost.

We ask that you would do this now in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, so far we have considered God's very good creation, and how at the end of creation, God ceased, or he rested, and he invited Adam and Eve to enter into the work that he had done, to enjoy what he had done.

[5 : 49] And last week we considered how that is the rest that Christ calls us into. He calls us to rest in the work that he has done on the cross.

As we come to this section this morning in Genesis chapter 2, we come to a new section in the book, and Moses signals it with these words that we find in verse 4, these are the generations. And what you find in the book of Genesis is there are 11 mentions of this through different sections of the book, and it helps you to see the different episodes or the different sections that Moses is laying out before the children of Israel and by extension to us.

And so we are signaled in verse 4 that this is a new section. And he says, these are the generations. Now, what we've seen is that this particular passage that we are looking at, Moses lays out essentially two ways how we are to live.

But it is important for us to see that this is not disconnected from the rest of this section. This entire section runs until the end of verse, the end of chapter 20, chapter 4 in verse 26.

[7 : 24] And you'll notice that there are six sermons planned in this section. And I say this because I don't want us to hear the sermons like in silos or separate from one another. There's this one big story that Moses is telling, but it is too big for us to try to cover in one setting.

So we're cutting it up into six different sermons. But this is one section that we are going to be looking at starting in verse 4.

And so what we have seen so far is we've seen that God has done this amazing creation. we'll see in this section that he takes Adam and he places him in this garden that he planted for him, give him a habitation, give him a place where he is able to be protected.

In this section, we'll also see how God gives Adam a tailor-made wife, a wife that is suited for him, gives him a gift as a helper.

And then this section of Genesis as well, we'll see in a couple of weeks how Adam and Eve fell, how they sinned, how they rebelled against God, and how God pronounces a curse on the serpent and announces a curse on Eve and on Adam, and how he banishes them from the garden and the tree of life.

[8 : 49] We'll also see in this section how the first murder that took place took place between two brothers. We'll see how this descend into sin results in people just living in contrary ways.

We'll also see how there's this man, Lamech, who's the first person who defies what God has ordained.

and how he takes two wives instead of following the pattern that God gives of giving Adam one wife. Lamech takes two wives.

And then Lamech also murders a man who just struck him. And so this section is all together, and Moses is telling a story.

He's telling a story about how God's amazing, perfectly good creation became marred. Now you're probably wondering what's the point in all of this.

[9 : 58] And I think the point in all of this is that we need to see that what we are considering this morning is really not disconnected from us.

It's easy to read this as you know, an ancient Bible story, but we need to read it to make sense of the world in which we live.

For example, when we understand what Moses is writing in this section, it'll help us to understand how a man is able to have an argument with two persons and walk away and come back with a gun and kill them in cold blood as happened on Friday not too far from here on Camp Road.

When we understand what Moses is laying out for us in this section, we'd understand what is wrong in the world and how the world went wrong. We'll understand how a leader like Vladimir Putin could start a war, a war that has resulted in the slaughter of tens of thousands of people, Ukrainians and his own people because of darkness that is in his mind.

But we'll also understand some things that are closer to home. We'll understand why sometimes as a husband you may be harsh with your wife or as a wife while you may be rebellious and unrespecting towards your husband or as a child being disrespectful or disobedient to parents or as a father exasperating and exhausting children through unbiblical discipline.

[12:00] In short, when we understand this section that we've come to this morning and that we will be considering over the next six sermons, we will understand how God's good and perfect creation became marred and we'll understand what's really wrong in this world and why the world is broken and why the world is fallen in the state that it is.

Yes, on a closer level, we will analyze the situation and say, well, he was angry or she provoked him but underneath it all, brothers and sisters, it is what Moses tells us happened in this particular account.

And what Moses lays out for us in this account is that God has laid out for us how we are to live. And so this morning what I hope that we'll see as we consider this passage in Genesis 2 and as we consider Psalm 1, I trust that we're able to see that there are only two ways to live.

One that leads to life and the other that leads to death. That's the bottom line of the point that Moses is making in Genesis 2, 4 through 7.

There's some other things in there but let's not be distracted by them. Bottom line, what he's telling us what he was telling Israel and what we need to hear as well is that there are only two ways to live.

[13:33] The book of Psalms, the psalmist in the opening psalm of the first book of the Psalms, he sings about these two ways to live.

And so let's consider these two ways beginning with the first one, the way of life. the way of life that we see in this passage is the way of obedience. And it's represented by the tree of life that is referred to two times in this passage.

And in laying out these two ways to live, Moses does something that we could easily miss if we're not paying attention. In verse 4, for the very first time, Moses refers to God by his personal name. His personal name, Yahweh. He refers to God and Yahweh is that word that we have translated in our Bibles as Lord in all camps. Prior to this time, 35 times up to verse 4 of chapter 2, Moses refers to God.

But he refers to him as Elohim. He refers to him because God, he designates God with that word as the one who creates, the God who is the God of creation.

[14:57] But now he adds another designation, another name to God. It's a personal name. And this is the name that God reveals himself throughout the rest of Scripture.

He calls him Lord God. So this is Yahweh Elohim. and what is interesting about this is that this is the revealed name of God when God draws near to create Adam.

Now what you'd notice is that in verses 5 through 9, we get some details about creation and the creation of man that we don't find in chapter 1.

We find them here and Moses tells us really up close how God created Adam in these verses that we'll see how he created Eve later on.

But in chapter 1 all we are told is that God created man and woman in his own image. But now he is revealed as the Lord God.

[16:08] And so that's what he says, the Lord God. is the one who came and created Adam. In verse 7 we're told that the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into him the breath of life.

Now I'm referring to the man as Adam but Adam doesn't get his name until like verse 20. So up to this point he's just being referred to as the man. But I'm referring to him as Adam even though it's a little ahead of the account.

And the reason Adam is called Adam is the word for ground is Adama and Adam came from the ground so he is called Adam.

He is the one that God created from the ground and that's where his name comes from. But what we see is in the creation of Adam we see the all-powerful God the God who spoke everything into existence creating Adam differently.

Could he have spoken Adam into existence? Yes. But he doesn't. He draws near in a personal way and so what we see is we see the God who is transcended who is able to speak and things come into being he is also imminent he is the one who comes nearby and he creates Adam differently.

[17:35] breathes into him the breath of life and places his image on Adam and says you will be my image bearer in the earth.

And he does this not as Elohim but he does this as Yahweh Elohim the God who is the creator but also Yahweh is the God who is the covenant redeemer.

And so you remember when Moses is writing to the nation of Israel they would have by this time been delivered from Egypt and they know that God has delivered them and Moses is trying to help them to understand who this God is who delivered them.

Not only is he the creator God but he is also the redeemer the covenant keeping God. And we see in verse 8 that the Lord creates a home or a habitation for Adam.

Again the account tells us this is very early on there's no bush in the field there was no small plant in the field it had not rained yet and God is showing his amazing care for Adam and he plants this garden sanctuary this home for Adam where Adam is going to live.

[18 : 51] He didn't do this for the other animals who were created before Adam but he does this for Adam and I know when we think of garden some of us will think about you know the patch in the back of our yard but that's not what he's doing here.

This is a vast area in this place called Eden which we don't know exactly where that is specifically but it is an amazing place in the Septuagint which is the translate the Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures the word for garden was translated paradisos where we get paradise from and that's what God actually designed for Adam he designed this paradise for him where he had every single thing that he needed everything that he could want this garden was like a paradise and it had all kinds of trees in it Moses tells us in verse 9 that the Lord God made to spring out of the ground every tree that is good that is pleasant to the eyes and good for food and then he highlights two of the trees two of the trees two trees in particular our attention is drawn to the tree of life in the midst of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil now verses 10 to 14 is kind of like a by the way that Moses puts in there because he's really focusing our attention and dwelling on these two trees in particular but let's just run through what he tells us in verses 10 to 14 tells us that there was a river that flowed out of Eden to water the garden and this should tell us something about the vastness of the garden that it took a river to actually water it the vastness of Eden and also the vastness of the garden that God had planted for Adam to be a habitation and clearly

God didn't plan just for Adam to live there God was preparing for Adam's offspring that he would have offspring and that they would progressively go out and they would take dominion over the land and that's why this river would divide into four different directions and the picture here is to the four ends of the earth I don't think this was kind of like just haphazard just for anywhere I think it's the four different directions given this picture of going out to the ends of the earth and Moses also tells us the names of these rivers two of them we can identify today the Tigris and the Euphrates and they are in modern day Iraq but the other two Pishon and Gihon they have not been satisfactorily identified and so I don't think they're really the point Moses also makes reference to the good gold in part of the area and

Bdellium and the onyx stone and interestingly the Lord would later call for these same precious metals in the building of the temple and the building of the tabernacle of Moses and I think the idea is that he is calling the people to recognize that these precious resources are God's resources out of God's earth and there will come a time when God calls for them and those who have the blessing of holding them must freely give them I think that's the point that the hint that Moses is laying early on and later on he's going to give instructions about the building of the temple and calling the people in Exodus 25 to bring all the resources to build the temple and then we see in verses 15 to 17 that God puts Adam in the garden and he tells him that he is to work it and he is to keep it or some translations say he is to guard it he is to tend it he is to work it he is to cultivate it he is also to guard it so Adam was a gardener and he was a guardian and I think we all know that you only need to guard where there is some danger or threat and although we don't have a whole lot of details we can put things together in scripture and we can have a sense that there was a good reason that God called Adam to not only work but also to guard even as he worked and we will see that very clearly in chapter 3 where the adversary will come and he will challenge

God's word and therefore Adam needed to be a guardian but we also see God's generosity in this passage he causes to grow up in this garden these are mature trees these are not you know put a seed in the ground and God gave them mature trees and the description is that they were all kinds of trees pleasant to the eyes and good for food and God says to him he says you're free to eat off all of these trees except one the generosity of God eat off all of these trees including the tree of life that's in the middle of the garden you're free to eat of all of them but this one you must not eat of because the day that you eat you're going to surely die so God warns him about this tree and says don't you eat off this tree because the day that you eat you will surely die and so what we see is

God really gave

[25 : 09] Adam options a sanctuary garden he's the only the only of God's creation who has that an abundance of beautiful trees from which he could eat including the tree of life but there is one prohibition and God not only told him not to do it he also told him why he shouldn't do it sometimes without children we may say to them don't do this if we give them no reason don't do it because I said not to do it but God not only does tell him not to do it but God tells him the day that you eat of this you will surely die and so what we see is Adam was not created as an immortal being Adam could die and clearly God made Adam to understand the issues of life and death because if he didn't the warning would make no sense to him the warning only would make sense if he knew what it meant to die and he knew what it meant to also live and so what we see is that the first way to live was laid out to

Adam and the first way to live may be summarized as obedience to the Lord obedience to the Lord is the first way that is laid out for Adam to live and brothers and sisters it's the way that's laid out for us to live as well not just for Adam it is the way for us to live in obedience to the Lord the Lord is the one who sets the boundaries for life he is the one who sets the rules for life why he is the creator he is the one who created the world in which we live he is the one who created us and places into the world and been abundantly good to us and he lays down the rules and he says follow these rules! live within these boundaries and in living the way that God calls us to live means that we will not do what he calls us not to do that's the first way to live in obedience to the Lord but in this passage we also see there's another way to live it's represented by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil which is the tree of death which brings me to my second and final point the way of death the way of death is the way of disobedience it is represented by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil the way of death is to disobey God and to try to understand evil and good away from God it is to have our sense of right and wrong away from God it is to make ourselves like God and we can decide what is right and what is wrong and what we are going to do versus what God calls us to it is to be arrogant and wise in our own eyes but the truth is brothers and sisters the knowledge of good and evil can only be known in a true sense from God can only be known from God it cannot be known from ourselves we cannot be the reference point for ourselves to truly know good and evil comes by following God's way obedience rather than going the way of disobedience which leads to death now we're not told much about the tree of life it's mentioned but we're not told much about it but

I believe it's reasonable to conclude that included in the tree of life the tree of life certainly represented the way of life but included in choosing the tree of life was the way to understand good and evil from God's perspective the way God lays it down as opposed to trying understand it on our own by ourselves you may remember if you're somewhat familiar with the book of judges that there's a refrain that runs through the book of judges it says in those days Israel had no king and everyone did what what was right in his own eyes and brothers and sisters not much has changed our world can still be described truthfully in that way that everyone is doing what is right in his or her own eyes and that is because although this story is about

[30 : 30] Adam and the choices that he had it's also about us as well that the ways of life are before us and there are so many who have chosen the way of disobedience the way of death which is to disobey God and which is to understand the world and what is morally right and what is wrong based on their own wisdom and their own knowledge and so God still speaks to us from his word he still speaks to us to tell us that there are two ways to live the way of disobedience that leads to death the way of obedience that leads to life and so the issue is that we have to choose how we're going to live in God's world as God's creatures will we choose the way of obedience that leads to life or we choose the way of disobedience that leads to death and the outcome of these two ways could not be more divergent and drastic and that's what the psalmist picks up in

Psalms 1 he sings about these two ways to live he sings first about the righteous man or the righteous way he speaks about the way of obedience the man who delights in the law of the Lord he meditates!

on it day and night he meditates on it because he wants to obey it he meditates on it because he delights in it he meditates on it because he's come to see the wisdom and the rightness of following the way of the Lord brothers and sisters this is no small thing when God has opened our eyes and we realize that had he not opened our eyes we would have been delighting in darkness and delighting in sin this man who's the righteous man who is following God's way in God's path he is

delighting in the things of the Lord that he would not otherwise delight in because he wants to obey it he avoids companionship with the wicked and those who are not walking in God's ways and not walking in God's delight and the psalmist likens him unto a well planted tree that is watered and that is very fruitful the psalmist says this man will stand in the day of judgment he will stand when the all righteous

God judges and the reason he stands is because he has walked in God's way by God's grace and God is able to make him stand and then in stark contrast to the righteous man the psalmist also talks about the man who chooses the way of death the way of disobedience to God and he has a dark and a despairing outcome he is described as the wicked who scoffs and who mocks God's way and God's law he has no true stability his life is marked by the absence of divine blessings he's likened to the chaff or the husk of the wheat that the wind takes and blows away and about him the psalmist says he will not stand in the day of judgment in the day of judgment he will perish and you know so brothers and sisters when we think of life life is not as complex as people make it life is basically simple life is about two ways to live and two kinds of people the two ways to live are God's way or our own way the way of life or the way of death and the two kinds of people are those who live on those respective roads those who are the walking dead on the road of death those who are living with the life that God gives on the road to life Jesus picks this up in the Sermon on the Mount when he talks about the two roads the broad road and the narrow road and he said there are few that find the narrow road many are on the broad road and he uses two terms to describe these roads he says the one leads to life and the other one leads to destruction and so life in this sense is very simple and what I find is oftentimes there will be a person who will acknowledge to me that they're not serving the

[35 : 56] Lord and that means they're not on the way of life but they are reluctant to say that they are on the road of death as if there's another road there's no other road brothers and sisters we are on the road of life or we are on the road of death and the road of life is marked by those who are living in obedience and in conformity to the Lord the one who owns this world the one who created us and placed us in his world and gave us the boundaries in which we should live and the other is to go totally contrary to that those are the only two ways and for those of us this morning who are gathered or watching online if we know within our hearts that we are on the road of life we are in that way that leads to life we should rejoice in the amazing grace of

God that has put us on that road because the truth is that not one of us woke up one day and said you know what I'm tired of being on this road of death and destruction and I'm going to go on that road to life left to ourselves we'd be on the road to death with a smile on our faces going to our death but one day for all of us God in mercy and grace came to us and he opened our eyes to the wonder and the beauty of serving him and living by his rules and living his way in his world and he took us off of that road of destruction and brought us on to the way of life and we should rejoice this morning if that's where we find ourselves but if in your heart of hearts being as honest as you know with yourself you are not on the road of life and you are on the road of death say to you turn to Jesus because he still rescues off of the road of death he still rescues the perishing he still cares for the dying he still brings!

them into his fold you can turn from your sins you can trust in him and what you will find is a savior who is quick to pardon all of your sins and to give you a new life on a new road that leads to eternal life next week we're going to see how God was even more gracious to Adam and see Moses is building the case to get us to chapter three he's helping us to see how God was amazingly generous with Adam all that he gave him he's going to give him a wife who was a helper for him and then we're going to see that despite of all of that he blows it and he disobeys the Lord but may God help us this morning to recognize that this is these are the options to live these are the options God's way or our own way the way of life or the way of death let's pray together Father we thank you for your amazing grace that you have not just laid before us the two ways to live but Lord even when Adam failed and disobeyed Lord you were the covenant redeemer who rescued your people and redeemed them and placed them on the road to life Lord we thank you this morning for your saving work in our lives that took us off the path of death and destruction and put us on the path of life and

[40 : 36] Lord may we ever rejoice in your amazing grace towards us and oh Lord I do pray that you would convict the hearts of those who do not know the Lord Jesus those who are on the road to death and thinking it's a good time God open their eyes to help them to see the truth and help them

to see reality God would you rescue them from death and destruction and bring them into the kingdom of your dear son we pray these things in Jesus name amen let's stand for closing song