

The Gospel in the Garden

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Preacher: Rev Donald M Macleod

[0 : 0 0] short time the chapter that we read genesis chapter two genesis chapter two i'm taking in really the whole of the chapter in our short time but just for sake of of a text for us we can take the verse we have this wonderful section of poetry the verse for these the generations of the heavens and the earth when are created in the day that the lord god made the earth and the heavens we are as we said on the lord's day beginning with the lord's help a new series this evening and we're beginning this new series the best place possible for a new series to start at the start of scripture now this series when i tell you what it's going to be called you might think this new minister of ours he's he's lost a thought he's been on his own for a week and he's beginning to lose it already the series roughly is going to be called along the lines the name will improve i'm sure time goes on the gospel in the gardens so we're going for gospel in the gardens and just as it says in the tin we're looking at gardens not gardening but gardens all the way throughout the bible there are themes as we all know throughout scripture various themes that the lord uses to tie scripture together and these themes of course ultimately all point towards becoming savior all point towards jesus and it's the same with the theme of garden gardens again and again throughout scripture we see gardens or garden imagery appearing throughout the pages the old testament prophets the psalms into the new testament and even into our future which gardens in our future but that's for a few weeks time with the lord's help so all that being said we find ourselves here this evening at the start of creation to of course perhaps the most famous or one of the most famous gardens we have in scripture which is the garden of eden and there's no time this evening no time in in tens or hundreds of sermons to go into the the glorious depth of god's creation that's a whole different series itself but just this evening focusing on this garden itself and just under two very simple and at times which are overlapping points looking first of all of a garden in its design the garden in its design and then secondly the garden in its purpose so the design of the garden and the purpose of the garden we can begin looking at verse 8 of chapter 2 it's where this narrative really starts for us verse 8 and the lord god planted a garden in eden in the east and there he put the man whom he had formed so beginning to look at the the design of the garden we first look how this garden was both planted and placed so planted and placed in the midst of god's new creation the whole universe has just been spoken into existence all that exists all that created that exists in our universe has been spoken into existence the glory the grandeur of the first chapter all the days of creation and then it narrows down we're going from looking at the whole universe the whole god's creation now we're focusing not even just on earth but on one small patch one small bit of land on earth here in verse 8 of chapter 2 and here god plants a garden

there's more even to that who is the one planting it verse 8 and the lord god the lord god i covered this on sunday and again last first evening but again every time we see the name of god in scripture at least in the old testament often in the new but especially in the old testament it it pays us to stop for a second just for a second and see what name of god is being used here again capital l-o-r-d we've all heard a million times before from this pulpit and for myself plenty of times capital l-o-r-d is of course yahweh yahweh covenant keeping god the all-sufficient god god who is god already is he is god who needs nothing who needs no one and this god who needs nothing and who needs no one who is all self-sufficient he's just finished creating this glorious creation didn't need it god did not need this creation for himself to be somehow more satisfied or more complete if we even begin to use these words and we probably really shouldn't god doesn't need creation they chose to make creation he chose in that creation to then make us he's yahweh but also we see here he's yahweh elohim that's the second name of god there he is god of gods the covenant keeping god yahweh the god of god yahweh elohim he is lord over all other so-called lords and here this big glorious eternal god who is beyond our understanding he plants a garden he takes gentle time and gentle care to perfectly plant a garden in his new creation this garden we see it has a purpose whilst the rest of creation still seems to be a wasteland we see that verses 5 and verse 6 there's nothing growing yet really there's nothing really formed yet it's starting to grow there's there's animals but there's still there's still this sense of god doing his work in the midst of this this kind of wasteland we could say and we'll see that more next week lord willing we'll see of course what happens when adam and eve are forced to leave the garden but in this wasteland we see god has planted this perfect garden and in this garden god then places as it were the pinnacle of his creation the lord god where say it planted the garden eden in the east and there he put the man whom he had formed and the word there for put it's a similar word to the word for planted and it's a beautiful image the image is god plants the garden and then almost plants man in the garden the same care that a gardener does to make his garden look beautiful god takes that same care to plant man to place man gently in the garden what's the point of the garden it's been planted man's been placed into it this garden is a garden of both provision and also of beauty we see that verses 9 down to verse 14 a place of provision and a place of beauty verse 9 and out of the ground the lord god made his spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food god is a god of order isn't he he's a god who orders all that he does eternally perfect but god is also a god who cares as it were for beauty of course not talking about ourselves here but god is a god who has made creation beautiful now when we look around us even for his lochie even lochie can admit that from even my kitchen when they're doing the dishes in

the morning the view is of course beautiful it's a glorious view but the view i have of my morning dishes even that view out across trivore across most of the village half a village that's a view that's been marred by effects of sin we live in a world damaged by sin even the most beautiful views we have are somehow tainted by sin at this point there is no sin in the world and god makes everything perfectly beautiful and god cares the beauty of his creation that's the most glorious thing we have here in verse 9 and god doesn't just make the garden practical and livable for man he makes trees that can be eaten but also trees that are pleasant to the sight brothers and sisters even a small way in a passing half a sentence we're reminded that god cares for the ones he has made god cares for the ones he calls his own adam wouldn't have known or cared we're sure if the garden was bland and purely practical adam of course didn't know anything else this is all the world he knew but god wanted to make sure that adam saw a world the first man opened his eyes when he was first created and saw a world that was beautiful fossil trees were practical trees that could feed and provide food for this garden paradise yes of course man was to tend the garden we'll see that in a second but the reality is god had as it were done the hard work man was placed a garden to look after it but the trees were there the hard work was already there when adam opened his eyes and through that first breath he he he became alive he got up and walked around a garden that was ready made by a gracious and loving god in this garden that was so perfectly planted where man was placed in this garden where god provided beauty and provided food we also see just very briefly here in verse 9 there is also presence and perfection in the garden verse 9 at the end of verse 9 the tree of life was in the midst of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil of all the trees the lord has created and planted we see these two trees being specifically mentioned and we come to discussing these trees in verse 9 we must tread very very carefully and not for a second not for a second would i begin to claim as we look at these verses that we can see that i can see for certainty what is going on there has been discussions and debates from the very first christians up till now and your new minister certainly won't solve these debates for you but it's good for us to delve into as much as the word allows us we can say that these were two very real trees in the garden they were real as the rest of the trees and these trees were also central to the garden quite literally they were central they were in the middle the tree of life was in the midst of the garden now we know what happens later on with these trees we know how they feature later on and we'll be more detailed as to that next week and that is next week's discussion as we look at what happened for a man and woman to leave this beautiful prepared graciously given garden we can't ignore just now just the mention of these trees we can't just say just now in passing that these trees for everything else they go on to mean these trees represented something incredible they represented

god's presence with man the tree of life representing god's presence with his created beings the other tree also is there the tree of the knowledge of good and evil represented man's responsibility before an eternally holy god eternally holy god eternally holy god we leave these trees there just now that's again for next week in more detail with the lord's help but in this garden god's presence was seen was known and was evidenced at all times by the physical reality of the trees that god has planted right in the middle of it so that's the design of the garden placed by god planted by god made perfect by god with food given to adam and to eve later on a garden made beautiful for adam and for eve a garden where god made his presence known to adam and to eve but what was the point of this garden was it just there for early man for the first man to to get a good start in life there's more going on as we look at these verses brings us to our second point the purpose of the garden the purpose of the garden first of all as we went to at least one of the many purposes in verse 15 we see that the garden was a place of work verse 15 the lord god took the man and put him in the garden of eden to work it and to keep it as we say the garden was ready made the trees were fully grown the beauty was there and adam's job was to tend what god had already given him now some think and some will say that in a sinless world there's no work a work only became a thing uh because of the fall and if there was no sin then none of us would work and we'd have spent all our days and frolicking and frolicking in the garden and just eating the fruit of the trees and is that the life we see adam would have had you know adam had clearly a job to do in the garden work it is not a result of the fall toil is hard work we could say at least hard work that is that is painful but is unenjoyable that's a work of the fall a result of the fall we'll see that next week that that sin doesn't bring work but sin brings toil and pain but man was made to have a purpose and even sinless man had a job to do and again this touches more to the end of our series as we look to the final garden we see in scripture but just to to give us a hint and we know where it's going the reality is that at the end of our days we see a new heavens don't we and a new earth and heaven and earth we see the reality that we are there physically and i'm a new heavens i'm a new earth the evidence points to the fact that there will still be activity there will still be work to be done and this is for a later time but it's not as if we'll be in glory just with respect just floating around just just ethereal singing that that's not scriptural that's from cartoons that's from artwork that's from the world scripture paints a new heavens a new earth where there is activity perfect sinless activity but activity nonetheless because the new heavens and the new earth is the garden but forever the garden but perfected in jesus the garden but so much more

glorious so much more perfect the garden without the possibility of a fall and if there's work in the original garden if sinless man had work to do then not for a second shall we think that in our eternal futures there won't be activity there'll be joyous activity and we'll see that more in the weeks to come it's a place of work but if we read quickly we might lose track there's something else going on in this garden it's the same verse we have again for us in verse 15 the lord god took the man and put him in the garden of eden to work it and keep it yes we just said that we just said all you said about that verse why are we going back to it again there's something fascinating going on in this verse which tells us something incredible something glorious and something about eden that shouldn't surprise us really yes he was to work the garden and to keep the garden but there's no wasted words in scripture and the two words here of adam's job description we could say these two words appear elsewhere in scripture in fact these two words appear often elsewhere in scripture in one very specific context the word here in verse 15 for adam to work the garden it literally means to serve the garden to serve the garden and the word here used to keep the garden verse 15 quite literally is to guard the garden so man was to work and keep it to tend it but also he was to serve the garden and to guard the garden where else in scripture do we find these exact same two hebrew words used together in the exact same way words we see to describe the duties of the priests again and again and again more specifically the duty given to the levites in their temple service the instructions given to adam the same instructions then repeated later on to the priests to guard the temple to keep the temple that's important for us to to to grasp that just now because it is so essential for us as we carry on this journey and just for a wee insight into a few weeks time as we come to look at the tabernacle that traveling temple here's some homework for you so i won't double check but if you have time go look at some of the tabernacle design and see where we're going in a few weeks time and see what you notice in the tabernacle design that brings you back to genesis that brings you back to eden tabernacle was called even by our own reformed uh forefathers the traveling garden the reason for that adam was there to worship god and to serve god and for us to to fully grasp the horror of adam's sin next week we first have to fully understand his role in the garden the garden of course is where god met with man where god we see later on interacted with man adam as such as the link between man and god he was the priest what was a priest's role later on the priest's role was there to about the high priest role was there to be that that interaction between god and man being the holy of

[20 : 20] holies and the people of israel here we begin to see the connections don't we between the first and the last adam adam here was serving in the presence of the lord adam was a priest of his garden sanctuary his job was to work it to keep it to guard it to guard as aware of a holy of holies this place for god makes his presence and made his presence known to humanity jk beale writes much of this but for one summary just one quote here just to back up what we're saying jk beale says the two hebrew words here for cultivate and and keep are translated usually serve and guard when these two words occur together now of course these words appear hundreds of times on their own but when these two words to serve and to keep and to keep and to guard when these two words appear exactly together they are only ever used says jk beale they are only ever used in talking about the priests who serve god in the temple and guard the temple from unclean things entering it adam's job is to keep the garden and to guard the garden keep the garden and guard the garden and we ask what what is he keeping the garden from what was he guarding the garden from he was to guard the garden from the presence and the incursion and the the attack of all uncleanness of all evil tears we see again the horror of next week we see the fall we know the account that's why it is so horrendous when we see adam standing back and doing nothing as satan tempts first of all his wife and then himself into sinning against god when adam the priest whose job it was to guard and to keep the temple to guard to keep the garden holy from all uncleanness and he stands back and does nothing when satan appears that's why adam has failed we see that when adam's kicked out of the garden we see then what takes place and this is not for this week it's for next week we see then what takes place that shows us that man's access to god has now been ruined because adam the first priest the first servant of the lord has failed in his simple clear duties access has been shut off and again this is for for weeks time but again some more homework there are two things in chapter three two creatures in chapter three but again feature in the tabernacle add that to your homework sheet this week what objects in the tabernacle look back to genesis and and what two creatures in the tabernacle remind us what takes place in eden the first adam failed and he failed spectacularly didn't he he failed to look after the garden god had given him he failed to keep the garden god had given him he failed to guard the garden god had given him this holy place where god's presence of man went on going it was holy place where god's presence with his pinnacle of creation where god in this beautifully planted pleasant to the eye garden had chosen to make his presence known to man where man and god communed in ways we don't begin to understand or sinless man and god communed in ways we can't begin to understand and in one second because of adam's failure it's all gone all gone never to be reclaimed this side of the new heavens and the new earth but in the failure of adam right from the start as we know see this next week we are brought to the new adam

here's why it's so more so much more glorious for us as we begin to think of jesus as we have done before as high priest where the very first priest failed to keep and to guard the presence of god from uncleanness the final high priest the ultimate priest he did not fail he did not fail in guarding as it were god's holiness the final high priest did not fail in any of his duties unlike adam it was a place of worship finally and just to conclude for our time this evening it was of course a place for their home a place for their home these verses we all know so well from 18 down to verse 24 god gave adam and eve a garden for their home to live in to exist and to dwell in now this is not for us to know or to discuss really we can discuss it but not to preach about the question hangs in the air and it's not answered for us at all of how long they had in the garden before the fall took place i don't believe scripture gives indication some say it does but reality is scripture does not give indication to us of how long they had in the garden how long is the gap between verse 25 and the start of chapter 3 i don't know how long do they have in the garden together in perfection and glory serving and keeping the garden in perfect unity together we don't know what we do know is god gave him a garden again we'll touch more on this as the series goes on but god in his goodness and again god and his mercy and his love towards us as created beings he made someone for the man to love he made someone for the woman to love ultimately too of course of course we live in a world with these glorious verses these verses of such beauty of verses 18 to the end these verses which tell us so much about the character of god and the care of god these are verses which if we were to read them in public and share them in public as we've seen even the last few days verses which cause so much controversy verses which the world hates to hear man and woman made for each other it doesn't take any great wisdom to see and read between the lines of why this causes such controversy so if we preach as we do preach the gospel truth and the glorious truth even of these verses here that god made man and woman for each other for specific purpose a clear purpose to serve one another to to to to make a life one another to to cleave to one another as we we know it also written to become one flesh so we preach that glorious truth it flies in the face of all that our modern world i say modern world it's going to have to do with the modern world it's been controversial since the start the the situation we find ourselves in today that the sin that goes against these verses the the mindset that that hates these verses there's nothing new under the sun the early christians uh shared these verses and preached these verses and believed these verses and loved these verses in roman and greek cultures which which make today look like nothing honestly when you begin to read the history books i'm sure most many of you have and you see just the just the sheer chaos and darkness of these ages nothing

compared to what we see in here today it's bad for us because we live in this time the glorious gospel truth as we come to conclusion of this chapter is god made man for woman and woman for man and he made the garden for them the kindness of god he has made this first couple to have one another to love one another to serve alongside one another the glorious reality of verse of chapter two ends with the beauty of verse 25 the man and his wife we're both naked not ashamed why is that here for us why do we need to know that why is that a fact given for us in one sense verse 25 adds nothing to the narrative it doesn't add anything to the account at least in first look that tells us so much about this perfect world of course in the old testament to be naked is often seen as to be shameful it was seen as something to be shamed to look on someone's nakedness is to face shame for them and to be ashamed and all that connotation is tied up in it here we see there's no sin in this perfect garden world there's no shame there's no misery yet there's no worry there's no pain adam and his wife they lived the perfect life not a worry in the world not a concern not a burden serving the lord in the garden he made made for them adam serving as priest to the living god tending and guarding and keeping this perfect paradise made just for them made to be beautiful made to be practical made to be perfect and we know what's coming this is a sad thing for all the preaching on the beauty and the perfection of the garden we know what's coming next week we know what takes place in chapter three we're here this evening very much aware in ourselves as we feel our pains and our aging as we feel perhaps our own illnesses and our own drawbacks in our lives as we see the sin and the darkness and the misery and the pain we know that chapter three takes place the glory is that all the way throughout these chapters and the weeks ahead god willing we're reminded that it lies ahead of us what lies ahead of us it's not just a return to eden to those who know the lord and who love the lord something actually much more glorious for all the beauty and wonder we've seen this evening in chapter two we come to see the final garden in scripture we see the reality of that the new heavens and the new air are not just eden repeated they are eden glorified they are eden eternally perfect they are eden without the chance of sin without tears without pain they are eden so so much more beautiful so so much more glorious i know that's bad grammar but i don't care because it's so much more glorious we turn to read in revelation and see the final garden as we see dear brother your sister our future when we leave chapter three of genesis behind when we face up to reality that the day is coming when our sin-sick bodies our sin-sick world will be no more that's the hope we have to look forward as we leave the perfection of eden and look ahead next week to the destruction and pain and misery of the fall we're reminded again and again even in the fall even in the misery even the darkness that's lying ahead of us in the next chapter that god is his plan despite man's waywardness despite man despite adam failing to serve him properly god will keep his promises because he is yahweh and garden after garden after garden scripture approved to us that god

is a covenant-keeping god who keeps his people who loves his people and who will never let his people go through our heads now a word of prayer lord we ask you bless your word uh to us this evening we give you praise for it in it you have woven such glorious themes such glorious beauty as we think back lord for the short time this evening to the the glory of that first creation the glory of of a sinless garden the glory of a sinless man we thank you that you did make a garden that was beautiful we thank you for the evidence of your love and care we come this evening so aware of the loss of that perfection the loss of that sinlessness and we come just now giving you praise where we have lost the reality of eden one came one came one came who did not fail as adam failed the second adam came and all that he did all that he said and all that he now is and all that he now does as he reigns and rules at your right hand as the eternal high priest that we have one who is eternally faithful eternally successful in all of his services towards you and because of his completed perfect work because of his role as high priest we can know the future for your people it is bright the future of your people is one with you for all eternity despite lord the the pain and sadness and anguish we must face this side of glory you know that glory still awaits us help us to leave this place for this evening lord you forgive anything that was said that's not consistent or correct according to your word give you praise the power is not in the jar of clay stands or the power is in you and in your living word we ask you would not just grow in our knowledge this evening but leave this place having grown in our worship and our love of you it's all these things in and through and for christ jesus in precious name's sake amen let's uh conclude by singing to god's praise again the psalter and psalm 98 we can sing verses uh two uh down to verse nine uh of uh this psalm psalm 98 the lord god his salvation have caused to be known his justice in the heathen sight he openly have shown he mindful of his grace and truth to israel's house have been and the salvation of our god all ends of the earth have seen psalm 98 verses two to nine to god's praise provision hew

As justice and the hidden side, He all and near at yore.

[36 : 05] Be mindful of his grace and truth, To his beards of the wind, And the salvation of the Lord, For his joy and our sin.

The dawn we hear from to the Lord, Send forth a joyful noise, With love you, Lord, that now to him, Sing praises and rejoice.

With heart, with heart, And voice of sound, And to Jehovah's sin, When thunder's horn is badly sound, Before the Lord, the King.

The seas and all their fullness roar, The world undwell as there, With hearts above, And there the hills, Together joy declare, Before the Lord, Because he comes to judge, The earth comes to you, He'll judge the world, With righteousness,

His hope, We never give. With grace of the Lord, And the love of God the Father, And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, Both you now and forevermore.

[39 : 18] Amen.