

The Garden of God

Mike Rosenau with New Beginnings Church on Sunday morning January 27th, 2019

The first thing God tells us in His Word in the book of Genesis is the account of the creation of the universe.

Before God created humans, He created a garden, the Garden of Eden. The Garden was designed by God to be the home and the source of the supply of all of the physical things that humans needed.

I want to look at some of the passages that talk about the garden and man's place in it, and what happened to the garden when Sin entered the creation through Adam and Eve's rebellion against God.

Gen 1:27-30 **“God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.** God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it."

Notice that God creates the people he had made in His own image and then says “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.”

This is God's primary purpose for creation and the reason why God created you. This is one of the most important truths that you can ever know. This and hundreds of other passages connected to this, tell you why you exist, why you are here on planet earth, and the purpose that God has for your life.

God's plan was, and still is, that you and I would bearers of the image of God. That God's image and likeness, His nature, His character, His heart, and His will and ways would fill the whole earth everywhere that humans went. That the glory, the goodness and the knowledge of God would be seen in every human being.

Gen 1:29, 30 “Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground — everything that has the breath of life in it — I give every green plant for food." And it was so.”

Gen 2:8-9 8 Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the people He had formed. And the Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground — trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life.

The garden was a place of incredible fruitfulness. There was no lack. It was full of abundance. It was full of the life and blessing of God. It was a place of health, growth and increase. There was no sin and no death. The Garden and the people God put in it were extremely fruitful. God describes what He had as “VERY GOOD”.

As we read on in Genesis God also records what happened to Adam and Eve and to the Garden when the corrupting force of sin and rebellion against God entered human hearts.

God said to them, “in the garden is a tree that you must not eat. It is the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The day you eat of it you will surely die.”

They rejected God’s words and warning. They looked on the ‘knowledge’ of good and evil as something to be desired. When they partook of that ‘knowledge’, God says, their eyes were opened and they ‘knew’ they were naked and they covered themselves. The innocence and purity God created them with was instantly gone. Their hearts filled with shame and guilt. They had known only open and clear intimate relationship with God, but now they knew evil. They immediately ‘knew’ sin was in them and they hid themselves from God.

It is impossible for us to comprehend the complete horror of that moment because we live on the fallen side of Eden. We live every day with a fallen nature and in a fallen creation. Decay, corruption and death are so completely normal to us we hardly think about it until it visits us in some way that we cannot avoid. We have no idea what it is like to be completely innocent and pure, to have no shame, no guilt. But this is the way God created Adam and Eve.

The Hebrew words used here in Genesis for ‘knowledge’ and ‘know’ are particularly revealing. It is the Hebrew word ‘yada’.

The word ‘yada’ is found just a few verses later in Genesis 4:1: “Now Adam ‘knew’ (yada) Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain”

‘Yada’ is not just intellectual knowledge or information about something. It is to come to see something in a way that the know it intimately. To know in this sense of ‘yada’ is to have the knowledge enter our being and become intimately joined to us. It becomes part of you, and you become it. To know in the ‘yada’ sense is to know by experiencing, and to know so intimately that who you are is changed. You become what you know.

Now let me share a life principle with you.

Prov 23:7 “as a person thinks in his heart, so is he.”

Prov 4:23 “Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.

What happened to Adam and Eve was possible because of the way God designed human beings to be. God has designed us to be able to receive knowledge and to have that knowledge imprint itself in us to such a degree that it manifests completely in the life of the one who receives that knowledge. God designed humans to be receptacles, containers or vessels of knowledge. Listen to this in I Cor 4:6-7:

“God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”

When coins are minted the metal is cut out into a blank. The blank is made of a metal alloy that is malleable enough to be stamped with an image. The blank was created by its designer for the purpose of bearing the image stamped on it. This is what we are like, We are a blank designed to bear the image and likeness of God.

Now this is important. The God who's image we were created to bear is not a simple thing like the image that is carved into the mold of a coin press. The nature of God is extremely complex and wonderful.

In the Scripture God reveals Himself to have all the design attributes of the persons who He created to bear His image.

- God thinks. We are created with the capacity to think.
- God perceives. We are created with the capacity to perceive.
- God knows has knowledge. We are created with the capacity to know.
- God has a will and the ability to choose. We have the capacity to choose.
- God creates. We have the capacity to create,
- God values. We have the ability to value.
- God has emotion. He is moved and feels. We are created with the capacity to be moved and to feel.
- God loves and can receive love. We are created with the capacity to love and be loved.

God is the Word. Not just a Word, but the entire Word of God that fills all things and informs all things and that holds all things in existence.

And God created us with the capacity to have Word in us

God is Truth. Not truth the way our fallen society mangles and distorts truth. God is the exact, precise, accurate and holy truth that identifies and comports with reality. God's truth about all things is way everything actually is.

And God created us with the capacity to know truth and to have truth operate inside us.

God is understanding and divine revelation that God is manifests in Godly character and in godly ways of living that bring life.

And God created us with the capacity to have understanding and to receive revelation and to walk that understanding out in our lives.

God is good. Therefore the knowledge of God manifests in goodness, rightness and purity.

Ps 19:7-9 "The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul.
The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

8 The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart.
 The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes.
 9 The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever.
 The ordinances of the Lord are sure and altogether righteous.”

But the love of God, the desires of God, and the values of God are always toward goodness. God’s love is never unclean, twisted, selfish or depraved. It is always pure, clean and right love.

And God created us with a sense of good and of justice.

We are vessels that have been designed by God to be filled with all these things that God is.

Now back to Genesis:

God said to Adam and Eve,

“You were created in my image and designed to carry my likeness, and no other. I don’t want you to take into yourselves the knowledge of good and evil. I don’t want you to look upon it and take part in it. Because death will come when you come to know evil.”

In the same way we can receive the knowledge of God into us and it recreates us in the image of God, so knowing and receiving evil also recreates us in its image. We think we can eat the tree of knowledge of good and evil with no consequences, but it will shape our lives.

Death is far more than just a physical thing. Death is a spiritual thing. Death is the loss of life. It is the loss of God’s life. It is separation from all that God is and the loss of all of the wonderful life that God had given. Adam and Eve, didn’t just die physically, they lost the life of God they were created to live.

God was telling them, when evil comes to live inside you, you will cease being what I created you to be. You will no longer be the image of God. You will receive into yourself the evil you have desired and it will remake you in its image.

Adam and Eve rejected God’s words. They pushed away the words and the knowledge of God. They listened to and received into them the lies of the Serpent instead.

The result was, rather than replicate the image of God through all the earth, the knowledge of evil shaped them in its image. Desiring and knowing evil became second nature to humans. They passed it on to their children and to their children’s children. Adam’s nature – disobedience, self-will, rebellion and selfishness was passed on to all humans after him.

But I want you to see the other cost of sin.

God said, the Garden Earth would also be subject to decay and death. It would no longer abundantly and easily yield all that humans needed.

Gen 3:17-19 The ground is cursed for your sake; All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it. Now it will grow thorns and thistles for you, though you will eat

of its bread. Now it will be by the sweat of your brow that you have food to eat until you return to the ground from which you were made.

The ground that was created to give life and abundantly provide for humanity would now require toil and frustration

God's fruitful garden became a wild, rugged inhospitable place that could only produce with great struggle. The garden became a wasteland a place desolation and ruin, decay and death came upon the creation itself. It would no longer be 'home' to us – a place of refuge and safety, a place of abundant and continuous supply. All living things came under the dominion of corruption and death.

But here in these verses in Genesis we see the first glimmer of promise that God would reverse of the curse. Here we find the first promise in the bible that God would come to humankind and break the power of curse on man and creation and destroy the destroyer of man. God would visit humanity once again in His Son, Jesus Christ. This seed of the woman will give himself over to death, the price for sin that every man, woman and child paid ever since sin entered.

To the serpent who had deceived and tempted Adam and Eve, God said,

Gen 3:15 Satan, "I will put enmity, between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."

Heb 2:14-15 "Because God's children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death. Only in this way could he set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of death.

God tells us again in the New Testament the promise of the restoration of all creation and the reversal of the curse..

Rom 8:20-24 18 **For the creation was subjected to frustration (futility),** not by its own choice, but by the will of the One who subjected it, **in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay** and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. 22 **We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.** 23 Not only so, **but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.** 24 For in this hope we were saved.

Again in I Corinthians 15 he says.

I Cor 15:22-23 "as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. 23 But each in his own turn: Christ, in the firstfruits (to be raised from the dead); then, when he comes, those who belong to him (will be raised from the dead)....

Listen to the reverse of the curse and the defeat of death and decay.

I Cor 15:42-44 "The body that is sown (into the ground in death) is perishable (it is subject to decay), but it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

I Cor 15:53-55 "For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. 54 When the perishable things are clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." 55 "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"

Acts tells us the same thing. Here Peter speaks to the Jews at the temple in Jerusalem and tells them what God is going to do and how He is going to restore the creation.

Acts 3:19-22 "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, **so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,** 20 and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, 21 **whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things,** which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began."22

This passage tells what Jesus will do when He returns, but it also tells us what He is going to do right now, and this is what I want you to hear today, because this is what God wants to do in our lives and through our lives right now.

"Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord"

What I want you to see is that when Jesus came he began the process of restoration, and He began reversal of the curse. As you listen to these verses, notice the Garden terminology and the restoration of the waste places and the turning of them in to the Garden of God again:

Let me start with the passage that Jesus started His ministry with. In Luke 4 Jesus goes into the synagogue and the scroll of the book of Isaiah is handed to him to read. He opens the scroll and looks for Isa 61 and reads it to them. Then he tells them: "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your hearing."

In other words, what you hear in these verses is exactly what I have come to do. Listen to it out of Isa 61.

Isa 61:1-7 The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the meek; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;

Now listen to the terminology, and remember what the curse on the creation did to us and to the earth.

The Spirit of the Lord has anointed me.... "To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;

Again notice the Garden of God terminology. And Notice that the trees and plants are the people God is restoring and touching and filling with Himself..

So that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.

Notice the restoration of the wastelands and that which was made desolate:

4 And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations. 5 And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers. 6 You shall be named the Priests of the Lord: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: **you shall eat the riches of the Nations,** and in their glory shall you boast yourselves. 7 **For your shame you shall have double;** and for confusion (frustration) they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess a double portion: everlasting joy shall be unto them.

Listen to what He is doing in the restoring the ruins that has come to His people. He is making them like the garden of Eden! They are now the Garden of God.

Isa 51:3 The Lord will surely comfort **His people** and will look with compassion **on all HER ruins; he will make HER deserts like Eden, HER wastelands like the garden of the Lord.** Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the sound of singing.

Isa 58:11-12 YOU will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail. 12 **Your** people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets to dwell in.

Jesus spent 3 ½ years with His disciples For a number of weeks we have been talking about "Tending your own Vineyard and eating your own grapes." I want to remind you again of what that is. Your life is a Vineyard, given to you by God. God's will for your life is to cause the Vineyard of your life to flourish and produce much fruit.

Jer 31:12-14 12 They will come and shout for joy on the heights of Zion; **they will rejoice in the bounty of the LORD--** the grain, the new wine and the oil, the young of the flocks and herds. **They will be like a well-watered garden,** and they will sorrow no more. 13 Then maidens will dance and be glad, young men and old as well. I will turn their mourning into gladness; I will give them comfort and joy instead of sorrow. **I will satisfy the priests with abundance, and my people will be filled with my bounty,"** declares the LORD.

Joel 2:23-24 "Be glad, O people of Zion, rejoice in the LORD your God, for he has given you the autumn rains in righteousness. He sends you abundant showers, both

autumn and spring rains, as before. 24 The threshing floors will be filled with grain; the vats will overflow with new wine and oil.

Amos 9:13-14 "The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman and the planter by the one treading grapes. New wine will drip from the mountains and flow from all the hills.... They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit.

I Cor 3:9 "For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building."

And how does Jesus describe us?

He is the Vine and we are the Branches.

John 15:1-8 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.... I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

Remember the Tree of life in the Garden. Jesus is the tree of life

John 5:26 "For as the Father has life in himself; so He has given to the Son to have life in himself;"

John 14:6-7 "Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Remember that when sin entered death came to all people died. .

John 11:25-26 "Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; 26 and whoever lives and believes in me will never die."

John 17:2-3 "This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."

Col 3:10 "We have "put on the new nature that is renewed, it is recreated in knowledge in the image of Him who created him"