

Genesis 2:4-7 A Short Life Serving a Great God

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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.

5 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, 6 and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground— 7 then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

(Pastor prays)

Forty years ago in 1977, a then-progressive rock band named “Kansas” had a song entitled “Dust in the Wind.” The refrain was “All we are is dust in the wind.” It was a somber song that reminded the listener of his or her own mortality. Kerry Lindgren, who wrote the song, took his theme from the Bible, a theme that promises us we are here but for a moment – and then gone. Isn’t that what the Psalmist tells us in Psalm 103:14-16?

*14 For he knows our frame;
he remembers that we are dust.*

*15 As for man, his days are like grass;
he flourishes like a flower of the field;
16 for the wind passes over it, and it is gone,
and its place knows it no more.*

I’m reading in Job in my devotion and Job keeps saying, “I will soon lie down in the dust and you will search for me and I’ll be no more.” And the truth is, in a little while, you will get old and probably get sick and then die. (Aren’t you glad you came to church today?) What I’m trying to get at is in this passage about God and man - about you and God. Life is but a whisper. God will make it mean something.

Creation Shows Us God's Love for Man

Let me just point out some things about God in verse 7 especially.

Our God Is a Personal God

Look at the little phrase in verse 7 "The LORD God." When you read Chapter 1, the term used most to describe God is the term "Elohim," a God with great creating grandeur, the almighty God who puts the stars in place as an afterthought and creates universes by speaking.

This all-powerful God can seem far off, overwhelming and unapproachable. But then in 2:4, we get a hint that this God comes close. Verse 5 says "The LORD God." Verse 7, "The LORD God."...LORD – YHWH – the covenant name of God. It is the same name God uses at the burning bush in Exodus. In Chapter 2, LORD God is the covenant God who has fellowship with Adam and Eve through Chapter 2 and into Chapter 3 when Adam and Eve fall into sin.

And to fall into sin is to fall out of fellowship with God. In chapter 3:9, the LORD God calls to the man but the fellowship is broken and in the rest of the story of man and God in the Bible, you don't hear the name "LORD God" until you get to Joshua. (It's) The name Yeshua that means "YHWH saves". It points us to the real Yeshua of the New Testament, Jesus; the Jesus who lives righteously in a way that none of us can and then dies on the cross in the place of sinners, restoring fellowship between God and man.

Let me show you something else about this personal God. Look back in verse 7, *then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground. The LORD God formed man.* What a beautiful phrase, a great word picture that presents God as a master artist, sculpting and forming and shaping man. It's funny, you get down in verse 22, the LORD God is making or building a woman. My son Mack said she is called "WOMan" because she ends the "woe of man." (He just doesn't know.) This text shows us God's love and authority and intention to make you into something pleasing to Him.

The prophet Jeremiah picks up on this in Jeremiah 18:1-6. See if this describes you: *The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ² "Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will let you hear my words."³ So I went down to the potter's house,*

and there he was working at his wheel. 4 And the vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to do.

5 Then the word of the LORD came to me: 6 "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done? declares the LORD. Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. See the Lord now, bending down, stooping down into the dirt of where we are and involving Himself in shaping us, getting His hands dirty.

This text teaches that God shapes you with His own hands and He comes and inserts Himself into your life with His majestic hands. He reaches down and shapes us. With His own hand, He provides for us and, as the cliché says, we bite the hand that feeds us.

Let me press on this a little further. This personal God shapes us with His own hands, and with those same hands, He redeems us. Isn't that what Isaiah says in 53:5? *But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.* This forming, pursuing, saving God still desires to mold and shape you into who He wants you to be, forming you into the image of Christ.

And as He does that, I wonder; what are the roadblocks and secret sins? What are the hang-ups and addictions that must be removed? Our God is a personal God who gets close. He gets into your personal space and that can be an uncomfortable thing. Let me take you back to the text and let's press to finish out verse 7. *(T)hen the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.* If you just read the first half of the verse, after God fashioned Adam, you get the impression that Adam was just a body. This is important as we think about salvation. Before God breathes into man, man is a well-made, artistically designed corpse, just a body. In the text, this is a remarkable picture of God the Father stooping down over His creation. And it is a vivid picture of a spiritual reality: That without God's love breathing into us, we are dead. That's the picture Paul paints in Ephesians 2:1-5, *And you were dead in the trespasses and*

sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—

Genesis 2:7 is God's grace. Even here at the beginning, God so loved that He gave. Here is a New Testament truth written in an Old Testament fashion. The picture in Genesis 2:7 shows us that without God's love breathing into us, without a saving faith in Jesus Christ, we miss what we were created for. Let me close by speaking to those here who are unclear about what it means to come to Christ: the story of creation is the story of redemption.

(Pastor shares the Gospel and prays)