

*And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. <sup>9</sup> 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.*

*<sup>10</sup> A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. <sup>11</sup> The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold.<sup>12</sup> And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there.<sup>13</sup> The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. <sup>14</sup> And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.*

*<sup>15</sup> The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. <sup>16</sup> And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, <sup>17</sup> 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."*

*(Pastor prays)*

I seriously think that we don't spend enough time thinking about how good God is to us. His goodness is often drowned out by bad health or hurt feelings or lonely nights. As human beings, our tendency is to focus on what we don't have or how we have been wronged or our lack of lasting happiness. We forget to notice the millions of micro-blessings that cover us and shout at us to worship this life-giving God.

We are in Genesis, Chapter 2 – and here in Chapter 2 we have the creation of man and man's perfect fellowship with God, man's happy relationship with the earth where there is free food and plenty of water. In the passage, Adam is placed in a perfect garden made especially for him, a beautiful place where man has all he ever wanted including access to the Tree of Life.

What you have here is the pure goodness of God and the picture is of this good God surrounding the man. He was created with all he will ever hope for or need. He gives us great blessings, real purpose, clear boundaries, and overwhelming grace. And yet somehow, we forget those things. Isn't that when we get in trouble, when we forget?

Even Solomon would say in Ecclesiastes 12:1, *Remember also your creator in the days of your youth...* That is really what I want to do today from this passage. I just want to help you remember so that you might see this great God and have great cause to celebrate.

## **In Christ, Don't Forget How Good God Has Been to You**

### **Don't Forget Who's In Charge**

Let me show you what I mean. In the previous passage, we saw God as a potter, forming the man. Now in this passage, we see God as a planter as He creates and plants a garden for the man to live in. To see His lordship and rulership, you have to read the whole passage and listen for the refrain. Let's look at it. Verse 8 - *And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.* Verse 9 - *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.* Verse 15 - *The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.* Verse 16 - *And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden,*

All of this is like a constant refrain, a simple song that tells us our God is in control. This is His world. You are His creation and His love is real. And if God is in charge, that means that we are *not*. We are His subjects created to find our most profound pleasure in Him. And the fact is that this repetition of "The LORD God" seen throughout the passage reminds us of the personal nature of our God, that you are created to feel and love and hurt and give...To give yourself to Him. But our sin has clogged our senses and clouded our judgment so that we give ourselves to everyone and everything *but* God.

This passage reminds us who's in charge. He created you. Your sin separated you. But Christ will redeem you. Don't forget how good He's been to you and don't forget who's in charge.

### **Don't Forget His Great Blessings**

In verse 7, we read about the creation of man. Now watch as God provides for his every need. Verse 8 says, *And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.* God places Adam safely and securely in the garden in Eden. The word "Eden" means "delight" or "pleasure." It's a scene of paradise. The fact that it is called a garden suggests that it is an enclosed and fenced off place, a space in the created order where God invites man to be in fellowship, a place where God is uniquely present.

Verse 8 says the garden is in the East. The East is where the sun rises so this represents light and life. Verse 9 continues the description. Look at the great provision: *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.*

In this verse, the garden is presented as a banquet table. Every tree is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The Tree of Life is there. And when you get down to verse 10, you see that a river is flowing out of Eden so that you have a beautiful picture of super-abundance. Man in the garden has no needs – no need for *anything*. No need for the forbidden fruit that Satan tempts him with in Chapter 3. In verse 9, two trees are mentioned. The first is the Tree of Life, a gift from God reminding us that all life comes from God. And if you step back and look at this passage, you see how gracious and good and plentiful the blessings of the Lord are.

Why couldn't Adam be satisfied with the opulent blessings of God? With the Tree of Life there, God gives the potential for life in its highest form to Adam. When Proverbs speaks of the Tree of Life, it's pictured as longings fulfilled, righteous living, and healing of the hurting all right there in the Tree of Life. The Tree of Life is mentioned first but, if you know the rest of the story, you know that's not the tree Adam and Eve will focus on.

Let's go back to the story. In verse 15, God puts Adam in the Garden of Eden to work and keep the garden. It's sanctifying – to work and keep, to protect. This points out to us that in Chapter 3, Adam and Eve should have driven the serpent out but, instead, the serpent drove them out. This reminds us that what the Puritan John Owen said was

right, “Be killing sin or it will be killing you.” That is the aggressive warlike nature we are to have when it comes to our sin.

Isn't that what Jesus said in the Beatitudes? Matthew 5:29-30, *If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.*

Man was placed in the garden to work and protect it. In verse 16, the Lord speaks for the first time to Adam and the first words are blessings. *And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden... Look what I have given you, water to drink and food to eat. Beauty to look at. In the next section, God will create Eve so that paradise is made up of fellowship with God. Food and family. But verse 17 introduces a problem. 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.”*

Here is one thing you must not do. Do not eat of the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil. What is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? There's been plenty of discussion about it. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is God's alone because only God can really know what is actually *good* and what is actually *evil*. God and only God has the prerogative to decide what is right and what is wrong. And when you reach for that prerogative, when you make your own self-guidelines, you become "god."

Adam and Eve will eat of this tree in Chapter 3 because they wanted the power to decide for themselves what is right and wrong. And Man has been eating from that tree of self-determination ever since. So the truth is not what God has revealed in the Bible, His word. Truth becomes whatever you *decide* it is.

When you look at verses 16 -17, you see that God gives us great permission and blessing and only one prohibition. And in Chapter 2, when the serpent tempts Adam and Eve, the serpent doesn't talk about God's goodness and generosity and manifold blessing. He distracts us from God's goodness and then magnifies what God says is forbidden.

It's always like that. Sin is always pointing you *away* from what you *do* have and points you *to* what you *can't* have. You know the story. Adam and Eve will sin and lose the

garden. They will lose the Tree of Life. They will become spiritually dead and that loss of the Tree of Life is a foreshadowing of another greater Tree of Life, planted, not in a garden, but planted at a place called Golgotha the "place of the skull." And there on that Tree of Life, on a cross between two thieves, the death of Jesus on the tree becomes *our* Tree of Life.

We have been separated from a holy God by grievous sin. Jesus Christ, the perfect redeemer, lived a perfect life and died on the tree in place of sinners so that we can look unto Christ and be saved.

*(Pastor prays)*