

a garden of life delight

Well, this morning, we're going to head back to Genesis, so take your Bibles, and it turns me to Genesis chapter 2. I feel like anytime we get out of our consecutive textual exposition, that's kind of like when you go on a little short trip. It always is kind of exciting to leave. Usually, you have a good time while you're away, and then by the end, you can't wait to get home, and I think that's how I feel.

I'm glad for the excursus that we had in looking at the incarnation of our Lord and focusing on our Savior and spending a couple weeks looking at the implications of the gospel and the foreign righteousness of Christ as it relates to a spirit of legalism, and yet I'm eager to get back to Genesis, and I know many of you are as well, as I've heard. Today, we're going to go back to the garden, okay? We're going to return back to the garden, and we're going to be learning some valuable lessons there. Pre-eminently, what I want you to take away from looking at the garden again is to have your view of the character of God put back on display in front of us, to relearn, to re-see your theology of who God is, that God made you, that as a result, God owns you, that He loves you, that He provides generously for you, that He's a good God filled with moral perfection.

He's generous toward His people, that He earnestly desires fellowship with His children. It's remarkable the lessons that we learn just right here in this account of creation, and so I want to read beginning in verse 4 this morning, and we'll read down through verse 17. 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 the dust of 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. 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 it divided and became four rivers. The name of the first is Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold.

And the gold of that land is good. Bedilium and onyx stone are there. The name of the second river is 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.

Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. 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.

This morning I entitled this message, A Garden of Life and Delight. A Garden of Life and Delight. We're going to look primarily this morning at verses 8 through 14, but since it's been a few weeks since we've been here, I want to kind of get a running start and back up to verse 4 and just reacquaint ourselves with where we've been.

Remember in this last section we saw lessons that we are gleaning as God makes man. And we saw some tremendous reminders. And so verse 4 of chapter 2 serves really as a prologue or an introduction for all of chapter 2. Moses writes, 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.

And so if you remember, there's two indicators in this verse that we're transitioning into a new section. We're leaving behind the sequential creation week of days 1 through 7 and now we're transitioning. That phrase, these are the generations, appears 10 times in Genesis.

10 times that appears in Genesis. This is kind of a heading then of a new section, divinely inspired. The creation week is complete.

Now we're still on the topic of creation, but we're kind of leaving behind the previous sequence to focus in on the creation of mankind specifically. So the first indicator of this section is that phrase, these are the generations. The second clue is that word in all capitals at the end of verse 4 in your Bible, Lord.

And the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens. This is Yahweh, the ineffable tetragrammaton. This is the first time that the name Yahweh has appeared in the scriptures.

And this is God's personal covenant name. Again, indicating here this very small, but significant detail that now there's a shift in focus here. One commentator puts it this way, Genesis 2 no longer describes God in His majesty as the creator, but it gives a much more personal account of His care and interaction with His creation.

Yahweh demonstrates His close relationship with Adam and Eve in the way that they are created and His concern for their welfare by providing for them all that they need. And so we go from seeing God in Genesis chapter 1 as the cosmic, all-powerful, all-wise creator who brings the universe into being by merely speaking it into existence. Now in Genesis chapter 2, the focus narrows to God who is imminent, He's near, He has an intimate personal relationship with His creatures.

And so we see then in verses 5 through 7, God forming Adam and giving him life. And so this was kind of our first lesson that we drew out from the text where He saw man's functional purpose on earth, that man has a purpose, it is a function, it's in relation to the creation itself. So you see in verse 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, there was no man to work the ground.

So although God had created trees and reproducing plants earlier in the week, the garden plants had not grown up yet. There was no man to cultivate them. And so there's no discrepancy here, as some would posit, between the account given in Genesis chapter 1 and the account given here in Genesis chapter 2. It's not that we read in Genesis chapter 1 that God created vegetation on day 3 and then man on day 6, and then we come to Genesis chapter 2 and we read that there's no vegetation because there's no man.

Rather Genesis chapter 2 is now talking about a different kind of vegetation than Genesis chapter 1. And so God creates vegetation, generally speaking, on day 3. Now what's being talked about is those plants that are cultivated, the horticulture that needed a man, that is not yet in place. And so we see here that the earth, by God's design, needs human beings to reach its full potential. Isn't that amazing how theology comes to bear and even how you think about man and the earth and our relationship to the earth? Right there, the problem was there was no man, end of verse 5, to work the ground.

The earth could not reach its potential without mankind harnessing it. And so man is not a blight on mother earth. Rather God assigned man a responsibility to rule over the creation, to subdue the earth.

He gets a job from the get-go as a caretaker and as a steward to harness the earth's resources. And so you kind of think of it in this way. In Genesis chapter 1, God is told to be fruitful and to fill the earth and to carry out dominion.

In order to do that, he's going to need resources. And so the earth provides those resources. If you want to think of kind of a modern way of thinking of it maybe, go back a couple hundred years, a couple hundred years, early 1800s.

One farmer could produce about enough calories to feed between three and five people. You know how many people one farmer can feed today in the U.S.? It's over 160. How is that? Well, technology.

We figured some things out. Fertilizer and pesticides and farm equipment and irrigation and bioengineering and all of this is part of God's design for the earth to sustain human life. That was the purpose of the earth.

He's giving man the charge. He's putting it in man's heart. That's why we have this drive innately to produce and to make things more efficient and to invent.

It's part of ruling over the creation and subduing it. And so here in this garden, there are certain plants that need to be cultivated by a man. And so we see here kind of that why question behind the drive in human heart.

The earth needed a man to cultivate it. And we also learned from these verses our dependence upon our maker. Remember what a good reminder this was? From this text, verse 7, then the Lord God formed man of the dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

This is our second lesson that we glean from these verses that life is in the hands of God. Every person on the earth, whether acknowledged or not, is utterly dependent upon their maker. I mean, you could think of it this way.

Take the greatest specimen, the greatest human specimen that's ever lived, the wisest, the wealthiest, the most powerful, the most physically strong, whoever that individual was. And at the end, that individual is still a mortal creature, not even close to being a creator. And so we gain a rich anthropological understanding about ourselves from verse 7 and a rich theological understanding about God from this verse.

God formed the man of the dust from the ground. And again, as we said, of all of the building materials that God could have chosen, all of the possibilities He chose dirt. We saw that this speaks to our frailty and our finiteness.

And in God's perfect knowledge, He cares for and loves us. He understands that we are but dust, the psalmist would say. And so rather than try to deny our weakness, we're to be humbled by our humanity, humbled by our weakness, and then look to God as the giver of life, to not overestimate man.

In fact, in the scripture, God makes provision for us in our weakness. He calls us to be strong in the strength of His might, to rely not on our own wisdom or power or might, but to rely upon His, to trust that He meets our needs and He promises to be our sufficiency. And then we also see in verse 7 that God breathes into Adam's nostrils the breath of life.

I mean, this is just astounding. This is the means by which God brought about life. He had an infinite number of ways that He could have chosen to bring about human life.

Why did He breathe into Adam? Well, as we said, this isn't clinical. It's not a mere science experiment. This is God personally breathing life into a personal creature.

That's why God chose to use this imagery to convey the impartation of life to Adam, was to show that from the very get-go, He was personally involved. He wanted Adam to live, and so He personally brings him into existence. The text says, and Adam became a living creature.

And so we see here that God alone gives life. He is the sovereign author. Adam did not make himself.

Adam did not ask to be created. That would be nonsensical. Rather, like every other human being, He came into existence by the sovereign hand of God.

And so if you have life, I trust all of you, you look fairly awake. I'm assuming all of you have a pulse right now. If you are alive right now in this room, it is because God gave you life.

Do you understand that? You exist because God gave you life. Yes, through the ordinary means of reproduction. But the Bible says, know this, beloved, that the Lord is God.

It is He who made us. And we are His. We are His people, the sheep of His pasture.

Psalm 100 verse 3. Of course, then if He sovereignly gives, He also sovereignly takes away. And so your life is in His hands. This is why anxiety and worry about your life or the lives of your loved ones is so fruitless.

It's misguided because God alone is sovereign over all life. You cannot add a minute more to extend your life beyond the appointed number of days. God has determined the day of your existence and the day of your death.

And so life, because it comes from God, is a gift. Your life is a gift. It's a stewardship.

You're to thank God for the life He's given you. And even if it's not meeting your expectations, even if you don't have a personal sense of a value and fulfillment according to what you think life ought to bring you, the fact that you're living today means that God wants your life to be sustained. He wants you here on earth.

It's good for us to be reminded. Just think to yourself, God made me. God wanted me to exist.

He made me and gave me life. He wants me to live right now. He wants a relationship with me.

And God is so good to His creatures that He provides for them. And so we saw this in verse 8, God makes a garden. We introduce this garden.

The text says, and the Lord God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there He put the man whom He had formed. And so now we see God taking Adam and He's assigning him a domain. He's telling him, this is where you're going to be.

I'm putting you in a garden. The imagery there really is of God as the supreme king and ruler over all, taking Adam kind of as a lesser king, if you will, a vice regent, and saying, here's the plot of land that I'm giving you to rule over. You're assigned dominion in a garden.

And so now Adam finds himself in this little domain, this garden, with the mandate to rule over the earth. He's supposed to do that by reproducing little Adams and little Eves with Eve, his wife. And so we come back to this garden and we start to take a closer look around.

And we see right off the bat that this garden is a testimony to the goodness and the generosity

of God. This garden is a testimony to the goodness and the generosity of God. When you read it, a garden in Eden, or oftentimes as we would refer to it, the garden of Eden, it's probably better to understand it in that language, a garden in Eden.

Now, Eden is just a proper name. It's transliterated, meaning Adam and Eve would have pronounced the name of that region similarly to how we would. It would have sounded basically like Eden, as they would have said it to one another.

It's tough to know if there's a definitive meaning in the word Eden. Perhaps it means plain. It's not really the point.

It's a proper name for that region assigned by God. And this place, this garden, was created by God and He owns it. It's referred to as the garden of the Lord later in Genesis chapter 13.

It's called the garden of God in Ezekiel 28, 13. And so God planted this garden, He owns it, and now He's going to give the garden to Adam as a domain, a stewardship. In fact, the text says, and there He, that is the Lord, put the man.

And I just love how you cannot get past hardly a verse in the Bible without seeing divine sovereignty. I remember when I was a young man, and I was first starting to wrestle with the sovereignty of God, and I showed up at a church, and kind of in their vision statement, as they would talk about the vision that they had for ministry, they included the sovereignty of God. I remember going to the pastor and saying, like, well, like, that seems kind of arbitrary.

You know, I think you're kind of picking a pet doctrine, and you're making that a bigger deal than it really is. And I just looked back, and I'm like, man, that was a gracious man. The way he handled me was very gracious.

I said, well, I don't think it's just something that I've kind of picked as a pet doctrine. I think it's a scriptural doctrine, it's a scriptural teaching. But you come to a verse like this, and you read, how is it that Adam got in the garden? It's not him and the Lord looking through a magazine that has various pictures of places that he might enjoy to live.

And God asking Adam, would this suit your fancy? How would you like to live here? Now, this sovereign God knows what Adam needs, and He puts Adam exactly where He wants Adam to fulfill His own purposes. And this just reminds us immediately to rest in the sovereign ordination of God, where you were born, when you were born, to what family you came into, where He placed you vocationally, the circumstances surrounding your lives. And Paul would draw this point out even regarding Adam in Acts 17, when he said, and He, that is the Lord, made from one man every nation of mankind to live on the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place.

Adam's in the garden because the Lord, right there in the text, put the man and then we read, for emphasis, whom He had formed. So, Yahweh is the divine ruler that brings about what He intends. It's His garden.

It's His man. He plants it. He assigns man His domain.

I just want to show you the emphasis. Just look with me at the verbs. Verse 4, we read that the Lord God made.

Verse 5, the Lord God had not caused. Verse 7, the Lord God formed. Verse 8, the Lord God planted.

The Lord God put. Verse 9, the Lord God made. Verse 15, the Lord God took.

Verse 15, and put. Verse 16, the Lord God commanded. I mean, you go to Genesis chapter 2 and there is no question who's in control right now.

And God is bringing about what He intends down to the details. He's acting solamente. He's not consulting anyone right now.

He's not asking for help. He has no assistance, no input, no outside pressure. He's acting freely according to the counsel of His own pleasure.

And so all of these verbs express the reality that God is actively involved in His creation and in the lives of His creatures, bringing about His own sovereign purpose. And so we come to this garden and this is just a marvelous and mysterious place for us, is it not? I mean, I was thinking about how limited our information is on places in the Bible that are not tainted by the fall. And so I don't really count the concordance because the concordance doesn't count.

I have one page, I think, on the back, Revelation 22, a place without sin. And then I have almost two pages in the front of my Bible, and that's it. Everything else is tainted by the fall.

I mean, do you understand how much revelation here we have dealing with our sinful condition and God redeeming humanity? Right here, we just have a little taste of what things look like prior to sin. And it starts out by God putting man in a garden. Well, let's look at this garden and glean the lessons that we need to learn from it.

Beginning in verse 10, we read that there was a river that flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers, okay, four rivers, the Pishon, the Gihon, the Tigris, and the Euphrates. Now, the Tigris and the Euphrates probably sound familiar to you from learning about the Crescent Valley, ancient Mesopotamia, kind of elementary school coming back here for some of you. Some of you are still in elementary school, maybe you even learned that this year, but we kind of learn about those two rivers.

And here, the descriptor reads that the river flows out of Eden and then it waters the garden. And so, if you kind of conceive the Garden of Eden being the garden that is named Eden, you read verse 10 and it sounds a little funky, sounds like somebody got confused on something, okay? It's not the Lord, trust me, you're probably the one who's confused. I've gotten confused too, I was a little bit confused by this.

The region is Eden, there's a river in the region of Eden that flows into the garden. And so, rather than thinking of it as the Garden of Eden, I think it's clear to think of it as the garden in Eden, the garden that is in that region of Eden. So, kind of like if you were to go to Portland, to the Rose Garden up there, not what's now the Moda Center, but the actual Garden of Roses, it's one of the largest rose gardens in the world.

It's called, I think, the Portland Rose Garden or the Rose Garden of Portland. Portland is much bigger than the Rose Garden, but that garden is contained within Portland. So, similar idea here, the garden is contained within the region of Eden.

And so, there is a river that flows into that region and then it divides. Now, we know of water sources that will sometimes fork off. Typically, we see multiple tributaries coming into one river.

And then, as those waters collect in a basin, the rivers get deeper and they get wider. The perspective here is that there's actually a source of water in Eden that is feeding all of these rivers. Okay.

So, if you've ever seen a natural spring, that's what we're talking about. I remember, for some reason, a natural spring, I was in high school. I was in Central Oregon.

Me and some buddies rode a bike out to see a natural spring. And I just remember thinking it feels like your mind is playing tricks on you because normally you see water coming down from the heights. And as it comes down, it grows as additional water filters into that basin.

But when you come to a spring, there's just suddenly a little river that seems to have no origin. The water is just coming right up out of the ground and that is the headwaters. And so, the picture here is that there's a source of flowing water.

There's a headwaters of fresh nourishment there in Eden that flows into this garden. Now, the descriptors of these locations and these rivers present some challenges in piecing together the data. If you were to go home today after church and lay out a map of the Ancient Near East and then try to kind of put an X to mark the spot where the Garden of Eden is, you're going to have some challenges.

Okay. First of all, we don't know the location of a couple of these rivers. So, the Pishon and the Gihon.

They existed at one point. We don't know where they are today. Either rivers that have a different name, maybe rivers that disappeared altogether, topological changes obviously took place in the flood.

But for whatever reason, we don't know where those locations are. We don't know where Havilah is, this land of gold. Cush is probably related to the area of Egypt.

And then Assyria could either refer to an ancient city in that part or the nation of Assyria. Again,

we can't be definitive. And so, as you look at these locations, you can say somewhere in kind of the Arabian Peninsula is what we're talking about.

John Calvin was very interested in the location of Eden. And so, he undertook that as a matter of intense study. And he read a lot of ancient maps.

If you look at the Tigris and the Euphrates, they don't connect. And so, trying to figure out where those two rivers connected, we don't have the exact location. Well, he found from some ancient documents that they used to connect historically north of Babylon.

And so, that is where he placed the locations. If you want to guess, you could guess north of ancient Babylon. The point is that certain things have changed likely in terms of where the rivers flowed to the degree that we can't be exactly confident as to where this garden existed.

So, what is the point that we're to glean from all of these locations? Well, the main takeaway from these verses is not to identify the specific location. It's true Moses says it's in the east, which for Israel coming out of Egypt in the wilderness when they received this revelation, it would have been somewhere in that Arabian Peninsula region. But the main takeaway is twofold.

Number one, Eden was an actual place. Eden was an actual place. There are many who think of Eden as just a mythological conception, kind of an ideal, if you will, of what we would like things to be, but it never existed on earth as a physical location.

But all of these physical geographical markers indicate that the concept here is this was an actual garden that existed. And secondly, this land was a rich land. This land was a rich land.

Even if we cannot identify the exact location of all four of these rivers, four rivers means a lot of water. And water is necessary, as you know, for life. And so, we come to this garden and we see that God put Adam and Eve in a garden.

It's called a garden in verse 9. It's called a garden again in verse 10. And we realize of all of the places that God could have put this first couple, he chooses to place them in a garden. He doesn't put them in the tundra.

It's in some ancient version of Survivor where they have limited food and clothing and supplies and God's just kind of going to watch and see if they're able to figure things out and tough it out on their own. Rather, he puts them in a garden, a place with plentiful resources. There's water, there's minerals, there's food.

It's a place of great bounty. We understand a garden is a place where plants grow. More specifically, a garden, unlike a forest or a field, has defined boundaries.

It's cultivated. Typically, it's a place where flowers, fruits, vegetables, and herbs grow. Essentially, that's what it means to have a garden.

In our day, we add to our gardens walls or fences, sculptures, fountains, benches. The idea is that you enjoy the aesthetic beauty of the garden while it's also a place that supplies food and enjoyment. It's a place of vitality and fruitfulness.

This garden was a garden of gardens. Look at the scriptures. Verse 9, out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food.

This is the generosity and the goodness of God on display. Out of the ground, the Lord God made to spring up every tree. The picture here is that you have mature trees in that garden.

The idea of springing up, I mean, the text is indicating not that the spring up. What takes place in my little sanctified imagination here is, if you were to watch the time lapse of a tree growing over a period of years, that just happened. The Lord planted the garden and trees are just springing up.

They're becoming mature. Biological growth is taking place on hyperspeed, almost as if we're watching the time lapse take place so that these trees that normally might take one, two, three years to bear fruit are already bearing fruit. They're producing that which could be eaten immediately.

This garden had many trees. We know that the animals are there. They're there in harmony.

Many of them, we're going to see that shortly. And there where it says every tree would be, not to think rather that every species of tree is in the garden, but rather every tree that was in the garden was a beautiful, rich tree. It was a productive tree.

And so we see here that we have abundant food source. We have an abundance of water that's necessary for life flowing. Streams of water always are associated in scripture with blessing and stability and life and longevity.

Psalm 1, the man who meditates on the law day and night is like a tree planted by what? Streams of water. Whose leaf does not wither. Who yields its fruit in its season.

And so this is a picture then of a land that is full of food, it's full of water, and not only that, but it's rich in resources. Verse 11, we read that there is gold in that general region. Verse 12, the gold of that land is good.

Bedelium and onyx stone are there. Gold of course is precious. Gold is valuable.

Now the reason is because it's scarce. It's somewhat limited in its supply. It's rare.

Not only that, but it's beautiful and aesthetically pleasing. It's durable and it's malleable. It can be shaped.

It does not tarnish. It's not susceptible to oxygen and water. It doesn't rust like many other metals.

And so throughout the world for generations and generations, gold is pretty much universally treasured. I just want you to understand that's not an accident. It's right here called out as being abundant in that garden.

When I was in my previous career and I was involved in marketing, one of my mentors that I was learning from would say, you know as human beings we like the shiny stuff. We like glitz and glamour. Even something that gleams just intrinsically draws us to it.

And so this land is filled. There is much good pure gold in this land. Bedelium most likely is the gum resin from the Arabian tree.

It's fragrant and transparent. I was doing a little research. You can actually technically buy some of this on eBay and it's edible.

So I'll pay for it. You can go first on eating it. I was looking at the pictures.

I'm not really sure based on where it's coming from what it looks like if I would eat it, but bedelium there is certainly a value at that time, the resin. And then the onyx stone would be a precious stone. We don't know exactly what it was, but the idea is that there are rare rocks in this garden.

Beautiful rocks, gemstones in this garden. And in fact Ezekiel 28 would list out all of the beautiful stones found in this garden. They would include sardius, topaz, the diamond, beryl, onyx, jasper, sapphire, emerald, and carbuncle.

And so the picture that I have of this garden is is rather than than bark dust being ground cover, you had an abundance of precious stones. This was a rich land. And we take stones, we spend money on them, we adorn ourselves with them, we lock them away for safekeeping.

And here the perspective is they are just in abundance. Not only that, but everything is good in this garden. I mean look at how the very food is described in verse 9. The Lord God made a string of every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food.

Every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. This is not incredible. The Lord could have said your diet is going to be pine cones.

That's what you're going to do. You're going to eat pine cones. I looked it up.

You can eat a pine cone if you want. It doesn't taste very good. As long as you chew it up really well, it's not going to hurt you.

That could have been the diet, man. Pine cones aren't very attractive and they don't taste good. But the picture here is that God made the food pleasant to the sight and good for food.

God made your eyes. He made your taste buds. He gave the ability to experience through your senses and to enjoy things.

And so the fruit on these trees was beautiful and nutritious. It looked good and it was good. And so you just think about the goodness of God here.

I mean, think about the variety of trees. We love to look at trees. If you build a house and there's trees nearby, you're going to orient the house so that you can look at the trees.

We put them in our backyards. We research what kinds of trees to plant to enjoy all of the different varieties. We take long trips sometimes just to go see trees.

And then we take pictures of ourselves in front of them. And so there are deciduous trees and coniferous trees and fruit trees. There's majestic trees and delicate trees.

Trees that are towering and ones that are flowering. And all of this variety of food gives the essentials for life by God's design. So this fruit was varied.

Various levels of calories and nutrients, proteins and carbohydrates and fats and sugars and vitamins and minerals and fiber and hydration. All of it is there. Sweet to sour and tangy and soft and creamy and crispy and crunchy.

You'd have had all the herbs and the aromatics. Zesty and spicy and salty and fresh. Cinnamon and vanilla and cocoa.

And it tasted good and it smelled good and it looked good. And you understand the goodness of God here to provide that kind of enjoyment. My first real job was working in a produce department.

And there was a lot of money invested in how you display the produce. You have to have the right kind of lighting. We don't want it to be too cold or too warm.

So you get the right temperature of light. You shine it in the right spot. And then you turn the fruit a certain way.

Why? Because if all the little green stems are up on top of the strawberries, you might not feel that hungry for a strawberry. But if you have plump red ones displaying their beauty on the top, then you can smell them. You're going to want to buy strawberries.

And so God here is creating pleasure and enjoyment and he's generously providing for his creatures. This is his original design. To give man and woman the senses and then to place them in a world filled with pleasures and delights to fulfill those senses.

God gave you the capacity for experiencing pleasure and then the corresponding opportunities for fulfilling that pleasure. When I was just picturing this it'd be a lot more efficient to just put Adam and Eve in a granary filled with beige colored barley and say have at it. And yet that is not the character of our good and generous God.

So God's provided us with good things to enjoy. You remember when when Israel was out in

the wilderness wanderings and they were hungry? What did God provide them with? He provided them with manna. At first they were glad to have a meal in their belly and then quickly what did they start to complain about? Man, we could really go for some leeks and onions and garlic.

We missed the food in Egypt. That was a warped and perverted way of thinking. Things weren't actually better in Egypt.

But there's a recognition here of God providing in his initial created order generously for his creatures. What are the lessons for us to take away from here this morning? Well first of all to be reminded that God is a God of all blessing. Who's rich in mercy.

James 1 17. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above coming down from the father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. I mean God's character never changes.

So when he has the plan to begin the created order this is exactly what it looks like. It's to provide bountifully for his creatures. Physical, spiritual, relational.

Not only that but in that garden we see the backdrop for the fall. I mean we're going to look at the fall here in a few weeks. It's absolutely devastating.

But we know what's coming. And as you put yourself here in I'd like to say Adam and Eve's shoes but they don't have shoes because they don't need them. Everything's perfect right now.

Perfect relational harmony. They're naked. They're unashamed.

I mean just think about they're naked in the climate. Is that not astounding? No sunscreen. No sunglasses.

No rain jacket. They're in a perfect environment with God supplying bountifully for their needs. And it is against that backdrop that they're going to sin against the Lord.

They're going to distrust. They're going to believe the lie that that God is withholding something good from them. Does that not immediately challenge our hearts? To realize that when you and I believe that there is something good that God is withholding from us that this is a tale as old as time.

Psalm 84 11 says, no good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly. And Adam and Eve even enjoyed fellowship with God. That same fellowship that's described by the psalmist when he says, how lovely is your dwelling place oh Lord of hosts my soul longs yes faints for the courts of the Lord.

You go on and say you make known to me the paths of life and in your presence there is fullness of joy your right hand are pleasures forevermore. See when you and I question the character of God and his goodness we often think it's related to our circumstances. And I just

tell you it's not circumstantial.

Adam and Eve had nothing circumstantial to cause them to distrust the goodness and the generosity of God but they did it anyway. We're going to spend some time in Eden still looking at what exactly was lost and forsaken by our first parents and also seeing a sense of what we have to look forward to. There's a lot of lessons here in the garden but this week what I want you to ponder is just the reflection of your heart toward the generosity of God.

And to realize that that spirit in our first parents that distrusted the faithfulness and integrity of God in spite of all the evidence being to the contrary still exists in you and me. I invite you to pray with me. Lord God thank you for your generosity toward us as your people.

Thank you for your personal care for us. Lord it's hard for us sometimes to see and trust your goodness because we do live in a world that is currently fallen and groaning and so we know pain and sorrow and grief and loss and heartache and hardship and difficulty. We know what it's like to lack and yet Lord we also see that distrust is not a new issue and Lord even if we had everything circumstantially we would still struggle to believe you.

Lord we want to repent of that and we want to embrace your character for who you really are and what you reveal in the pages of scripture. Lord I thank you that you tell us what it was like before sin and for the encouragement that brings to us. We love you.

Amen.