

Scripture Reading: Genesis 2:4

“7 And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. 8 Jehovah God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. 9 And out of the ground Jehovah God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. 15 Then Jehovah God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. 16 And Jehovah God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 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." 18 And Jehovah God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." 19 Out of the ground Jehovah God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. 20 So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him. 21 And Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. 22 Then the rib which Jehovah God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. 23 And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man." 24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. 25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.”

"Man is Given Work"

- **We are studying Chapter two of Genesis which is an expanded look at the activities of the Sixth Day of Creation with a focus on the creation of man and woman.**
- **I have pointed out that we must see how man is created as the crown jewel God's Creation.**

In this chapter we see that man was given life, given work and given a woman all of which is referred to in the account in Chapter one:

Genesis 1:26: “26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

There we have the summary and in Chapter Two we see many more details which we have been studying. We have looked at gardens & rivers, we have seen precious metals and jewels proclaiming all the richness and creativity of God's Good Creation.

And now we are considering some of the gifts that God has given to man...

- **Life – Work -- & Woman**

After this we will talk about the special trees that God planted in the garden which will be very central to our study of Chapter three.

This morning we must again remember that we live on the fallen side of the fall of man found in chapter three. Man's fall into sin impacted his life, his work and his relationship to woman...

Man is commanded to fill the earth and take dominion. This calling did not end with the fall, it is repeated AFTER the flood as part of God's covenant with Noah and again as God makes His covenant with Abraham who was to be a blessing to all the nations of the earth.

- **However the fall of man greatly impacted his work as we shall see in chapter three.**

The challenge for us is to even imagine what work would have been like before the fall: Can you imagine no sweat and no toil as we go about our daily tasks?

- **A garden with no weeds?**
- **A hammer that does not strike our thumb?**
- **An oven that will not burn your hand or production without industrial accidents.**

Now I cannot argue with certainty that we will have ovens and hammers in our eternal state, but we do know there will be work because there was work before the fall! Man was to tend and keep or guard the garden... Now obviously the Garden of Eden did not have weeds, but there was still work to do to maintain the garden and yes, perhaps to make it even more beautiful!

- **AND man was to fill the earth and make it all a grand garden/city!**

Here on the 6th Day Adam was called on to name the land animals & birds...

Now many look at this mostly as something to help illustrate to Adam that he needed a wife, but I don't think it was the main point *[it does not say they were brought in pairs like the flood so Adam may not have looked longingly at their mates]*

Some argue that Adam simply would not have had the time to do this work in a normal 24 hour day but they are usually the ones looking for excuses to believe the earth is billions of years old. As we shall see when we come to the flood, there are only a few hundred kinds or families of animals and birds and I believe those are the ones God brought to Adam.

- **So was naming the animals a big deal?**

Seems easy to us because we know them all: That is a bear that is an eagle, but remember Adam has to give them a name appropriate to their nature and character having just seen them for the first time, which he did.

- **Think about the implications of this in terms of early language!**
- **IF as some have argued Adam's language was Hebrew then we have his actual names surviving down to us today and in any case something very close to those he chose.**

We need to make sure we don't see this as just some filler text as we move on to the much more important part about the creation of woman. We will get their soon enough, but here we see the wisdom and creativity of man right from the very beginning.

Just as God took a few verses to explain the wonder of the garden of Eden and gave us some information about rivers and riches, He now gives us a picture of just how capable Adam was as one created to work.

- **So, just how smart was Adam?**

Again we cannot be sure this side of the fall, but some claim that we only use 10% of our brain today. I am not sure how they figured that out with no one to measure it against...

But if it is anywhere close to being true, you can see how hard it is for us to imagine this first man at work naming the animals and tending the garden.

It is hard for us to imagine a body that is not dying but that is what Adam had and we see a small picture of this with the much longer life-spans men had after the fall but before the flood.

- **Not only did God greatly reduce our life-spans after the flood, but we also have no record of the Garden of Eden nor any advancements men made prior to the flood.**

I would posit that since their life-spans were still quite long, their minds and abilities would also have been far better than we have today,...

- **Thus, their accomplishments may have been as well.**
- **Sadly their wickedness was also advanced and brought destruction.**

Remember the world wants us to think of ancient man as primitive but the Scriptures clearly teach the decline of man after the fall until the coming of Christ! With the victory of Jesus, Satan is bound and no longer able to deceive the nations and the Spirit of God indwells the Body of Christ, the Church, so the Kingdom of Jesus can advance and fill the earth. We will not see an end to sin & death until the Second Coming of Jesus so yes we still have weeds and toil, but I would argue we progress in that area as the Kingdom advances. We as Christians should understand the value of work, the importance of work and even the enjoyment of work as we move toward what is pictured by the Prophet Isaiah and the final chapters of the Book of Revelation.

The fact that Christians have believed and acted on this for most of the past two millennium is why our Western culture has advanced in so many ways while other civilizations have stalled or declined over the years. The contrast is NOT because of climate or resources it is because of a major difference in world-views.

Peter in a portion of his second letter that we often read as part of our commissioning strongly urges the Saints to action BECAUSE we believe in the coming of the New Heavens and the New Earth: II Peter 3:11: “Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? 13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. 14 Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; 15 and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation--as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, 16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.”

I will bring Paul into the discussion in a moment, but first I think we should go back and see what the Prophet Isaiah had to say about the New Heavens and the New Earth! That portion of Isaiah would have been familiar to those Peter wrote this Epistle too, or anyone familiar with the Scriptures, and it certainly should come to mind.

Isaiah 65: “17 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. 18 But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, And her people a joy. 19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem, And joy in My people; The voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, Nor the voice of crying. 20 "No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; For the child shall die one hundred years old, But the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed. 21 They shall build houses and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. 22 They shall not build and another inhabit; They shall not plant and another eat; For as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, And My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. 23 They shall not labor in vain, Nor bring forth children for trouble; For they shall be the descendants of the blessed of Jehovah, And their offspring with them.

24 "It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; And while they are still speaking, I will hear.
25 The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain," Says Jehovah."

These passages should give us great hope just as we find in the final chapters of Revelation. But in BOTH passages we still see some death & sin: Which means they have to be speaking of things on this side of the 2nd Coming of Jesus while giving us a glorious picture of eternity.

A few years ago Pastor Rich Lusk spoke at our family camp taking us through a series on Revelation 21 & 22 relating them to the Church and Acts. He gave that series when his church was young to as he said, 'give them a vision of where they should be going.' [mention tapes]

Yes we have a LOT of work to do here in history and I believe that reflecting on Adam's work before the fall and thinking about working in our glorified bodies in the same way after the 2nd Coming of Jesus informs us about how we should work in the here and now. We groan under the sweat and toil of work under the fall of man, just as the entire creation does waiting to be freed from the bondage of corruption.

- But we are still called upon to work as unto the Lord!
- This brings us to the question we should always ask: What does this have to do with Jesus?

To begin with we must remember that He is the creator who brought this world into being and created man and woman to work in His creation for His Glory... And He declared this to be Very Good!

It was Jesus who came to redeem us from the fall and to restore us and all of creation to the way it should have been and will be for eternity. And as we pointed out about a thousand times in our journey through the Book of Acts, He has sent the Comforter, the Holy Spirit who uses the Body of Christ, the Church, to fill the earth with the Kingdom of Jesus and prepare for His return.

- That is where we come in!

The Apostle Paul could not have made this any clearer when he told the Ephesians: Ephesians 2:8 "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."

Now of course good works here included a lot more than just labor: Paul goes on to talk about reconciliation, love, church unity, submission, singing and giving thanks, love and submission in marriage, the obedience and training of children and in the end putting on the armor of God in chapter six. However, labor or work is NOT left out as if it is just some secular activity we need to do to have money & stuff.

Our labor is interwoven in Paul's discussion of what our good works are as it should be in our lives if we come to understand the proper nature of work. When Paul admonishes them to put away the old man in chapter 4, listen to this example: 4:28 "Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need."

- Good labor not only helps the thief turn from his evil ways and care for him or herself, but positions them to even help others.

In chapter five Paul reminds them to redeem the time and to avoid drunkenness which should remind us of the sluggards in Proverbs who are not productive and fall prey to the many sins that Paul outlines.

And finally in chapter six Paul brings his discussion directly to bear on the issue of labor or work:

Speaking both to those who work and those who employ he says:

Ephesians 6:5 “Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; 6 not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7 with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, 8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. 9 And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.”

Let me try reading that again in a more modern way...

“Workers, be obedient to those who are your employers at your job, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; 6 not being showoffs, trying to please men, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7 with goodwill doing service, as to Jesus, and not to men, 8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a minimum wage worker or business owner. 9 And you, employers, do the same things to your workers, giving up threatening, knowing that your own boss also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Jesus.”

- **How we live our Christian lives here is seen by all the world!**

Sadly many Christians have given their Lord a bad name in this realm thinking it was not important or even worse doing poor work after people hired you because of the fish sticker on your truck or the “Christian Yellow Page Ad.”

The bottom line is that I hope you can see how the Apostle Paul wants us to come to understand the nature of work even in a fallen world. We are to turn from our sinful ways and desires, and look to Jesus who is restoring all things and redeeming all things, including our work!

Now the applications of this could be legion but the important thing to remember is what Pastor Tuuri focused on in his sermons on vocation: We must always remember that when we are in the work force, when we are running our business or when we serve in the highest calling of running a household...

We are ALWAYS working for Jesus AND we are working as Jesus. We are the Body of Christ and we don't cease to be a part of the Body when we clock in at work or it is time to change that next diaper.

[mention the vocation tapes and stress them for young people]

- **So wherever God has placed you there is work to do, and yes, we can probably find ways to do that work better and to even find more work!**

Not so we can build more barns to hold all our stuff as the sinful man who God prospered did!

- **No, we work as unto Jesus even if our tasks are not the most glamorous nor the results spectacular.**

In fact Christians are often persecuted and given the most menial of jobs, like those in Russia before the iron curtain came down who memorized hundreds of hymns as children because they knew their work would be menial.

I will close with the words of Paul to the Church at Corinth where he describes how the Spirit of God works through the Body of Christ:

- **The context here is the worship service but the principles apply to our vocations as well if we fully understand the value of our work!**

I Corinthians 12:11 “But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills. 12 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that

one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For in fact the body is not one member but many. 15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? 18 But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. 19 And if they were all one member, where would the body be? 20 But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. 21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." 22 No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. 23 And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty, 24 but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, 25 that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. 26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually."

- Remember that you have been saved by grace and are now His workmanship called upon to walk in the good works that your Savior ordained you to walk in!

Communion Meditation: Isaiah 55

"1 "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price. 2 Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance. 3 Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you-- The sure mercies of David. 4 Indeed I have given him as a witness to the people, A leader and commander for the people. 5 Surely you shall call a nation you do not know, And nations who do not know you shall run to you, Because of Jehovah your God, And the Holy One of Israel; For He has glorified you." 6 Seek Jehovah while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near."