

4. The Perfect Covenant of Life (2007)

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[0 : 0 0] Well, if you turn to Genesis chapter 2. If the prologue, that is Genesis 1 down to the end of chapter 2 verse 3, the prologue answers the great questions of the purpose of life, the purpose of the world and humanity.

What is the world for? Where did it come from? Where is it all going? What are human beings for? Then Genesis 2 and 3, if you like, answers the great questions of perplexity about our humanity.

Why do we die? Why is there suffering? Why are our relationships in so many ways cursed? And so on. So Genesis chapter 2 is not a second account of creation as such.

Rather, it focuses in from the big picture to give us a more detailed look at the vital things that we have to know about our humanity. We move, if you like, from God's revelation of himself and his purpose in his transcendence, as the powerful creator of all things, to his imminence, his nearness, as the special creator of man.

The focus moves from God's majesty, high above the heavens and the earth, to his intimacy, right down beside man. And that explains the form of the text that we have in Genesis chapter 2.

[1 : 3 5] There's a focus on the earth. Well, if you notice the switch in verse 4, from the first half to the second half. The first half, it's the heavens and the earth when they were created.

Then it's in the second half, in the day that the Lord made the earth and the heavens. That's why also the focus is on man. Humanity is very much at the heart of the story.

In Genesis 1, man's creation comes at the end as the climax to the story. But in Genesis 2, the focus is on man right at the very beginning. It's rather like a microscope, if you like.

In Genesis chapter 1, you've got the widened field. You see the whole of everything and it gradually focuses in to the climax on man. In Genesis chapter 2, it's the reverse.

We've got the high magnification straight away, right down on man. And then just a little bit of pulling back to see how man has an effect on everything else in the world. There's a focus also in Genesis 2 all the way through on God's personal name.

[2 : 3 5] Did you notice? In Genesis 1, he's just called God, Elohim, the powerful creator. But in Genesis 2, right from the beginning, it's the Lord God.

Yahweh, Jehovah, Elohim, the covenant name, the personal name, the name of relationship. And that brings us to the importance, once again, of remembering the context here.

Remember that Genesis is written by Moses for the people of the covenant, for Israel. The people of the Exodus and the Sinai, the people who have the promised land ahead of them.

They know this God, they know him as the Lord, as the covenant God. And they know his covenant, they've known his grace and redemption out of Egypt. They've also known his command to loyalty and to obedience.

It came at Sinai. And Moses is writing to encourage their faith. He's holding before them God's gracious promises and also, yes, God's gracious warnings.

- [3 : 40] And he wants to help propel them forward towards their destiny with God. Remember, Moses is a preacher. He's a leader of God's people. He loves them. He cares for them. He wants the best for them. He's not just informing them about God. He's seeking to turn them to God. He's seeking to tether them to God forever.
- And that's why he wrote all the words of this law, the books that we commonly call Genesis through to Deuteronomy, the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. Let me just read what Moses says right at the end of Deuteronomy in Deuteronomy chapter 30.
- When the people are on the brink of the promised land, when they're about to enter after forty years in the wilderness of disaster, after their rebellion at Kadesh Barnea. Let me read to you what he says in Deuteronomy 11.
- Deuteronomy 30, verse 11. For this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you, neither is it afar off. Verse 15. See, I have set before you today life and death, good and evil.
- [4 : 45] If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you today by loving the Lord your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commands of the statutes and his rules, then you shall live.
- And multiply, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. But if your heart turns away and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and to serve them, I declare to you today that you shall surely perish, die.
- You shall not live long in the land that you are going over to the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse, therefore choose life that you and your offspring may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice, holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days.
- You may dwell in the land that the Lord your God swore to your forefathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, to give them. You see, there's nothing dispassionate there, is there?
- Choose life, says Moses. Why did Moses write Genesis chapters 2 and 3? Well, yes, of course, that we might know about the past, the beginning of all things at the hand of God.
- [6 : 01] But not just that. It's not just a message about the past. It's a message for the present. It's a message for the future. It's a message that demands a response.
- It's a gospel message in that regard. Moses is setting before the people then and he's setting before people today life and death, blessing and curse.
- And he says, choose life. Why would you do anything else when you've seen the glory of the life that God sets before you? You see, he's setting out in Genesis 2 before the Lord's people the goodness of God and the sheer glory of his calling in order that they should never despise that.
- In order that they should never turn away from it to the way of disaster. It's a message, isn't it, that we know Israel needed again and again. And it's a message that according to the New Testament God's people today need again and again.
- That's why it's preserved for us, says Paul, to make us wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. And that's what these chapters do.
- [7 : 13] They do what God's gospel always do. They set before us the delightful freedom that there is for man under God's rule in obedience to God's covenant, but also the disastrous fallout that there is for man when he rebels against God's rule by disobedience to his gracious covenant.

Now there's more in these chapters than we can adequately cover even this morning and this evening. We'll have to come back, I think, to Genesis 3 again. But today I just want us to see morning and evening the two clear sides of all of this.

First of all, the perfect covenant of life in chapter 2, and then the opposite, the painful curse of death that we see in chapter 3. I should say that there are sometimes people who object to talking about Genesis 2 as being about covenant.

covenant. It's true that word isn't there, but of course, elsewhere in scripture there are clear references to God having a covenant at the time of creation which Adam transgressed. It's the very word that Paul uses in Romans 5.

But also, don't forget that this is all about the Lord, Yahweh, the covenant God. And it's written for his people who know him as nothing else than the covenant God. And Moses' purpose is to show the glory of God's perfect covenant of life to the people that they will never despise it.

[8 : 40] So let's look at Genesis chapter 2 then in a little bit more detail. I want us to see that it's all about the life of delightful freedom for humanity under God's sovereign rule.

Let's focus on three things that I think the text emphasizes for us. First, the sheer grandeur of God's purpose for man. Then the sheer generosity of God's provision for man.

And lastly, the sheer grace of God's protection for man. First then, the grandeur of God's purpose for man. There are two things surely that stand out here.

It's man's dignity and his destiny in God's purpose. Think first of the dignity that's accorded to humanity in this account. Just look at verses 4 to 7.

Don't get bogged down worrying about how these things harmonize with the days of chapter 1. That's obviously not what the writer wants us to focus on. He talked here about the day in which the whole heavens and the earth are created.

[9 : 44] Now, what he wants us to focus on here is verse 7. Do you see after the little dash? Then the Lord formed the man. That's the main clause that everything else builds up to.

Until man is made, he's saying nothing else makes sense. Nothing else is complete. There's no bush of the field, says verse 5, probably wild vegetation.

There's no plant of the field, probably cultivated grains. Why? Well, yes, verse 6 says there was no rain, but God had provided mist or flood or however it is we're meant to translate that word.

No, the main issue is there at the end of verse 5. Do you see? There was no man to work the ground. You see what he's saying? Until man comes to work the ground, God can't cultivate his creation properly.

He can't bring it to the glory of its true goal, or at least he chooses not to. He wants humanity to have the honour and the glory and the dignity of being God's co-creator, to work his works after him, to work the ground, to bring creation to all its glory.

[10 : 53] And by the way, that's why keeping and shaping God's creation is a dignified and honourable work, whether you're a farmer or a biologist or a conservationist or a gardener or a forest ranger, whatever it is.

Dignified work, says Genesis 2. And it's dignified work and so it requires a creature of real dignity to do it. That's what verse 7 speaks of, doesn't it?

Yes, man is a creature, he's made from dust, but he's not like any other creature. Look at the dignified intimacy and the beauty of that description.

The Lord God, the God with a personal name, he drew near, he formed man with his own hands. The word is the word of the potter shaping the clay, literally it says he pottered him.

And he breathed into his nostrils with his own mouth, the kiss of life, absolutely literally. And he became alive. Alive. That's life.

[11 : 56] He's designed for dignity above everything else in creation, by the Lord and for the Lord and near the Lord. Because he's made for relationship with the Lord his God, as we saw last time.

He is the very intimate image of the Lord himself. He's made to depend on him, yes indeed. Because life comes from nowhere else but God's breath alone. But what a dignified dependence.

A glorious picture, isn't it? Of course, that's why to despise human life in any form, whether old or young or unborn, is to despise God himself.

Because it despises the dignity of the intimate image of God in man. But think also about the grandeur of the destiny that is given to man here.

Look at verse 15. The Lord God put man in his garden to work it and keep it or guard it. That's language that's most commonly used in the first few books of the Bible for the service of the priests in God's tabernacle, his temple, his dwelling place.

[13 : 07] And that's very significant. In fact, a lot of the language that's used here about the Garden of Eden is used also equally of the tabernacle, the moving tent which God's glory dwelt in with his people that later became the temple.

Well, that shouldn't surprise us because the tabernacle was God's dwelling place on earth. And that's exactly what the Garden of Eden is presented as here. So, Leviticus 26, for example, tells us that the tabernacle is where God walks with his people.

Just like the Garden of Eden, God walks in the cool of the day. The tabernacle is guarded by the cherubim on the east side. Well, the cherubim also guard later the Garden of Eden.

At its very heart in the holy of holies of the tabernacle is, well, the lampstand. If you read about that in Exodus chapter 37, you'll see it's described as like a budding tree with blossom.

Represents the tree of life at the very heart of God's home. And so man is given the destiny to serve and to protect the place of God's own dwelling in holiness.

[14 : 18] He's to have a destiny as a king and a priest for God. Working in line with God's created purposes of glory and keeping and guarding for God anything away that would intrude or spoil or deface it.

Man's created for dignity and for destiny in God's own home. And by the way, don't mishear the importance of the point that work isn't a curse on man.

We usually think that, don't we? But no, work is part of our destiny. It's a gift. God has made us for work. Work dignifies us. An essential part of our humanity.

Remember that, students. You see, to refuse to work usefully or to be denied the opportunity to work usefully or to be discouraged from working usefully actually dehumanizes us, according to the Bible.

That has a lot of implications, doesn't it, for our view of work? A lot of implications, too, for the politicians, isn't it? And their view of work. Work is good, according to God.

[15 : 28] It's what we're made of, made for. So, Christians, of course, above all, should rejoice in our work. That's why Paul says in Colossians 3, 23, whatever you do, work heartily as for the Lord, not for men.

For you are serving the Lord Christ. That's our destiny. And that's the sheer grandeur of God's purpose for humanity.

The dignity of an intimate communion that reflects God himself and the destiny of serving God as a king and a priest, sharing our own dwelling place with God.

Sharing his wonderful work with him. It's a picture, isn't it, of the delightful freedom that man has just because he has been given dignity and destiny by God's sovereign rule.

That's life, says Moses, in all its glorious fullness. goodness. But this passage also shows us the sheer generosity, doesn't it, of God's provision for man.

[16 : 32] And again, there's two aspects of this. It talks about man being given a place and also a partnership. God gives man a place that is both beautiful and bountiful.

Just look at verses 8 to 14. The picture here is of a garden, of God as the landscape architect. Not a garden of Eden, notice, but a garden in Eden.

Now I know immediately the question you're going to ask is, well, is this real or is this just a mythical place? And if it is a real place, well, where exactly is it? Well, I'm going to come to that. But let me just say, first of all, the main point of these verses isn't for us to ask that.

The main point is surely to tell us about God's wonderful generosity, his lavish provision for man. This isn't just life he's speaking about that he's given man, it's lavish life.

Just think about those two words. We can't miss, can we, that God's provision for man is lavish in these verses in every conceivable way. There's bounty, but there's also beauty.

[17 : 38] In God's home, verse 9 says, there's every tree that is beautiful and good for fruit. It's bountiful as well. It's pleasant to the eye and it's very, very useful.

There's a river, says verse 10, that's wonderfully abundant. It's a place that is watered abundantly so that it's fertile and productive and bountiful. But there's also gold, it says, and onyx and precious stones.

There's beauty and splendor as well as bounty. God's home is both aesthetically pleasing and immensely practical.

There's no contrast between the one and the other there. Some people are very good, aren't they, at the aesthetics, wonderful with the arts and all the rest of it, but you can never change a plug. There's other people who'd be great at unblocking your drain, but don't have an aesthetic bone in their body.

But God has created both. And he's commanded man to rejoice in both of these things, to value both of these things, not despise these things. And the Bible is clear that this is just what God is always like.

[18 : 46] He's lavish in his promises. He's lavish in his generosity. He's a God, says Paul, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. 1 Timothy 6, 17.

And you notice, as one writer says, he commands permission to enjoy, in verse 16. You may surely eat of every tree in the garden.

And that brings us to the other word. The promise isn't just lavish, but it is life itself. God's garden, which is his home, is to be man's shared home, because it's the place of life.

You see, verse 9 says, in the midst of the garden is the tree of life. And that too, surely, is what man is commanded to eat from. Some people think that because of chapter 3, verse 22, man hadn't yet eaten of that tree.

But no, the text clearly says man is to eat of every tree. Only one is excluded. Well, what is this tree of life? Well, in the Bible, it's a way of speaking about the source of life itself.

[19 : 55] God's own breath, his spirit. Symbolic of communion with God himself. It's clearly not to be thought of as some kind of magic tree. That would be totally foreign to the whole understanding of the Bible.

No, it's a figure for knowing God himself, for communing with God, because he is your life, said Moses. That's the Bible's constant message. So, for example, Proverbs 36, 9 says, for with you, speaking of God, is the fountain of life.

In your light we see light. And that's how the Bible speaks, of the tree of life elsewhere. God's wisdom, says Proverbs 3, 18, is a tree of life to those who find her.

Proverbs 11 and 12 speak a lot of the same images. Speak of the path of the righteous as being life. In that pathway there is no death. And that desire fulfilled is a tree of life.

The teaching of the wise, likewise, is a fountain of life. One that turns away from the snares of death. So the tree of life represents communion with God himself, because he alone is the source of life.

[21 : 06] There's no other. His life is inexhaustible and unfailing. He alone can give it. That's why when we get to the very end of the Bible in Revelation chapter 2 and chapter 22, the tree of life, again, is at the very heart of the paradise of God.

Because God himself is right at the heart. He is the temple. So God's promise for man, and his provision for him, is ongoing, never-ending life itself.

Because he gives himself to humanity. And Eden is a perfect home. It's lavish provision for all of man's needs.

And there's the ongoing source of life itself, the very presence of the giver of life, the Lord of life. And he commands man to enjoy his lavish provision.

And he commands him to have life, to have communion with his maker. It's a perfect home. A place of beauty and of bounty.

[22 : 11] But within that home, there's a second provision of God's generosity. God gives man also a perfect partner of bounty and of beauty.

Look at verses 18 to 24. Isn't that a wonderful paragraph? It's hard to match it, isn't it? In sheer beauty and charm. And by the way, one of the scholars tells us that in all of the pagan myths of the origins in the world, there's not a mention anywhere, in any of them, of the creation of woman.

But he says in the Bible, we have man's creation in one verse, and six beautiful verses devoted to the creation of woman. Oh, it must be brief, but just notice.

Verse 18. It's a jarring note, isn't it? It is not good. Well, why? Surely God has said in his creation in verse 1, everything is very good. Well, no, not yet. Because, again, we've got a snapshot of the time before the completion of everything.

But why isn't it good? Not, I think, because man is lonely. To be alone is not to be lonely. He's got lots of pets. Plenty of men I know would much rather be at peace with a dog by their side and a paper in their hand than with many of the wives that they could think of.

[23 : 23] Now, he's not talking about loneliness. But he is talking about something incomplete in the task of working and keeping the garden.

He knows that he needs a helper fit for him, suitable for him, says verse 18. In other words, one who is like him, unlike all the animals who fail the test, but who is corresponding to him, complementary to him.

That's what the word suitable means there. So, if humanity is to fill the earth and subdue the earth and rule for God, well, there must be a female, the only suitable helper for him.

Well, God knows that, but he wants man also to realize it. And that's why we have this whole animal parade with Adam naming them all and seeing that none of them matches up to him.

God wants Adam to really appreciate the woman that is to be his wife. That's probably quite a good take-home lesson for most of us married men, isn't it? God wants us to really appreciate the woman he's given us for our wife.

[24 : 31] And so, from his very own flesh, God makes her. Actually, the word there, literally, is he built her. I guess if God built her, she must have been a very well-built woman.

Maybe that's an encouragement to some of us too. But she, at last, is absolutely fit, suitable for the purpose.

Look at verse 23. Literally, it could be translated like this. This time, bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. This one, she will be called Isha.

This one, for she was taken out of Ish. He knows that, that unlike all of the others, this one is like him. And yet is different.

She's a helper, fit, a suitable one. God's generous and bountiful provision for man's dignity and his destiny. And yet, not just bountiful.

[25 : 33] Now, heaven knows that a man's greatest need is a practical woman. I'm trying not to look at any men in particular here. But she's not just practical, is she? She's beautiful.

It's rather lovely, isn't it? The very first poem in the Bible there, in verse 24, is a love poem. The only words that we hear Adam speak before the fall are these words, a love poem of expostulating joy and praise for the beauty of the one who stands before him.

And so it is, says verse 24, a man shall leave his first home and cleave to his wife to form a new home, a new partnership in serving their destiny as keepers and workers together in God's kingdom.

Joint heirs together in the grace of life, to use Peter's lovely phrase. God gives man a perfect place, he sets him in a home full of life, lavish, fulsome life, and he gives him perfect partnership, male and female, side by side and face to face.

And the generosity of his provision matches the grandeur of his purpose for humanity. It's a wonderful picture again, isn't it, of the delightful freedom that there is for humanity under God's gracious rule.

[26 : 56] But where is Eden? Well, just wait a little bit longer. Just to notice the third thing that we mustn't miss. The sheer grace of God's protection for man.

Look again at verses 16 and 17. See, God commands man. But his commands are generous and gracious commands, aren't they?

He commands him to take pleasure in all his provision of life, in all its lavish fullness. Because that's where true freedom is to be found in obedience to God's rule.

There's a line in one of the Anglican collects, the prayers, that speaks of God in whose service is perfect freedom. A more literal translation from the latter would be to whom to be in subjection is to reign.

See, man is truly free. He is truly reigning in the dignity of his true destiny only when he is in subjection to the gracious rule of God, his sovereign.

[28 : 06] And therefore, he must not be free to disobey his creator. And so, says verse 17, God makes him a responsible being, responsible to obey God, bound to obey God by God's sovereign command.

Now, that's not what some people call free will. That's not the same thing at all. Man is not God to do everything that he pleases. He's not free to choose his own way, to have autonomy.

That's precisely what this command forbids him from doing. Because, says God, that would destroy him. And so, God commands man not to eat of the only tree that he is not to eat of, the tree of self-determination, of good and evil.

That is, he tells man he is not to grasp what belongs to God alone. Because God alone decides what is evil and good, what is right and wrong.

Man must submit to God's revelation of morality and of truth. But see the grace, do you, of God's protective command.

[29 : 16] It's to preserve man. It's to protect man that he commands this. only that negative command in the whole gamut of the beautiful picture. In the midst of all the lavish grace of his promises and his provision, there's this only one privation and it is to protect man's very life.

How could it possibly be when we get to the next chapter that that is the thing that is all the focus and everything else is forgotten? And how can we be so perverse and so often resenting God's commands that are for our protection, to keep us, to save us?

We don't doubt a parent's love, do we, when they say no to the little one? Don't step on the road. Don't go near the fire. But we do so all the time, don't we, with God's gracious commands?

And that's why Genesis 2 is here. Moses wants us and God himself wants us to see his goodness, his grace, his provision, his protection, the grandeur of his purpose for his people.

He wants us to see the delightful freedom that can only be for man under God's sovereign rule, the lavish grace of his covenant of life, so that he can say to us, choose life.

[30 : 46] Choose life in God's Eden. But where was Eden? I think the real question Moses wanted his people to ask was rather where is Eden?

This place of lavish life in God's presence? And the answer that Moses wanted them to grasp was this, it's where God by his grace has called you today to return to.

It's where he's leading you to right now if you will obey him and listen to his command and grasp hold of the covenant of life that he's once again held out in front of you.

You see verse 10 to 14 describe Eden as a place. The word means delight. We're told it's a place from which rivers or headwaters flowed out eastwards and westwards.

Verse 11 says the Pishon in Havilah the Bible always refers to Havilah as being near or around Egypt. The Gihon is in Cush either Ethiopia or again the place of Egypt the easternmost border of biblical thinking in terms of the promised land.

[32 : 01] And in the other direction the rivers flow westward to the Tigris and the Euphrates in Mesopotamia. And if that is so this picture of Eden is a place bounded in the east by Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea and in the west by Mesopotamia and the great rivers of the Euphrates.

Everything in between there is what's known as the fertile crescent stretching right down through Assyria and right down. And in the very center of it is of course the land of Canaan.

The promised land the land that would be flowing with milk and honey the land of lavish provision that God had promised to his people. The land of rest where God himself would dwell in the midst of his people and walk with them.

See Moses' people look back to Genesis 15 verse 18 and God's promise to Abraham of a land that would stretch from the rivers of Egypt in the east to the great river Euphrates in the west.

That was God's covenant of life with Abraham his promise. And you see Moses is saying to his people fear not don't doubt God's goodness and grace believe in him trust in him and follow him to his chosen place of rest the place where he will dwell with his people.

[33 : 21] Don't ever look back and doubt his promised covenant of life. See in verse 15 where it says God put man in the garden in the garden.

God set man to work it and keep it. To be in Eden is to be at rest serving God and fulfilling your destiny in joyful obedience.

That's the language Moses uses always of the promised land. It's the place of rest. In Deuteronomy 12 he speaks of the place of rest and destiny, the place where God's name dwells, the place where his people will obey him with joy and rejoice in his presence.

Where is Eden? Say Moses heroes? It's where God himself dwells in the midst. It's the place he chooses for his name to dwell. It's where he's calling you to follow, to obey his voice, to listen to his covenant of life.

For this is no empty word for you, says Moses, the very end of his whole book of Deuteronomy. It's not just past history. This is no empty word, says Moses.

[34 : 33] It is your very life. And by this word you shall live. Friends, it's no empty word for us either. Was Eden a real place?

Yes, indeed. Of course it was. Real and solid and historic and tangible. We can't find it exactly today, but it was a place where God dwelled in joyful harmony with man and his dignity and grandeur, surrounding him with gracious promises and gracious protection.

Yes, Eden was real enough, but friends, far more important for us to grasp is this, Eden is real. Because for all that has happened since Genesis 2 and the terrible catastrophe and the curse of death, God's perfect covenant of life has not been extinguished.

That's the whole point of the book of Genesis. It's the book of promises. The book of the covenant, the book of the gospel, it marches on unstopped back towards Eden. And that's the point of the gospels in the New Testament also, isn't it?

Because there, above everything else, we get a glimpse again of Eden as a real place. The joy and the peace and the blessing that surrounds the place where the presence of God himself is, in Jesus Christ.

[35 : 54] I have come, says Jesus, that they might have life and have it abundantly. And in Jesus we see, don't we, the restoration of man's dignity and destiny as he heals the sick, the lame, and casts out demons and calls back into humanity the dehumanized creatures that are around him.

Eden restored. it. And in Jesus we have the provision again of a wonderful home, the place where God dwells. I go, said Jesus, to prepare a place for you.

And in Jesus, above all, we have again forever God's protection from death. I am the resurrection and the life.

Whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Eden restored. You remember he says straight away to Mary, do you believe this?

Moses is saying to us by writing these chapters, believe it. Jesus is saying to us, believe it. Eden is real. There is a place of real life, of true life, of life that is as deep down in our hearts every single human being knows it should be and wants it to be.

[37 : 21] What all the world is searching for. And the Bible says it's real and it can be found. But it can only be found in one place.

In the Lord of life, the Lord God of Eden. And in the one in whom God has made his fullness to dwell. In whom God once again breathes the breath of his life in Jesus Christ who said, I am the way of life.

I am the bread of life, the water of life, the tree of life. It's found in his covenant of life, the gospel call to submit to his rule whose service is perfect freedom.

That's a great paradox of God's wonderful grace. To submit is to be exalted. To lose our life is to find it. To suffer and be crucified with him is to be glorified and to be crowned with him, says Jesus.

Friends, Genesis 2 is no empty words for you. Not just past history. It is your very life and by this word, if you grasp it, you shall live.

[38 : 43] the gospel of Genesis, the gospel of Jesus Christ. Well, let's pray. O Christ, our Lord, to whom to be in subjection is to reign, make us this morning, we pray, rejoice in your perfect covenant of life made known to us in the glory of your cross.

grace. And may our rejoicing in that be today and tomorrow and forever for the glory of your name's sake.

Amen.