

The Perfect Covenant of Life

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 16 October 2022

Preacher: William Philip

[0 : 00] And now we come to our Bible reading this morning, and today we're reading from Genesis chapter 2, from verse 4 through to the end of the chapter.

Willie Philip, our senior minister, has been preaching from these opening chapters of the Bible which are so foundational for everything that we believe about life and death, sin and everything.

So today we'll continue my reading from Genesis chapter 2, beginning at verse 4. 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 the 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. Bdelium and onyx stone are there. The name of the second river is the 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. 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.

[2 : 42] Then the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a helper, fit for him. Now out of the ground, the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam, there was not found a helper fit for him. So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man. And while he slept, took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man, he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, this at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman because she was taken out of man.

Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

Amen. The grass withers and the flower fades, but the word of the Lord endures forever.

Well, do have your Bibles open, if you would, at Genesis chapter 2. Now, the prologue that we've spent several weeks looking at in Genesis 1 down to chapter 2 verse 3 answers the great questions of purpose about life and the world and everything. If you haven't been able to be here for those, it's all on the website. I would encourage you to listen in. I can't recap all of that.

But as we come to Genesis 2 to 4, we're going to find that these chapters address the very perplexing questions about our humanity. Why then, if mankind, as we've seen, is God's glorious image on earth, why do we suffer and die? Why are our relationships so often so cursed? And so on. Genesis 2 is not a second account of creation.

[5 : 58] of the God who is down here with us. And that contrast is what explains the form of the text. There's a clear focus now, especially on the earth. Notice in verse 4, it begins with the heavens and the earth and ends the earth and the heavens. There's a clear focus on man, on humanity. That's at the very heart of the creation story. But in chapter 1, man's importance was highlighted by being at the end, the climax of creation. Here in Genesis chapter 2, the focus you'll see is on mankind right at the very beginning. We zoom right in on man before we pull back again to see how mankind's destiny effects everything else in creation. Notice also there's a focus now on God's personal name.

In Genesis chapter 1, all the way through, it's just God, Elohim, the powerful creator. But right away here, verse 4, it's the Lord God, Yahweh Elohim, the covenant Lord of relationship. And of course, that reminds us that Genesis was written first for the covenant people, for Israel, for the people of the Exodus, the people of Sinai, the people who knew they had the land of covenant promise ahead of them. So they knew the Lord. They knew his covenant. They've experienced his great redemption. They've received his command to loyalty, to obedient faith at Sinai. And Moses is writing to encourage their faith by holding before them God's gracious promises and also his gracious warnings. He's wanting to propel them into their destiny with God. Remember, Moses is a preacher. Moses is a leader of God's people. He loves them. He's not just lecturing to them about God. He's seeking to turn their hearts to God, to tether them to God. So that they'll be faithful to him all of their lives. And that's why he wrote all the words of the Torah, the first five books of the Bible, the covenant writings that we have from Genesis to

Deuteronomy. Listen to what he says right at the end of those, near the end of Deuteronomy, when the people are 40 years late because of their rebellion, but now at last on the brink of the land and about to enter. And right at the end of Deuteronomy, he says this, I call heaven and earth to witness today that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Now choose life. Love the Lord, your God, obeying his voice, holding fast to him because he is your life. This is no empty word for you, but your very life. There's nothing dispassionate there, is there? Choose life.

So Moses wrote Genesis 1 and 2, of course, that we would know about the past, about the beginning of all things at God's hand. But above all, he wrote it as a perennial message for the present and for the future. It's a living word. It's a covenant word. And that means it's a word that always demands response. It sets before people then and now, life and death. And it says to us, choose life. Moses sets before us the sheer goodness of God, the glory of his calling to us in order that God's people would never despise that, never turn away to the way of disaster.

And that was a message that Israel needed repeatedly. But of course, it's a message that we need again and again, today and always. And that's why, of course, it's in the Bible and preserved for us. As Paul says, to make us wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

[10:00] Do these chapters do what God's gospel always does? They set before us the delightful freedom that there is for man under God's rule in obedience to his covenant, but also the disastrous fallout when we rebel against God's rule in disobedience to his gracious covenant. And Genesis 2 and Genesis 3 set forth that blessing and that curse in two acts of a single drama. Genesis 2 here, the perfect covenant of life. Then in Genesis 3, the painful curse of death. That is a result of Adam's, his transgression, his disobedience to the covenant, which brought death into the whole world of humanity, as Paul says in Romans chapter 5. Now there's a careful artistry with which this is laid out as a story so that we can see at the very heart of the story is the great act of disobedience to God's clear command. We'll come on to that next week and I'll have it set out for you. This morning we're going to look at chapter 2 in particular and what Moses and God himself wants us to see so clearly about this delightful freedom for humanity when living under God's sovereign rule, his perfect covenant of life.

And I want to focus on three things that the text emphasizes very clearly. The sheer grandeur of God's purpose for humankind, the sheer generosity of his provision for us, and also the sheer grace of his protection for mankind. So first then, the grandeur of God's purpose for man. Two things stand out so clearly. Man's dignity and his destiny in God's purpose.

Think first of the dignity that is accorded to humanity in this account. Look at verses 4 to 7. There's no need to try and harmonize this one day, verse 4, the day of God's creation with the six days or the seven days in chapter 1. That's not what the writer wants us to focus on here.

What he wants us to focus on is the climax of this section in verse 7. Look, then the Lord formed the man. That's the main clause of that whole section. Until man is made, nothing else makes sense. It is incomplete. Verse 5, there's no bush of the field, probably wild vegetation, and no plant of the field, probably cultivated grains. Well, why is that? Well, yes, verse 6, there's no rain, but verse 6 says God had covered the earth with a mist, with streams and floods, so there was water. The real issue is there at the end of verse 5. There's no man to work the ground. See what he's saying? Until there is man to work the ground, God can't cultivate his creation properly and bring it to its full glory, to its true goal, or at least God chooses not to without humankind. He wanted humanity to have the honor and the glory and the dignity of being his co-creator in this world, to work his work after him.

That's why keeping and shaping God's creation is dignified and honored work, whether you're a farmer or a forest ranger or a conservationist or a gardener or a street sweeper for that matter.

[13:43] It's dignified work for God. And so it requires a creature of real dignity to do it. And that's what verse 7 speaks of. Man is a creature. That's clear. He's made from the dust of the earth, but he is not like any other living creature. Look at the dignified intimacy. Look at the beauty of man's creation, the description there. The Lord God, the God with a personal name, draws near to form man with his own hands out of the dust. Literally, the verb is he pottered him as a potter shapes clay. And he breathes into him with his own mouth, the kiss of life, quite literally. And he becomes alive, life.

He is designed for dignity that is above all other creatures, by the Lord and for the Lord and near the Lord from the beginning. And that reflects what we said in chapter 1 about man being made for relationship with the Lord God. He's the intimate image of the Lord God himself, made to depend on him.

Yes, indeed, his life comes solely from God. But what a dignified dependence this is. That's why to despise or to devalue human life, old or young or unborn, is actually to despise God himself, the very image of God.

But think also of the sheer grandeur of the destiny that God has for man. Look at verse 15. God put him in the garden to work it and to keep it, or perhaps better, to guard it. It's the same word that's used in chapter 3, verse 24, guarding the way to the tree of life. Now that is language that's used most commonly in the books of Moses for the service of the priests in the tabernacle or the temple.

And that's very significant. A lot of the language used here about the Garden of Eden is exactly that that is used to describe the tabernacle, the moving tent where God himself made his home among his people. And that shouldn't surprise us because the tabernacle is the holy dwelling place of God on earth. And of course, that is exactly what the Garden in Eden was. It was God's home on earth. Leviticus 26, verse 12 tells us that the tabernacle was where God walks with his people, just as God walks with human beings in the Garden of Eden.

[16 : 38] The tabernacle was guarded by the cherubim who guard the way to the Garden of Eden. And at its heart, in the middle of the tabernacle, in the Holy of Holies, is the candlestick, the lampstand that Exodus chapter 37 describes as representing a tree. It represented the tree of life at the heart of God's home. And so man's destiny in creation is to serve and protect, to guard the place of God's own dwelling in holiness here on earth. He is to have a destiny as a king and a priest to God, working in line with God's created purposes of glory and keeping, guarding for God his home from anything that would intrude and spoil and deface it. And it needs guarding, as we will see in the next chapter. Man is created for dignity and for destiny in God's own home.

Now don't miss the importance of that, the importance of work, for example. The work of human beings is not a curse on man. Work is a gift. It's part of our destiny. God made human beings for work.

Work dignifies human beings as an essential part of our humanity. And that means that if human beings refuse to work usefully, or indeed if they're denied the opportunity to work usefully or discouraged from working usefully, then they are being dehumanized. All sorts of implications in that, aren't there, for our whole view of work, of our own work, for politics, for social thinking, about things like work. Work is good. It's part of our dignity.

That's why Christians should rejoice in our work. Paul says to the Colossians, whatever you do, work heartily as for the Lord, not for men. You're serving the Lord Christ, he says.

Of course, that means that we mustn't be working just to serve ourselves, or indeed just for others. It also means there must be some kind of work which can't dignify the Lord God. We have to think about that.

[19 : 01] But that's the sheer grandeur of God's purpose for man. The dignity of intimate communion, and of relationship with God himself, reflecting God himself, and the destiny of serving as a king and a priest, sharing God's own dwelling place with him, and sharing God's own work with him.

It's a picture, isn't it, of the delightful freedom that man has been given just because he has been given dignity and destiny by God's sovereign rule. And that is life in all its glorious fullness.

But think also of what this chapter teaches us of the sheer generosity of God's provision for man. And again, there's two aspects of this. God generously provides both a place for the man and also a partnership. God gives man a place which is both beautiful and bountiful. Look at verses 8 to 14.

The picture is of a garden with God as a landscape artist. Notice it's not the garden of Eden in verse 8, it's the garden in Eden. The main point of these verses isn't for us to ask, well, where exactly is Eden?

The main point is surely to tell us of God's wonderful generosity in his provision in this garden for man. This isn't just life that he's given human beings, it's lavish life.

[20 : 35] Just think of those two words, lavish life. We can't miss, can we, that God's provision here is lavish in every conceivable way. It's full of bounty and beauty.

In God's home, verse 9, there is every tree that is beautiful and bountiful, pleasant to the eye and good for food.

There's a river, verse 10, which waters the garden abundantly. It's a fertile place, a productive, a beautiful place. And verse 12, notice also there's gold, there's onyx, there's precious stones, there's beauty and splendor adorning.

His garden. One writer says God's home is both aesthetically pleasing and endlessly practical. It's not one or the other, notice. Some people are very good at the aesthetic, aren't they?

They're wonderfully artistic. Ask them to change a plug, no chance. You've got other people, it would be great to unblock your drain or do something like that, but they've absolutely no time for the arts, for music, for anything else.

[21 : 41] No, but God created both these things. And he commands man to value both of these things, not to value one and despise the other. And the Bible is clear, isn't it, that that is what God is always like.

He is lavish in his provision with sheer generosity. He's a God, says the Apostle Paul, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.

And he commands man to enjoy. Look at verse 16, you may surely eat of every tree in the garden. That brings us through to the other word, not just lavish, but it is life itself.

God's garden, which is his home, is to be man's shared home. It is the place of life. Verse 9, in the midst of the garden, notice, is the tree of life.

And that too is what man is commanded to eat from. Now some people have thought mistakenly because of chapter 3, verse 22, that man hadn't yet eaten of the tree of life.

[22 : 54] But that's a mistake. Quite clearly here, the text says, of every tree you may surely eat. That is a strong encouragement to eat of every tree, and that must include the tree of life.

Now what is this tree of life? Well, it's clearly a way of speaking about the source of life itself, of God's own breath, God's own spirit that he breathes into man.

It's clearly symbolic of the means of communion with God himself. It's clearly not to be thought of as some kind of magic tree. That would be quite foreign to the whole thought of the Bible.

Now this is a figure for knowing God, for communing with God himself, because God himself is your life, says Moses. And that's the Bible's consistent message.

You can read all through for yourself. Psalm 36, verse 9, For with you the Lord is the fountain of life. In your light we see light. And light is a figure for life in the Bible.

[23 : 57] Certainly that's how the Bible speaks of the tree of life elsewhere. Proverbs 3, 18 says, God's wisdom is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her.

Proverbs 12 and 13 speak of the path of righteousness as being life, and in its pathway is no death. It says, Life and death.

Life from the Lord, death in turning away from the Lord. The tree of life represents communion with God himself, because he is the only source of life.

Life that is inexhaustible, life that is unfailing. He alone breathes life into human beings. That's why at the end of the Bible, in Revelation 2 and Revelation 22, once again we find what?

The tree of life is right at the heart of the paradise of God, the garden of God. And the fruit of that tree is for the healing of the nations. Because God himself is in the midst to bring healing to the nations.

[25 : 13] So God's provision for man is this ongoing, never-ending source of life itself. In other words, God is giving himself and his life to human beings.

Eden is the perfect home of lavish provision for all man's life. And it is the home of the ongoing source of life itself.

It is the person of God, the life giver, who breathes life into man. And God commands human beings to enjoy that lavish provision.

He commands them to have life, to have loving communion with their maker. in the perfect home, in the place of beauty and bounty.

But of course, there's a second aspect here, isn't there? Very clearly, in this generous provision to the man, God gives the man a partner of both beauty and bounty.

[26 : 18] Look at verses 18 to 24. It's a wonderful little paragraph. It's very hard to match the beauty and the charm of these words. And by the way, none of the other ancient pagan myths of creation say anything at all about the creation of woman.

But in the Bible, notice man's creation gets one verse, the creation of woman, six beautiful verses. That is worth noting.

Now let's be brief here, but notice in verse 18, notice the jarring note. It is not good. Well, surely, everything is very good.

We've seen that in chapter one, haven't we? Well, not yet. Here's a snapshot again, going back to the time before creation's complete, before what we read of at the end of chapter one.

Why, why isn't it good? Well, not because the man is lonely. A lot of people think that, but being alone, not at all the same thing as being lonely.

[27 : 25] After all, the man here has got lots of animals, lots of pets. I know men who would be quite happily at peace with their dog and an empty house without being married at all.

So, this has nothing to do with being lonely. It is about incompleteness. Incompleteness in the task for which man has been created.

Working and guarding God's garden. And to do that, verse 18 says, the man needs a helper who is fit for him, suitable for him.

That is one who is like him, not like any of the other animals. Verse 20 says, every other creature fails the test, is not fit for him, but he needs one who is corresponding to him, complementary to him.

That's what this word suitable helper or fit helper means. If humanity is to fill the earth and subdue it, if he is to be fruitful and to multiply, then God says there must be a female as well as a male.

[28 : 38] There must be a woman as well as a man. And notice, unlike many of our politicians today, the Bible has no difficulty in understanding these two things very clearly.

The only suitable helper for man's task is that there be a woman. And God knows that. But of course, he wants the man to realize it too.

And that's why we have this whole parade of all the animals. God wants man to really appreciate the woman who is going to be his wife. And by the way, that's a good take-home lesson for all the married men here, I should think, to remember.

God wants to form her from the flesh of the man. So verse 22, God makes her. Literally, the word is God builds her. Strange word to use.

If God built her, I suppose she must have been a very well-built woman. That might encourage some of us as well. But she was certainly built as being fit for purpose. That's the point here. That's what this is about.

[29 : 48] Look at verse 23. And literally, what the man says here is this time, this time, it's bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh.

This one will be called woman, Isha, because this one was taken out of man, Ish. The two words sound very similar. The man immediately knows that unlike all the others, this one is like him, but is different.

This one is a helper who is fit for him, who is suitable. God's generous and bountiful provision for the man's dignity and the man's destiny requires the woman.

Notice she's not just bountiful, she's not just practical. Heaven knows practical woman is what most men really do need. But she's beautiful to him.

Notice verse 23 and verse 24. These are the first words of poetry on the lips of a human being.

[30 : 58] In fact, they're the only words on Adam's lips before the fall. And it's a love poem, isn't it? And so it is, verse 24 says, a man shall leave his first home and will cleave to his wife to form a new home, a new partnership in serving their destiny as guardians and workers together in God's kingdom.

Heirs together in the grace of life, as the Apostle Peter puts it in those lovely words. God gives the man a perfect place, a home of life, of lavish, fulsome life, and he gives him the perfect partnership, male and female, side by side as workers and face to face as lovers.

The generosity of his provision matches the grandeur of his purpose for human beings. It's a wonderful picture, isn't it, of the delightful freedom that there is under God's perfect rule for human life.

Where is Eden? Well, hang on just a little longer. We'll come to that. But just briefly notice the third thing here that we mustn't miss.

And that is the sheer grace of God's protection for man. Look at verses 16 and 17 again. God commands man, but his commands, notice, are generous. They are gracious.

[32 : 32] He commands him to take pleasure in his provision of life in all its lavish fullness there in verse 16. Because that is where true freedom and life is to be found.

It's a lovely ancient prayer of the church which resurfaces in one of the collects in the book of Common Prayer, speaking of God whose service is perfect freedom.

The God to whom to be in subjection is to reign. Man is truly free. Man is truly reigning in the dignity of his truest destiny only, only, only, when he is in subjection to the gracious rule of God his maker.

And therefore, mankind must not be and cannot be at liberty to disobey his creator. And so verse 17 says that God makes man a responsible being.

Responsible to obey God. responsible and bound to obey God. Now notice, that is not what some people call free will.

[33 : 52] That's not the same thing at all. Man is not God to do as he pleases himself. Man is not God to have freedom to choose his own way, to have total autonomy.

That is precisely what he has forbidden from doing here. because that would destroy him. And so God commands man not to eat of the one tree only, verse 17.

Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day you eat of it you shall surely die. The tree of self-determination of good and evil.

So man is commanded not to grasp at what belongs to God alone because God alone decides and tells us what is good and what is evil, what is right and what is wrong.

And mankind must submit to God's revelation of that truth, of what God tells him is right and wrong and to do what God tells him and to live under God's order and direction not his own.

[35 : 00] But notice the grace of that protective command. command. It is to preserve and to protect the man that he gives this command.

Only this one negative, privative command. In the midst of all the lavish grace, all the provision, all the permission, there is only one privation and that privation is to preserve the life of man.

How could it be then that this alone is what gets all the focus in the tempter's conversation when we come to chapter 3?

And how is it that we can be so perverse in so often resenting God's commands which are for our own protection, his commands that are there to keep us, to save us?

We don't doubt a parent's love, do we, when they teach their child, no, no, don't step onto the road. No, don't touch the hot fire. We say that's a loving parent protecting their child.

[36 : 11] And yet we do it all the time, don't we, with God's warnings. We say we don't want those warnings. We'll decide. You see, that is why Genesis chapter 2 is here.

Moses wants us and God himself wants us to see his goodness, to see his grace, to see the grandeur of his purpose for his people, to see the generosity of his provision for his people, and the sheer grace of his protection for his people.

To see this delightful freedom that comes only under his gracious rule, the lavish life of his covenant of life, so that we will choose life, so that we will choose life in God's Eden.

But where was Eden? Well, friends, the real question that Moses wants his people to ask is rather, where is Eden? Where is this place of lavish life in God's presence?

And the answer that he wants them to grasp is this, it is where God, by his grace, has called you to return to. And by his gracious command is leading you to right now, if you'll obey his command, and if you will lay hold of the covenant of life that he is offering to you again by his grace.

[37 : 34] See, in verses 10 to 14 here, Moses tells us that God's garden is in Eden. The word Eden itself means a place of delight.

and he tells us here that it's a place from which rivers or headwaters flowed eastward and westward. Verse 11, Pishon is in Havilah, which in the Old Testament always refers to areas in or near Egypt and Arabia.

It's in the east. Gihon, verse 13, Ethiopia, or again, perhaps Egypt, the east. And verse 14, in the other direction, the rivers flowed westward, the Tigris and the Euphrates.

That's Mesopotamia. That's modern-day Iraq. And if that's so, what he's telling us is that Eden is a place bounded in the east by Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea and in the west by the Euphrates area.

That is the whole of the fertile crescent. And where was the land right at the heart of that fertile crescent? Well, it was the land of Canaan.

[38 : 41] It was the land of promise. It was the land flowing with milk and honey like the Garden of Eden. The place of God's lavish provision. The land of rest where God said himself that when his people came there, he would dwell with them in the midst of them in peace.

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

That was God's covenant of life that he promised to Abraham. And Moses, you see, is saying to his people, fear not, don't doubt God's goodness and his grace. Trust him.

Believe in his promise and follow him to his chosen place of rest, the place where he will dwell in the midst of his people. Don't look back, don't doubt his gracious, promised covenant of life.

You see verse 15 when it says God put man in the garden. Literally in the Hebrew it says God placed man at rest in the garden to work it and keep it.

[39 : 56] To be in Eden is to be at rest. It is to be fully serving and discovering your destiny in the place of God's dwelling in joyful obedience to him.

And Moses used exactly that terminology again and again of the land of promise. It was the land of rest. It was the place of destiny where God makes his own name dwell and where his people will obey him with joy.

Well, they will rejoice in his presence in the midst. So Moses listened and said, well, where is Eden? How can we get back there? Moses says it's where God himself dwells in the midst.

It's the place that he chooses to make his name dwell. It's where he's calling you to follow. If you'll just obey his voice, if you'll heed his gracious covenant of life.

This is no empty word for you, Moses says to them. This is your life. This is not just past history. By this word, you will live.

[41 : 01] And you see, it's no empty word for us either. That's why it's in our Bibles. Was Eden in a real place? Yes, it was. It was real and solid and historical and tangible.

The Bible's telling us it was a place where God himself dwelt in the midst of his people in joyful harmony with man in full dignity and grandeur.

It was a place where he surrounded human beings with his gracious provision, with his generous provision and his protection.

Eden is real. Eden was real, but far more important for us today is to know that Eden is real because for everything that has happened since Genesis 2, for all the catastrophe of the curse of death that we're going to see, God's perfect covenant of life has never been extinguished.

And that's the whole point of the book of Genesis. Death shall not reign. It's the book of God's promise of his covenant.

[42 : 11] It's his gospel. And it marches on unstopped all through the story of the Bible back to Eden. That's the whole point of the gospels in the New Testament.

Read the gospels and you'll see we're getting another glimpse of Eden. We're seeing the joy, the peace, the blessing that surrounds the presence of God himself, the tree of life in the midst of his people.

I have come, said Jesus, that you may have life and have it abundantly. It's the language of Eden. In Jesus, we see God restoring man's purpose of dignity and destiny.

We see him healing the sick. We see him healing the lame. We see him bringing dehumanized creation back to its full glory. Eden restored. In Jesus, we have the promise, don't we, of a permanent home, the place where God dwells.

I go, said Jesus, to prepare a place for you. And in Jesus, we have once again forever, don't we, God's protection from death.

[43 : 23] I am the resurrection and the life. And whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. He's talking about the life of Eden restored forever and ever.

That's what he said to Martha. Then he said to her, do you believe this? Moses is saying to his people, believe this, the promise of God. Jesus is saying to us, believe it.

Eden is real. It's the place of real life. It's the place of true life. It's the place that deep down, friends, every human heart knows there should be and we want there to be.

What all around us in the world people are seeking for in all kinds of ways, the Bible tells us, is real. It can be found. But it's found only in one place.

It's found in the Lord God of Eden. It's found in the one in whom all the fullness of God dwells and breathes the breath of life back into humanity again in Jesus Christ, the way of life, the bread of life, the water of life, the tree of life.

[44 : 50] It's found in his covenant of life, in the gospel call to submit again to his rule, whose service is perfect freedom. That's a great paradox of God's wonderful grace, that in his gospel, his covenant of life, to submit is to be exalted.

To lose our life is to find it. To be made a servant is to reign with him. To be crucified with him is to be crowned in glory with him forever.

This word about Genesis 2 is no empty word for us. It's not past history. It's our very life. It's our very life. By this word we shall live.

That's the gospel of Moses here in Genesis chapter 2. Well, let's pray. Lord Jesus Christ, to whom to be in subjection is to reign, make us, we pray, rejoice in your perfect covenant of life today and all our days and forever we ask for the glory of your great namesake.

Amen.