



Sunday, May 11, 2025

Genesis 1-2 Part 2

Part A - Pastor Josh:

Last week we covered the very first of many messages on the beginning of it all - the 'Genesis' as it were, of all creation. We talked about how the Bible opens not just with the making of matter or the formation of planets, but with the creation of time itself: 'In the beginning...'

We focused on how God - who exists outside of time - chose to step into the beginning and bring forth light, life, and order. We saw that God didn't create out of boredom or necessity, but out of love. Because love, by its very nature, creates.

And so, what we began to see is that the creation story isn't just informational - it's deeply relational. Genesis 1 isn't just about what God made; it's about who He is: a Creator full of purpose, of beauty, of order, and most importantly, love.

Today, we come to the climax of that creation story. The pinnacle part where it all shifts. After forming and filling for six days - after separating light from darkness, waters from sky, land from sea - God now creates humanity as the object of His great love - not as an afterthought, or simply another element of creation but now the pinnacle of it. The point of it all. We are His beloved.

If you have your Bibles with you this morning please turn with me to Genesis 1 and 2. If you are able to stand, please do so for the reading of the Word of God:

Genesis 1:26-27 / 2:7, 18-25

'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.'

Chapter 2:7, 18-25

'7 And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being...

18 And the Lord 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 the Lord 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 the Lord 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 the Lord 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.'

There are three significant details about the creation of humanity that I want to share with you this morning - details that I believe will help us to grasp the great intention and purpose behind God's design.

The first thing I want you to see is that the creation of humanity is fundamentally different from the rest of creation. In all of creation there are two things that sets humanity apart:

When God created Adam, we're told that He made him in His image, and then breathed into him the breath of life. None of the rest of creation - no animal, no plant, no star nor sea - was created in the image of God, nor did any of it receive the breath of God.

If we zoom in on 2:7 we read that, before humanity received the breath of God, ‘...the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground.’ The Hebrew word being the word ‘yasar,’ which simply means to shape or fashion. Whereas the rest of creation was created as a result of God simply speaking, special care and attention is now given to the creation of humanity. One gets the picture of a potter sitting at a potter’s wheel with a clump of clay - forming and fashioning it according to his perfect will and desire. This is the picture we are intended to have when God forms Adam out of the dust of the Earth. But then God takes it a step further by now breathing His breath into Adam. A deeply intimate and significant action as he is the only part of creation that is not only formed by the hand of God, but also receives His breath. Theologians all agree that this breath is the moment we receive a soul or spirit - that part of our existence that transcends the physical and enters the world of the eternal. It’s that part of our consciousness that allows us to converse and commune with the Lord.

Now, it’s interesting to note that in 2:19 it says that God also formed the birds and animals out of the dust of the ground. But the similarities stop there. It’s only when the breath of God enters Adam that he becomes a living being. That’s what ultimately sets humanity apart - not just physical formation, but the spiritual life of God placed within us.

This is why when God is looking for a partner for Adam, He has to create another human because no suitable partner is found amongst all of the rest of creation.

Now the creation of Eve is where things really start to get interesting for me. But in order to fully understand the creation of Eve, we need to revisit the creation of Adam - because what God does next is deeply intentional.

When we read the name ‘Adam,’ we often picture a man named Adam. But in the Hebrew, the word translated Adam is the word ‘ha’adam,’ which simply means ‘the human.’ So in the beginning, God created a human. One human.

Genesis 1:27 also teaches us that this ha’adam was created in the image of God.

Which means that, in some mysterious way, the fullness of the image of God was present in that original human being - meaning that both male and female were somehow held together in tension, in one human form. Now, let’s go back again for just a moment more so you can see the power of what is taking shape here:

In the Bible, we often see God described as Father - after all Jesus teaches us to pray to ‘Our Fa-

ther in Heaven.’ But that’s not the only imagery of God that Scripture gives us. In several places, especially in the Psalms and the prophets, God is described specifically with maternal imagery - like a mother bird, spreading her wings to shelter her young, or even a mother comforting her child.

What does this mean?

It means that when God created life, He also created the distinctions of male and female. But just like time and space, gender is also a part of creation - and as such, is not something that defines or limits the Creator of creation.

In other words, God is not male or female. He is spirit. He is Creator. He exists outside the boundaries that He Himself created for human life with the purpose of procreation. And yet, in His kindness, He has revealed Himself to us in ways we can understand. So while He is called Father and reveals His authority and provision to us in masculine terms, He also reveals tenderness, nurture, and protection in ways that we would typically recognize as maternal.

So when ha’adam - this original human - was created in the image of God, scholars suggest that both masculine and feminine traits were somehow present in that one form. And from that one human, God would then separate and form male and female, each reflecting something specific and unique of the divine nature of their creator.

God then puts ha’adam into a deep sleep, and Genesis 2:21–22 tells us that God takes something from the human as the base with which He now creates Eve. In English we read that this is a rib but in Hebrew the word used is the word ‘tsela’ which simply means ‘side’ - so conceivably, it could be a rib, but when you look deeper into the Hebrew translation, we see that this specific word is a feminine noun - which when broken down into its most basic form, simply means that God took the ‘female side’ of human to create an entirely new form.

And, it is only now, after this operation, that gender names are now assigned to the two humans. The word to describe the male human is the word ‘ish.’ And the word for Eve is ‘ish’sha’ which means female human.

Two distinct beings. Two reflections of God’s image. Two halves, designed to complement one another.

And then we read: ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be united to his wife,

and the two shall become one flesh.'

Do you see it now?

Marriage becomes a reunion of what was originally whole.

A picture of unity. Of design. Of God's intention.

Humanity - created in the image of God - was separated into male and female. And through the covenant of marriage, they become one flesh again, reflecting the image and glory of God as they were meant to from the beginning.

Genesis 1:36

'Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good...'

I want you to see something here. All of creation embraces the rhythm of forming and filling. Every single day is either God forming something or Him filling what He has just formed. Yet on the last day of creation, we see the entire rhythm portrayed in his creation of humanity. He forms humanity out of the dust of the earth and then fills him with His breath of life. But unlike the rest of creation, His work in humanity is still ongoing to this very day. He is still filling us with His breath of Life - now the empowerment of the Holy Spirit and He is continually forming us into the men and women of God that He is calling us to be.

So it's no wonder then that on Day 7, God embraced this element of spiritual formation by introducing the very first Sabbath - not because He needed rest, but because He knew that there was a deep seeded forming that we needed to embrace with another rhythm. A rhythm of work/rest. So integral was this element to our survival that it was introduced in creation as part of creation.

So God's creative work didn't end with forming and filling the earth - it continues in us. In how we live, how we love, and even in how we rest. Because as you will see shortly, rest, too, was part of His original design.

Part B Sabbath - Pastor Jordan:

My brother's first child, my niece Imogen, was just the sweetest little toddler. Toddlers are always adorable—until the inevitable meltdown. One day, sweet darling Imogen was in full blown meltdown mode, and I watched my brother squat down to her level and gently hold out his hand like this: "Smell the flower," he said. Then he switched his hand: "Blow out the candle." Smell the flower.

Blow out the candle. And with that simple rhythm, he brought her back to her breath—and ultimately, back to herself, using the rhythm of her breathing.

From the very beginning, God built a rhythm into creation—a law of rest and work, designed to continually bring us back to our breath, the breath He breathed into us, and back to our true selves. When we look through the lens of love, we see this rhythm differently.

In the creation story, a repeated phrase marks each day. Genesis 1:5: “There was an evening, and there was a morning: one day.” Verse 8: “There was an evening, and there was a morning: the second day.” Verse 13: “Evening came and then morning: the third day.” It repeats through day six. What do we notice? It’s rest and work, not work and rest.

The rhythm of a day begins with evening.

We often say, “Let’s get the day started,” as if it begins when we open our eyes. But in Genesis, a day starts with our rest and with God mysteriously at work bringing forth new things while we sleep. We wake up in the middle of God’s day, invited to join what He’s already doing.

To live in alignment with the Creator, we need to live in that truth. We don’t start the day, and we don’t set the agenda. God does.

Let’s take a deep breath together. Smell the flower. Blow out the candle.

Let that sink in: It’s not up to you to start anything. God has already begun. He’s already in the day. We’re simply invited to join Him—and that invitation begins from a place of rest. This is how God created the rhythm of our day to look. Is that your current rhythm?

Do you start your day giving thanks for the rest you’re about to enter, trusting that God is still at work? Do you wake knowing He’s prepared good works for you—like loving your family, making coffee for your spouse, caring for creation, planting a garden, sharing His love with a neighbor, working at your job as unto the Lord, making dinner, shuttling kids, or even surrendering to His will in grief and suffering? As the Psalmist says: “This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.”

Our days have a rhythm created by God and it starts with rest.

But God didn't just build in a rhythm for our day... there's another rhythm we need to pay attention to. In Genesis 2:1-3 we read that after the sixth day: *The heavens and the earth and everything in them were completed. 2 On the seventh[a] day God had completed his work that he had done, and he rested[b] on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. 3 God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, for on it he rested from all his work of creation.*

This seventh day is different. First, we read that God had completed his work that he had done and he rested from all his work that he had done. Second, we read that God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy. And Third, we don't read about there being an evening and a morning. There's something unique about this seventh day.

First the number 7 – 7 means fullness or completion.

The fact that there was no evening and no morning means that the seventh day was meant to be eternal. God created the world, crafted an ecosystem that would provide everything for life, filled it with life...and the ultimate expression of life which was man made in His image. And then he invited all of creation into a seventh day, into the fullness and completion of creation, full of His holy presence and full of rest.

Because of sin entering into the world (Josh will be getting to that later) we see that humanity forfeits this rest. But as Josh said last week, Genesis 12-Revelation 22 is all about God restoring us back to how He originally created us...and one of those facets is to restore us back to an eternal seventh-day rest...which we glimpse in Revelation 22.

But until then we see God create a cyclical rhythm modeled for us in Genesis 8:22 after the flood, and then again we read in Exodus 20 in the 10 commandments:

“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. 11 For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

While the eternal seventh-day rest will only come when Jesus returns and redeems all things, here we see that there is a Sabbath day in the cyclical weekly rhythm. God in his great love is still making

a way to bring heaven to earth and the practice of Sabbath is one of those ways.

And this is significant because we have to remember that at the time of the ten commandments, the Hebrews have come out of slavery in Egypt where there was no rest. Slaves didn't get a day off. Slaves worked and then died. But God, brought them out of slavery and returned them to Sabbath. Note how this isn't even a command—like the rest of the commandments. When God talks about the Sabbath he takes up 1/3 of the tablets (it's the longest part of the ten commandments) but he calls them to "Remember it" because — before it was ever a 'commandment' — Sabbath rest was always an inherent rhythm in creation and a gift of love.

So what does practicing Sabbath look like? In our Practicing the Way course, a bunch of us went through the Sabbath practice and learned about four movements...and I am just skimming the surface here so I will include a bunch of resources for you in the weekly email...which if you don't get... you need to, you can sign up on our website.

Stop – The first movement is to stop. Stop 'business as usual' and simply breath. Put aside the human-doing and allow yourself to be a human being. We're not "adding" Sabbath to our schedule. We're removing things from our schedule or not adding more things to our schedules so we can make space for Sabbath. We're stopping, not because we've got everything done and finished—because that's never going to happen, we're actually going to have to leave things left undone, but we stop to remember that we are not what we do or what we have or what other people say and think about us. We can stop because of who we are most deeply loved by, and we can give Him the undone things to hold so that He can rest us. Which leads us into our second movement, Rest.

Rest – In our Practicing the Way practice on Sabbath we learned while rest sounds wonderful, in reality, rest is actually a radical, counter-cultural act of resistance to the powers and principalities at war with God and his kingdom of peace. To practice Sabbath rest is to say no to the external and internal forces that would encroach on following with Jesus and being formed in His image. A lot of things we do on a 'day off' let's say...are actually just distractions, they don't provide us with true rest. Things like (shopping, entertainment, binge-watching, scrolling, social obligations, errands, chores, sports). To Sabbath rest is to draw a line in the sand against cultural distractions so that we can be attentive to God. I like to think of Gandalf in Lord of the Rings when he's facing the Balrog..."You Shall Not Pass." It's that serious. And when we remove distractions many of us will come to realize that we are actually quite tired...who knew a nap could be an act of spiritual warfare? Quite a lovely thing, really. But least you think that Sabbath is all about laying around doing nothing let's look at the third movement... Delight!

Delight – Previous generations thought Sabbath was to be somber and serious, this current generation think it's a day to chill... but God created Sabbath as a day to give yourself fully to delight in God's world, your life in it, and in God himself. How do we delight? What is something that is live-giving for you? Some of us come alive if we're in nature, so we would find rest and delight as we go on a hike. Some of us delight by sitting on the couch reading a book or working on a hobby that brings joy, some of us delight in the presence of friends and family. I would say that a mix of all of those is just about perfect. Delighting in nature and movement, delighting in quiet and rest and creativity, and delighting in community. To delight is also an act of spiritual warfare...in a world that has troubles and sorrows, when we choose to delight, we are entering a deeper reality, we are living into the future of Revelation 22.

Worship – And then we come to our fourth movement, worship. God calls the Sabbath day holy. Set-apart and consecrated to God, for God, for our good. It's a way to be reoriented back to our breath...back to God himself who breathed his breath in us.

We visited Josh's brother and his family in Germany this summer and on Sunday everything was shut down. My sister-in-law and I headed to the grocery store on Saturday to make sure we had what we needed for Sunday. We were forced to plan for this day of rest. We went to church, we came home and had a simple meal, we relaxed, played games, we went for a walk and just enjoyed time together. We don't have that forced planning here, if we need an ingredient we can pop into the store on Sunday. However, Sundays still tend to be a natural day to practice Sabbath since this is when we gather to worship, I wonder if we just mentally told ourselves everything's closed...what would our day look like? How would we plan the day before or during the week? What would that look like? For some of us, it's not ideal to practice Sabbath on Sunday, Josh and I practice Sabbath on different days since Sundays is a day of work for us and that's okay, what 24-hour period would consistently work best for you and can you apply the same thought.

Are you exhausted, confused, burnt-out, feel distant from God, or that God is distant?

Or in the words of Jesus in Matthew 11:28-30 (MSG):

28-30 "Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

The practice of Sabbath is ultimately just the vehicle, the tool that creates the space so we can come to Jesus and allow Him to rest us. It's in relationship with Him, abiding in Him, that we find our ultimate rest.

So maybe this is a call for you to enter Sabbath rest as way to come to Jesus—setting aside a 24-hour period in your week for rest and worship and choosing to stop and delight in goodness and beauty and truth, accepting the invitation to live into this rhythm that God built into the world.

When we live in alignment with reality as God intended in his wisdom and in his love we tend to flourish and thrive but when we live at odds with it—and we could apply this to so many different areas—if we live at odds with the creator's good and loving intentions we sabotage our formation. Rest and work....Sabbath rest is built into the fabric of creation by a good and loving God.

It's like gravity: you can ignore it, but it still affects you. Try jumping off a roof—you'll discover gravity applies whether you believe in it or not. Sabbath rest follows the same universal law.

A study of Seventh-day Adventists—who still practice Sabbath seriously—found they live 11 years longer than the average person. Dr. Matthew Sleeth noted that if an average life is 75-year life there would be 3,900 Sabbath days. That equals to just under 11 years. Coincidence?

Ephesians 5:15–16 says:

“Pay careful attention, then, to how you live—not as unwise people but as wise—making the most of the time, because the days are evil.”

“Making the most of” is *exagorazō*—which means to “redeem” or “buy back the time”. Sabbath is one of the best ways to reclaim time from the enemy. It's engaging in spiritual warfare.

My favorite time each week is Friday night. I make a meal I love, sometimes we light some candles and play a record while we have dinner. Later, I hang with Josh and Caleb for movie night while the older kids are at youth. I go to bed with no alarm, letting my body wake up when it's rested, and Saturday is a blank slate. There's even a sticker in my planner for Sabbath, reminding me not to fill it with appointments.

From Friday evening to Saturday evening, I stop. I rest. I delight. I worship.

I allow the Spirit of God to return me to the breath He breathed into me...and return me to my truest self—a human being, created by and deeply loved by a good Father who holds out his hand and says...

Smell the flower, blow out the candle.

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