

**“BEGINNINGS: God, Adam, Eve, Satan”**  
**Genesis 2:7-25; 3:1-8 (selected verses)**

**Genesis 2**

**7** Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

**8** Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed.

**9** The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

**16** And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden;

**17** but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”

**18** The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”

**22** Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. **23** The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.” **24** That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh. **25** Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

**Genesis 3**

**1** Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”

**4** “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. **5** “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

**6** When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

**7** Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

**8** Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

**Introduction**

Last Sunday, Pastor Chris began this sermon series on BEGINNINGS by unpacking the Hebrew poetry of Genesis chapter 1 – of the goodness of God’s creation – the heavens and the earth, sun, moon and stars, plants and animals, culminating in “Let us make man in our image... male and female he created them... And God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.”

Remember that the “How” and “When” (the most often in wrangling discussions of Creation), are not as important as the “Why” and “Who.” God created the world. God made you and me. Here we are! In this world, in this life. Why? is the center of the Genesis Beginnings account.

In Genesis 2, the Bible gives us a further description, in a more narrative form, of the creation of human beings.

### **I. God’s Masterpiece (2:7-25)**

“Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.”

There is nothing fancy about the chemical elements that make up our bodies. This body of mine would be a lifeless shell if God had not made me alive with his “breath of life.” The value of your life and mine, our worth comes from God’s Spirit. The human body, this pile of oxygen, carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, calcium, and phosphorus, became a “living being.”

After church, a little boy tells his parents he has to go and talk to pastor right away. They find the pastor and their son says, “I learned today that our bodies came from the dust and when we die our bodies go back to dust.” “Yes, I’m glad you were listening. Why do you ask?” He says, “Well you better come over to our house right away and look under my bed ’cause there’s someone either comin’ or goin’!”

The Hebrew word is *nephesh*, in Greek it’s *psyche* – often translated as “soul.” Psalm 42 says it beautifully: “As the deer panteth for the water, So my soul (my *nephesh*) longeth after Thee, Lord God.” Like all the animals, yes, we are physical, living creatures. But we are also uniquely spiritual beings. You and I were created in such a way that our being would long deeply for fulfillment and satisfaction. We are able to hear, understand, evaluate, and determine what the Lord is saying, and then decide what we will do about it.

Then LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.” God created us to be moral beings as well. I suppose he could have pointed out a stone and said, “Don’t move it” or a brook and said, “Don’t jump across it.” The point is that God alone determines what is right and what is wrong. Our moral sensibilities are God-given.

Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government established Protection Project, an initiative that addresses human trafficking. In his book *Visions of Vocation*, author Stephen Garber tells the story of interviewing the woman who directs the project. First question he asked her – “So why do you care about the issue of human trafficking?” Not surprising, she told the story of her heart opening to the cries of women and girls who were sold into slavery, often involving sexual bondage. After writing on the issue, the Kennedy School hired her to work at their Protection Project initiative in Washington D.C.

As they talked in her office, he watched her impressive staff walking by in the hallway outside her door. “I get the most interesting applications here. Just imagine. Harvard University, Washington, D.C., human rights. It's a powerful combination, and it draws unusually gifted young women and men from the best universities in America.”

But then she surprised him with these words, “After a few weeks they almost always find their way down the hall, knock on my door and ask to talk. I know what they're going to say. After thanking me for the position and the opportunity, a bit awkwardly they ask, ‘But who are we to say that trafficking is wrong in Pakistan? Isn't it a bit parochial for us to think that we know what's best for other people? Why is what's wrong for us, wrong for them?’ To be honest,” the director said, “I just don't have time for that question anymore. The issues we address are too real, they matter too much. I need more students, more people who believe that there's basic right and wrong in the universe!”

The LORD God said, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”

Then, for the first time, the LORD God said, “It is not good... it is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.” And prior to trouble in Eden, it says that “Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.”

The man and the woman enjoyed the same opportunity and responsibility in life with the Lord. As a famous quote says, “The woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved.”

## **II. Trouble in Eden (3:1-8)**

“And God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.” Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd... The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” Okay... but when we look at the world today, when we reflect on our own personal lives, what happened? Genesis 3 tells us.

Now the serpent said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’? You will not certainly die. For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” She took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.”

O how things changed from good to bad for the human being. “The eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked... and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the

garden.” As Paul writes in the New Testament, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

Theologically, this is known as “The Fall.” Adam and Eve were free to enjoy the beauty and provision of the Garden along with the companionship and presence of the Lord. Notice how the restriction was not restrictive. “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden (there’s so much to enjoy in life); but you must not eat from (this one, only one) the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” The Lord did not want the crown of his creation, the man, the woman, you or me to know and experience evil.

But Satan, the enemy of God, our Adversary, takes the form of the serpent, a snake. He disarmingly attacks their love for and their loyalty for the God who made them, the God who loves them. Jesus speaks of Satan this way in John 8: “He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

Oh the lies to which every one of us is susceptible. “Did God really say???” Do you hear the hiss? “You will not certainly die.” Well, actually they did die. And so will we.

Israeli news sources report that a man filed a legal request for a restraining order against none other than God himself. The plaintiff, who actually appeared in court for the case, told the judge that over the past three years, God “had been very negative towards him,” (though no specifics were recorded). Court documents also made note that God did not make an appearance that day before the plaintiff and judge. Humorous, ridiculous, of course. But it highlights a hard question for believers and non-believers alike. “How are we to respond to God and his love in the midst of the hardships of living in a fallen world as fallen people along with all the other fallen people around us; everything that seems to suggest his complete disregard for us?”

Although 300 years old, the biblical writing of Welsh pastor Matthew Henry offers lasting comments on Genesis 2 and 3. “Satan assaulted our first parents, to draw them to sin, to separate them from God.” Initially, the person tempted was the woman. It seems that Satan’s policy to tempt when we are alone. Remember how he did that to Jesus alone in the desert. In the Apostle’s Creed we say we believe in “the communion of saints.” Being in the church with Christian but still fallen friends, we can be of help to one another. When Satan teaches people first to doubt, and then to deny, it seems the goodness of life isn’t as good as it might be or should be. Satan ruined himself by desiring to be like the Most High, to be equal with God, yes, even to be God.

It was too late. Adam and Eve saw the foolishness of eating forbidden fruit. They saw happiness falling away from them, and the misery they were falling into. They saw their loving Creator God provoked, his grace and favor forfeited. See what dishonor and trouble sin is. Sooner or later it brings us

shame; either the shame of true repentance, which ends in forgiveness and new life, or the shame of everlasting contempt. The excuses we make to cover and lessen our sins, are empty and frivolous. Like the fig-leaves, they make the matter worse.

Yet we all want to cover our transgressions before the Lord and before each other. We should welcome God's gracious visits with humble joy; but now with the Fall, God can become a terror to us. No wonder that we human beings become terrorists to ourselves, and the world full of confusion. This shows the falsehood of the tempter, and the frauds of his temptations. Satan promised we would be like God with the knowledge of good and evil - in control, calling the shots, running our lives even better than God. Yeah, right! But they and we can't even so much as think of ourselves this way. Human life has been trashed. Adam and Eve now became miserable comforters to each other!

### **Conclusion**

Jesus said, "What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?" (Matthew 16:26).

Yes, we are physical beings. And we spend most or all of our energy, time, money, and attention taking care of the physical – home, car, food, clothing, and a long list. But we are also, more importantly, spiritual beings. How much money and attention, time and energy do you spend taking care of your spirit? Your relationship with God?

### **Romans 3:19-24**

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law,  
So that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God.  
Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law;  
Rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.  
But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known,  
to which the Law and the Prophets testify.  
This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.  
There is no difference between Jew and Gentile,  
For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,  
And all are justified freely by his grace  
through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.