

GENESIS 2

THE VALUE OF CREATION NARRATIVES

- Getting lost in India.
 - High Commission in an auto-rickshaw
 - Getting lost in the Himalaya
- That's why Creation narratives are a gift.
 - Telling us about genetics and cosmic explosions doesn't meet our need.
 - What we need is answers to "who are we?", "where is humanity headed?" and "why does everything always break?"
- Some people wrestle with passages like today's – "the fossil record doesn't show plants only flourishing after mankind arrives". Reiterate – that's not what this passage is describing.
- When we talk about preaching the Gospel, reminder: this is part of the Gospel. It is God's Good News that He made us – as we go through the passage, see how many points you can note down that would be good news for others to hear. When you get a chance to "share the Gospel", it may not always be best to go straight to Jesus – sometimes people need the groundwork.

THE PASSAGE

- Our role as stewards of God's creation.
 - God creates plants for us to tend. Responsibility – forming us. Not because God can't be bothered (note that He enjoys working!)
 - Also a gift – God planted a garden: pleasing to the eye, good for food.
 - Given dominion – naming the animals!
- Life is a gift from God.
- Moral independence leads to death. "I want to experience both, and decide for myself".
 - Moral consequences – may be delayed, but God's nature runs in the interaction of subatomic particles, in the orbits of planets, and in the veins of every living creature.
 - NB Moral consequence and judgment is a gift – more on that next week.
- What's the first thing we read about in the book of Genesis that isn't good and perfect?
 - Not good for the man to be alone! Why?
 - We're created in the image of God – we are created for community. God is Trinity – as we saw last week.

- But also, we are creatures – not a complete reflection of God. There’s a mystery here. Paul makes a connection (1 Cor 11) between how God the Father and Jesus the Son relate, and how men and women relate. More on this in our mini-series – noting that there are differing interpretations of this too.
- The value of woman
 - Gen 1: equally made in God’s image
 - Suited to man – made to complement
 - Helper (ezer) – 21 times in OT. 2x Eve, 2x people, 17x God – so whatever it means, it’s not diminutive. Follows on from “not good to be alone”, so in my view this is about making up what is lacking in men fully representing God’s image.
 - Not created for sex, as an object of lust
 - Also note for later – command about not eating given to man, not to woman.
- Sex and gender difference is a source of glory, not shame

TRAJECTORY

- Our story begins in a garden, planted by God – and it begins with us in right relationship with God. And one day it ends back in a garden with God, right?
- No! It ends with a city, and right relationship with God.
- This trajectory is also part of the Gospel.
 - We were always made to grow and to flourish.
 - Joy of relating to an entirely dependent baby; different joy of watching a child take first steps, start to draw and speak, develop character, create, relate, join, lead, discern.
 - Relationship can be so much deeper - but doesn’t it also become more complex? Aren’t there so many more distractions for them?
 - God doesn’t want to take us back to bronze age simplicity – but He does want to take us back to simple relationship with Him. This means that we need to learn how to flourish at the things God has given us, in relationship with Him.
 - The glory of the nations will be brought into the city – we need to work out how different world cultures reflect attributes of God. We’re after world peace, but not simply through stopping killing each other!
 - The gates will never be shut – we need to move beyond fear and defensiveness, and live in generosity and overflow
- God **will** get us there
 - So the good news is – our world is destined for Godly flourishing, and will one day be renewed.

- The good news is – injustice will be overcome not through the triumph of one culture over others, but by all cultures aligning with the nature of God.
- In a world adrift: we were created for dignity, with a purpose and an end goal in mind. God is able to get us to that end goal, and he will!
- And back to Genesis: all of the sorrow, pain, injustice, separation and aching uncertainty of the human condition derives from our separation from God, and when he ends that separation, all those things will vanish!