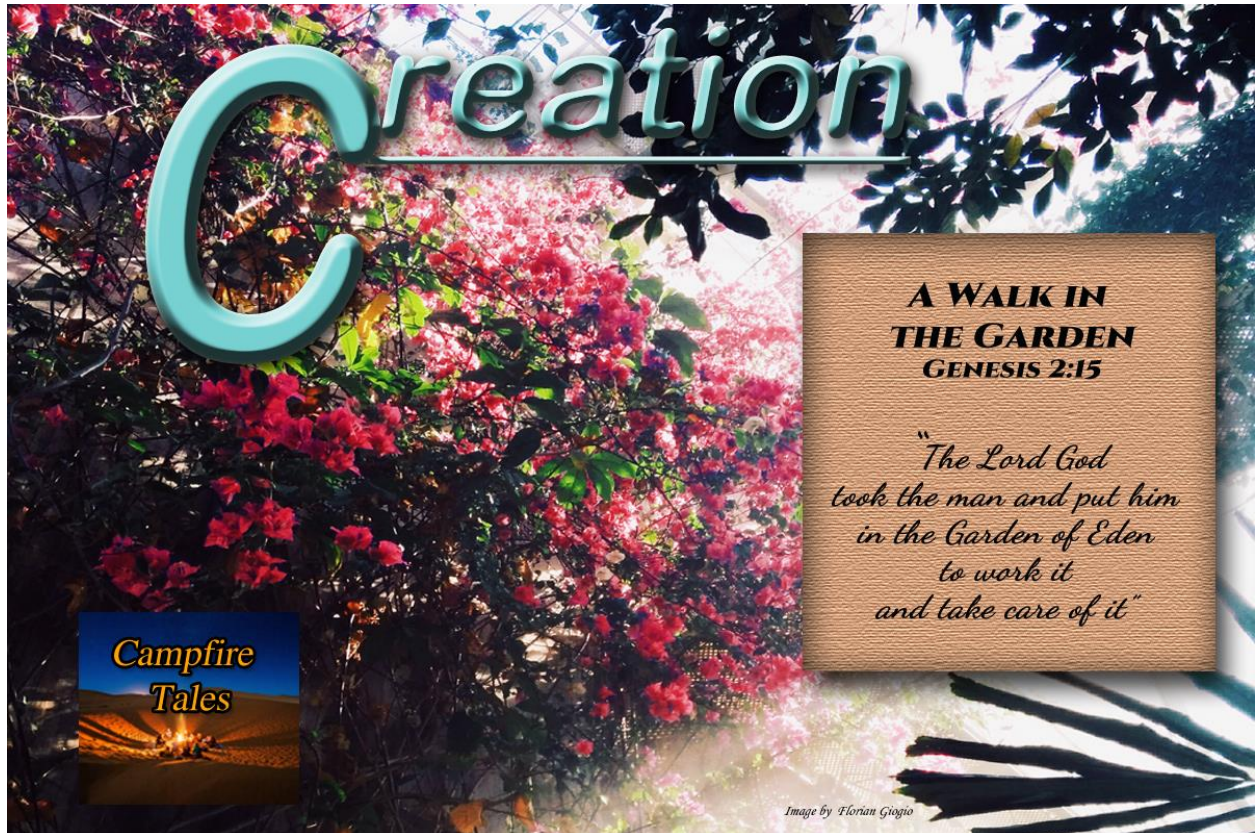


A WALK IN THE GARDEN      June 12

The story of the garden in Creation

Genesis 2:15



Special Music: "In the Garden"

Fountainview Academy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2fNfxv3K93Q>

## A WALK WITH GOD?

God walks amidst  
The whispering trees  
As grass engages  
With prideful flowers  
In a ballet,  
Tempo set by fragrant breeze.  
Tangled vines  
Up trunks and limbs do climb.  
The chatter of fledgling birds  
Nestled and nestled in treetops,  
While creatures prowl  
And hunters growl  
From the shadows.  
The gentle wind  
Makes leaves to quiver  
With silver shivers in the dawn.  
Clouds race across the sky  
In a crazy dance  
A tango of circumstance.  
The sun  
Pokes its fingers  
Through the lingering canopy,  
Caressing the newness of creation.

I stand in the meadow  
Caretaker of all that is  
Keeper of the plan.

I may not understand  
How I came to be  
Or what my God sees in me.  
But here I stand,  
A stick for a hoe  
And a leaf for a pan  
At the ready  
for His command.

God calls to me  
In the cacophony  
Of new scents, new sounds,  
In struggle to form a symphony.  
God beckons me and speaks,  
“Let’s walk,  
Let’s talk,  
I have much to say.”  
I struggle to match His gait  
Though He often finds  
He has to wait  
For me to catch up,  
My legs not quite able  
To keep in stride  
I find myself  
Rushing somewhat undignified  
Believing it is possible  
To match my creator’s steps.  
How silly that must seem to be  
How reflective of my humanity.

**“I made this all for you,” He says,  
As He stretches forth His arms  
And shadows fall across the world,  
Clouds unfurl and tree limbs swirl.  
“It is your purpose  
To tend and nurture,  
Protect this place  
For humanity’s future.  
I place it into  
The hands I gave you  
So that your offspring  
May view this offering,  
Creation as it is meant to be.  
Do not fail me  
For the cost will be,  
The souls of your children.”**

**And with that said  
He took His leave.  
I closed my eyes  
And let the wind  
Tickle my nose  
In the after throes  
Of God’s presence.  
I felt the sun  
Upon my face  
And understood  
My place of grace  
In a universe that was made for me.**

There are multiple versions of The Creation Story found in cultures all over the world. Even the Bible has two, side by side, in Genesis. The first one we talked about last week, a story that reads more like poetry than anything else. It was a very dramatic telling of Creation to people who were very limited in their understanding of the world around them. They lived the lives of simple nomads, searching for their place within Creation and their purpose before their God.

The second story of Creation in the Bible starts where the first one leaves off. This one is more of a narrative and goes into more detail about the creation of Adam and Eve, the Garden of Eden, the tree of life, the tree of knowledge, the serpent, and the fall of humankind into sin. While the first story moves along almost lyrically, the second story is where we find details about what went right and what went wrong.

But we shouldn't ignore the fact that there are other references to the Creation throughout the Bible. David talks about Creation in Psalms:

Psalm 8: 3-4:

**When I consider your heavens,  
the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars,  
which you have set in place,  
what is mankind that you are mindful of them,  
human beings that you care for them?**

And Job spends several chapters talking about Creation:

Job 28:4-7

**“Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation?  
Tell me, if you understand.  
Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know!  
Who stretched a measuring line across it?  
On what were its footings set,  
or who laid its cornerstone—  
while the morning stars sang together  
and all the angels shouted for joy?”**

The voice of God speaks to us in Job and declaring our hubris when discussing matters that are beyond our understanding, when we pretend we know what we are talking about. He does this because Job gets pretty haughty.

**“Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation? Tell me, if you understand.”**

If you are so smart, don’t just tell me how a plant lives, tell me how to create one from scratch. Or how about a leopard, or a penguin? How would you go about making dirt, or sunshine? How do you construct a doodle bug or a snake? How about a mountain, a river, a lake, or an ocean? Do you even have a clue on how to create a giant redwood from scratch?

In the New Testament, the Gospel of John starts out with the Creation story: **“In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word**

**was God. All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made.”**

**We can see that Genesis doesn't have a corner on the market with regards to the story of Creation. But this second story of Creation in Genesis does contain material regarding our relationship with the Creator Himself and the purpose for our creation. We are presented a vision where God takes mud and clay, shapes it, breathes breath into it, and makes a man whom He calls Adam. From Hebrew, Adam translates at “son of the red Earth.” The commonly held understanding of this is that God used red earth (which is where we get the references to clay) and that it was probably the color of Adam's skin as well. And from Adam, God creates a woman He calls Eve. Theologians across the world continue to argue over the literalness of this story in the Garden of Eden and whether it is intended as an allegory or the retelling of an actual event. Either way, it is still a narrative passed down by storytellers around a campfire, an oral history of events to explain the nature of something we cannot possibly understand in its infinite details.**

**I'm sure you have heard the story of the elderly woman who pulls a box of photo albums down from her closet shelf. She just wants to look through the photographs and take a walk down memory lane. There are photos from her honeymoon with her husband standing statuesque in the sun. Pictures of her four children from their birth through college graduation and into their marriages and the birth of her grandchildren. There are pictures of her husband and children on vacation or visiting the seashore and the mountains. So many**

**pictures of Christmases come and gone with children unwrapping their presents and her husband sporting his new watch or tool for his shop. But then she realizes something. There are no pictures of her anywhere in the albums and she must think for a moment about that. Then she realizes that she was always the one taking the pictures. She finds something very sad in that fact, almost like she missed out on the major events of her life.**

**In some respects, we are the same way when it comes to the Bible. So often, we don't know who the author is of different books or events in the Bible, and it can start to become a little confusing.**

**God tells Noah to build a boat and put all the animals and his family aboard, saving them from the flood. Who recorded that information?**

**The angel visits Elijah in the desert under the broom tree. Who was there to record it and how did that become a part of the Bible?**

**The Holy Spirit sends Jesus into the wilderness to engage with the three temptations. Who's taking that picture, recording that even?**

**Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. The disciples are all asleep and Jesus is deep in prayer with His Heavenly Father. Who's recording that moment? Who's the photographer?**

**God creates Adam in the Garden of Eden and then uses a rib to create his helpmate, Eve. Who is recording that event for posterity?**

**I'm not trying to make you question your faith or confuse you. I believe**



every one of these stories. I also believe that they were handed down in a manor of oral tradition until they could be recorded in writing. Just because it is oral history does not mean that it is incorrect or embellished. God used people to act as human recorders of these events and to make sure they were handed down to future generations. When you read about moments like this in the Bible, don't get distracted because you can't see the photographer. The moment is just as pure as if someone was there to record the event. God ensures that when He engages with His people. He shows us truth through His word even if we can't see the spectators or journalists.

I am neither a great theologian nor a great scientist. I don't even play one on TV. Still, I have never had difficulty intertwining the Bible with science. It has never been a matter of either/or for me. I tend to view the Bible and science like a glass filled with water (representing the Bible) to which is added the element of oil (representing science). Even when placed in the same vessel, they remain somewhat separated. The Bible is a love letter from our Creator that announces and encourages our relationship with God. Science is the study of God's Creation. The Bible makes no attempt to explain the uniqueness of Creation with theories, math, and scientific study, and science seeks to understand the nature of the universe only through numbers, equations, experimentation, and theory. That is why the two views often butt heads. Still, they can coexist if we don't try to force the oil to become one with the water. When one takes the Bible too literally, it will always conflict with the imperfect nature of science. The same is true when one chooses not to include the mystery of Creation and only focus on

the science. Science, while inclusive of creative thought, is based on materials that already exist, not the creation of those materials.

Science can often explain pieces of the “what” in Creation but not the why. The Bible tells us why. The Bible tells us the purpose. The Bible shines light on the path. Science can only tell us there is a path and maybe what materials were used make that path. The Bible is our heart and soul. Science has ever-changing “facts,” even though there are many people that disagree with that observation. Just as God does not change, the Bible does not change. Science is always changing, a revolving door of new studies and theories, observations, and conclusions. I grew up in a world where  $2 + 2 = 4$ . Today  $2 + 2$  can equal just about anything we imagine with our substituted variables, quadratic equations, trigonometric functions, and fuzzy math. It seems that science is always trying to disprove itself, something has to be wrong in order for something new to be right. The Bible is forever pointing to the rightness of the universe knowing that in the end, it is all in God’s hands. After all, it is God’s creation.

While science can give us numerous examples of how humanity came to be, only the Bible tells us why humanity came to be. When we look at today’s scripture:

**“The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.”**

We see in the verse God not only created humankind, but He gave humankind purpose. That purpose was to work the Garden of Eden and take care of it.

**Somewhere in the teachings of the Church, we have lost this verse, this proclamation of purpose. We have picked up an idea that Adam and Eve lived a perfect existence in the Garden of Eden, wandering about willy-nilly, collecting fruit and giving names to animals and objects. But God knew that mankind would always be unfulfilled without purpose and intent. He gave us work to do, goals to meet, responsibility over the world around us. And although we were forced from the garden by our own actions, our sin, and our disobedience, our purpose, goals, and responsibilities did not go away. We are still responsible for this world and all that dwells within it. Jesus tells us that we are still responsible to care for our neighbors, that our goal should be to leave this world in better shape than when we entered it. Our purpose is still to work and grow as God intended. It is built into our nature. We find fulfillment in pleasing our Creator.**

**This week, I want us all to reflect on today's scripture. "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it." Let our purpose shine forth in all that we do. Instead of just walking around this gift of creation, let's find our purpose in our responsibility for caring for it. Let us speak words of encouragement to those around us. Let us work the Garden as intended. Let us show others how God intended for our characters to exhibit an attitude of work, growth, and service. May that work, growth, and service lift others and point them always to our Creator, and the amazing gift of grace through His Son.**

**God bless you all.**

**AMEN**

**Copyright © 2021 Rev. Walt Wellborn**

**Scripture references provided under copyright by:**

**THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.**