

## THE PARADISE

Genesis 2:4b-25  
Key Verses 2:16, 17

"And the 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 of it you will surely die."

Thanks be to the Lord for richly blessing GLEF 2021 with His living Word to mobilize and spiritually equip our next generation to live as excellent Bible teachers and global spiritual leaders. We were allowed to study the entire Gospel of Mark in 5 lessons and through that we learned about the spiritual authority of Jesus that came from His hope, shepherd heart, faith, servanthship and obedience until death. God has blessed the shepherd heart and faith of M. Peter and many servants of God and worked mightily in our next generation, especially raised up 6 next generation messengers. Let's continue to pray for our next generation to be used as Bible teachers and global spiritual leaders for revival work.

Now let us return to the Genesis Bible study through which we may lay the firm foundation of life in creation faith. In chapter 1, we have already learned that this world and our life are not a product of chance, but that God created all things with His absolute plan. We have come to know God, who is referred to throughout as "Elohim," as the omnipotent and sovereign Creator God to whom nothing is impossible and who holds all things in His hand.

In chapter 2 we find a detailed description of how God created and blessed man. God is referred to in this chapter as "Yahweh," which is translated as "Lord." Here we encounter God as a personal and loving God who created all things for man's happiness. God, who revealed Himself to Moses as "Yahweh" (Exodus 3:15), wants to establish a personal relationship with us. He wants to bless our lives and be our personal God, our Shepherd. Today, let us experience the love of God who prepared the best environment for man's happy life in the Garden of Eden. Let us learn about the great blessing of establishing a family, namely a God-centered

and mission-centered house church. First of all, let us reflect on the significance of the order of creation in the Garden of Eden, without which there can be no true happiness for man.

### 1. God created man as a living being (4-7).

Let's look at verses 4b and 5: "When the Lord God made the earth and the heavens and no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth and no plant of the field had yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no man to work the ground." God had actually created the plants on the third day of creation. However, the seeds were still slumbering in the earth until now. The writer comments that God had not yet made them grow because there was no man to work the land. This teaches us that the whole creation was made with man in mind. Without man, the earth was like a stage without a leading actor, empty and meaningless.

Let us read verse 7: "The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being." How and with what did God create man? Man is made of earth from the field or literally dust from the ground. Earth is everywhere. Our physical body is very ordinary and easily broken. We may acknowledge our nothingness and be humble before God.

Only when God breathed His spirit into this dead body did it become a living being or soul. Our body will crumble back to dust after we die. But what will happen to our spirit? Ecclesiastes 12:7 says, "and the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it." God created us for eternity. But because God is holy, the sinful spirit cannot easily return to the holy God. The Bible points to an-

other place for the sinful soul. Matthew 25:41 says, "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.' What does it help a man if he gains the whole world but suffers damage to his soul? If he loses his eternal life, then all that remains for him is eternal damnation, a place of torment where their worm does not die and the fire does not go out.

Human beings are both physical and spiritual beings. We have a physical body. Therefore, we have physical needs, such as eating, drinking, breathing, sleeping, or exercising. (How many days can you go without eating?) If we do not take good care of our physical body, we become weak and sluggish, even sick. But man is not only a physical being, but also a spiritual being. Our spiritual body has spiritual needs. The spiritual food is the Word of God, without which we spiritually emaciate and starve. Matthew 4:4 says, "Jesus answered, 'It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Prayer is often referred to as spiritual breathing. We may always breathe out well by confessing all our sins to God and also breathe in well by accepting God's forgiving love for us. In addition, we also need spiritual exercise, namely practical obedience to God's mission.

At present we see that many people try to take very good care of their physical body by going to the gym, eating only organic or vegan food, or booking a wellness vacation. However, many people neglect the spiritual body, even though the spiritual body is much more important than the physical body. How can we stay spiritually healthy and live a blessed and fulfilled life? We can do this by faithfully keeping the early morning prayer and deeply studying God's Word. Our next-generation leaders have grown spiritually healthy by deeply studying the Word of God through GLEF according to the method of inductive Bible study. They have prepared excellent factual study lectures with interpretation and application, developed special lectures and questionnaires. By starting each day with Early morning Prayer and Daily Bread, they can grow spiritually healthy. Through their good example, may God motivate many young people to take care of their spiritual bodies first by leading one-to-one Bible study and starting a blessed life with God's mission.

## 2. God planted a garden in Eden (8-17)

Let's read verse 8: "Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed." Eden means "delight," in Greek it means "paradise." When we look at this garden, we realize the great love of God for us human beings. Let's take a walk through this beautiful garden. Verse 9a says, "And the Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground-trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food." There are cherry trees, apple trees, plum trees, orange trees, lemon trees, kiwi trees, mango trees and persimmon trees. All their fruits are tempting to look at and good to eat. One fruit tasted more delicious than the other and people could eat everything without allergy. Besides, there were countless beautiful flowers in the garden such as tulips, asters, roses, geraniums and chrysanthemums. From these, Adam could pick a beautiful bouquet for Eve. Everywhere you see animals living together in peace. A lion carries a lamb for a walk and a hare plays soccer with a fox. In the treetops you hear birds praising God with the most beautiful melodies. A quartet of frogs croaks by the pond. An elephant trumpets a fanfare and a monkey beats the beat with a coconut. The first mustard seed orchestra was born.

Let's look at verse 10: "A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters." Through Eden flowed a majestic stream, even more beautiful and romantic than the Rhine. Here you could swim or take a nice walk. The stream divided into four main branches from there. In this way, God's blessings flowed from Eden to the whole world. How beautiful the Garden of Eden must have been! Moreover, the Garden of Eden is a place where man has enough physical goods. In our daily life, the problem of goods is very serious, so we must study and work diligently. Because of greed for materials, countless crimes have been committed and even wars have been fought. In the Garden of Eden, however, there is no problem of goods. Everything that man needs to live is available in sufficient quantity. Not only can one eat freely from all the trees there, but at the river Pischon one can find gold, Bedolach resin and the precious stone Shoham. There is no shortage in the Garden of Eden.

There is also no death in the Garden of Eden. In the middle of the garden there is the tree of life. You can eat from the tree of life and live forever.

Let's look at verse 15: "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it." God gave man the beautiful garden of paradise and gave him the task of managing it well. The specific task or mission is an important part of God's blessing. If man does not have a task, he feels unhappy and superfluous, even if he lives in the best environment. We saw with the high school graduates how happy they were when they accomplished their mission and reaped the fruit of their labor. Man was created for the mission of God. (Man = Mission). God's mission is not a burden, but God's wonderful blessing for man, giving him happiness, meaning and significance.

The word "cultivate" teaches us that man should use all his diligence, creativity and energy for the garden and create something new. We may also diligently use our God-given abilities until we achieve something great. After graduation, Olaf may diligently cultivate his God-given garden and glorify God through it. Sarah may also diligently cultivate her God-given assignment, glorifying God both through graduation and through video ministry, orchestra, or worship leadership. Let us diligently cultivate our garden of campus mission, like online mission, also the garden of school, college or work, giving glory to God.

The word "keep" in verse 15 indicates that there are enemies as well. Man should not only enjoy the good, ideal environment, but God has given man the mission to keep himself and the garden well from the enemies. Every garden must always be preserved by watering, weeding and pest control. In the same way, we must preserve our spiritual garden by diligently pouring out God's word, also fighting the pests and weeds with the word of God, so that God can be glorified through the best fruits.

Above all, God gave man the word of God in the Garden of Eden, namely the commandment. Man cannot be satisfied with eating delicious food three times a day. A person needs a personal relationship with God. That is why God gave man a commandment. Let's look at verses 16 and 17: "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Thou mayest eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." These verses are called "Adam's Bible." It consisted of only two verses. The first verse describes the freedom and happiness of man, who

was specifically allowed by God to eat freely from all the trees in the garden. He was always allowed to remember that God gave him everything and took the best care of him. The second verse contains the commandment of God and establishes the order of creation in his heart. It teaches him to acknowledge God as God and saves him from death.

1. The commandment enables man to live in the right relationship with God.

God created a clear three-dimensional order: God in the first place, then man in the second place, and everything else in the third place. Just as a fish can live only in water, a person can live a happy life only in this order. If he leaves the order of God, he must perish. The commandment of God establishes the order of creation in the heart of man and gives him the clear orientation of life. By obeying God's command, he can acknowledge God as his Creator and as his Lord, honor Him, thank Him and love Him. If he rebels against this order, his relationship with God is broken and he separates himself from the source of life.

2. God's commandment gives man true freedom and the key to enjoy God's blessings.

God created man with a free will and gave him the freedom of choice. He was allowed to decide for himself whether to obey God or not. He was allowed to choose to go God's way or to rebel against it and go his own way. Of course, this freedom to choose also means that man must bear responsibility for his choice. It is not like a choice, as in the refectory between meal I and meal II, between schnitzel and spaghetti. It is a choice between the way of life and the way of perdition. That is why God warned man of the dire consequences of disobeying God's commandment: "When you eat of it you will surely die." (17b)

Nowadays, many people think that true freedom would be to have no more commandments. They want to live free and independent of everything. But this is not freedom; it leads them to chaos and unhappiness. Those who accept God's words, in the right relationship with God, can truly live a blissful, fulfilled life in the paradise God gave to human beings.

If Adam had held on to God's word and obeyed it, he could preserve paradise eternally. In the same way, our happiness also depends on holding the word of God that God gives us in our hearts and obeying it in our practical lives.

Abraham obeyed the word of God and thus became the father of faith and a blessing to all nations. Saul, on the other hand, regarded the word of God relatively, even though God had appointed him as the first king of Israel, so he lost all blessings. Jesus is the best example of obedience for us because he obeyed God to the point of death on the cross and thus became the author of eternal salvation for us.

When M. Peter came to Germany, he was just a foreign student who could hardly make any difference to the Disciples' Training Ministry. But he obeyed Mark 11:22 "Have faith in God." With this word, he challenged the Bible study with the local students and the disciple-making ministry despite all the impossibilities and setbacks. When he obeyed the word of God, he did not perish in the foreign land, but God made his life victorious and influential so that he could raise many disciples of Jesus for the European and world mission.

A young man lived according to his own opinion and desire, so he became very hopeless. But through Bible study, he accepted Hebrews 5:8,9 and learned obedience from Jesus. When he obeyed this one word of God, he was able to gain victory in many areas and also glorify God by graduating from school with the best grades.

When I came to Bonn, I only had my own goals and career in mind. Through Bible study, God came into my life and He gave me a word: Genesis 12:1. God's direction did not match my plan at all, but when I simply obeyed and started the life fellowship, I was allowed to start a life in God's paradise. God has guided my life on the best way until today and used me in His grace as a Bible teacher for the students. Now I may struggle with 2 Timothy 2:15 to live as a righteous worker of the Word who can also rebuke, threaten and exhort. God will richly bless the obedience of our high school graduates to the Word of God who do not follow their feeling but obey God's direction, so that they form a Holy Club 2.0 and are used as a blessing to their friends and fellow students, leading them to the Word of God.

Man's true happiness does not come from good, ideal conditions. True happiness also does not come from enjoying pleasure according to one's own feeling. True happiness comes only in the right life relationship with our Creator God. By accepting a word of God as "my Bible" and obeying it, we can stay in the right order of crea-

tion and live happily in God's paradise. (Do you have a word of God in your heart?) Let us take hold of a word of God that He gives us and obey it, and live a truly fulfilled and happy life in God's order of creation.

### 3. God created a family (18-25)

In eight verses, Genesis describes the establishment of the first family in the Garden of Eden. The family is God's blessing from His love for human beings. Let us reflect on what God created the family for. Let's look at verse 18: "The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." Here we first learn that God is the founder of the family. It was not man who felt lonely. Adam was fully occupied with God's mission, had to give all the animals their names, which is an extremely creative and demanding activity. God, however, thought that it was not good for man to be alone. Adam did not look for a wife, but God brought the wife to him. God is the founder of marriage and family.

Man needs a helpmate to cooperate with him for God's mission. In this sense, a family is created neither for the man's happiness nor for the woman's happiness, but primarily for the glory of God and for God's mission. The woman's role here is that of a helper. There are many women who dream of a perfect man. However, because there is no perfect man, they often become disappointed and unhappy after marriage. But God created the family precisely because human beings are simply imperfect. The wife's task is to help her imperfect husband well so that he can fulfill God's mission diligently and successfully. There is a proverb that says, "Behind every great man is a great woman." Where there are women of faith, there are also men of faith.

Nowadays, we see many marriages that have been established on the basis of a transient feeling of affection or on the terms. But as soon as the feeling wears off, they divorce again. In this way, they break the hearts of their life partners and their children. The key to a happy family is to accept God's sovereignty and live a life with God's mission. In this sense, a God-centered and mission-centered home church is a great blessing, not only for the spouses, but also for the children and for the whole society. God, who created us, knows best what we need, much better than we do. Therefore, we may first take care of the mission of God (Mt

6:33), and then God will also give us the blessing of starting a family in due time.

We have heard of Jim and Elisabeth Elliot, who conducted their marriage for the mission of God and thus were able to become a blessing for an entire tribe in Ecuador. I thank God that He has also provided me with the most suitable help-mate who bears all my weaknesses and is wholeheartedly committed to the mission of God, to the children, and even to the M mission. Even though our character is different, God uses her to wake me up again and again and fulfill God's mission.

In verses 23 to 25, we see the happiness of the family in the Garden of Eden. After God created the woman from the man's rib, Adam made a profession of love by accepting the woman as a part of his own flesh and bone. Verse 25 goes on to say, "And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." In paradise there was no shame and nothing separating.

In today's text we have learned that man is both a physical and a spiritual being. We have also learned that God gave Paradise out of His love. The key to happiness is to obey the word of God, namely to hold on to a word of God as our personal Bible. Then we can enjoy a blessed life in Jesus. We have also learned about the biblical view of marriage, that God established the family as a missionary unit. Let us hold on to and obey one word of God wholeheartedly, so that we can live in God's order of creation and cultivate and preserve God's paradise.