

“Dignity and Dust” – Genesis 2:4-7

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[What follows is the transcript of a sermon. It was originally intended to be heard, not read, so the tone is more conversational than academic. It has only been loosely edited, so forgive any grammatical, syntactical, or spelling errors. If you have questions please contact Southern Oaks Baptist Church through their official website, www.welovethegospel.com.]

Take a copy of God’s Word and meet me in Genesis 2...

I mentioned last time that the chapter divisions in the Bible are not original but were added much later to aid readers in navigating the Bible. Though sometimes they can be quite helpful, there are places where they probably should have been placed elsewhere. Where Genesis 2 begins is an example. If the chapter divisions were added today, I’m all but certain that the consensus would be to place the beginning of chapter 2 at the current verse 4, which is where we will begin today, since verses 1 to 3—with their description of the seventh day of the creation account—really belongs with the material laid out in chapter 1. Perhaps you are wondering, “Why don’t translations just move it?” Well, simply put, that would introduce even more confusions. Why? Once you start moving the chapter and verse numbers then you diminish the modern reader’s ability to interact with most of the Christian literature that has been produced to this point, which makes use of these numerical references. Nobody wants that. So because of the longstanding historical precedent, we have to live with these divisions we have inherited.

But, for the sake of mapping out some sermons, if we were to break down chapter 2—after day seven—I think we could reasonably approach it in three sections. First, we have the verses we will read in a moment, which deal with some background and the creation of the first human life (2:4-7). Second, verses 8 through 17 describe God’s abundant provisions in the garden and the command given to the first man. And finally, verses 18 through 25 describe God’s provision of a partner for man, and thereby the completion of the account of humanity’s creation.¹ So that’s where we are heading in the coming weeks.

Our focus today, however, is on just four verses. Let’s look at them now. I’ll read beginning in verse 4. Remember that this is God’s Word, so listen accordingly as you follow along...

“These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens. ⁵ When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the Lord God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, ⁶ and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground— ⁷ then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.” (Genesis 2:4-7)

The first thing I would like for us to notice is the similarities between these verses and how the author began the creation account in the first few verses in Genesis. Both sections begin with a summary statement, followed by some background material conveyed through some circumstantial clauses,² and then a main clause. So look again at Genesis 1:1-3...

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. [Summary] ² The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. [Background] ³ And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light [Main Clause].” (Genesis 1:1-3)

Now look at the passage we just read. Verse 4 is something of a summary statement. Verses 5 and 6 give us some background material to situate the opening act of God in the main clause. And verse 7 gives us that main clause.³

One of the things you will notice as you read Genesis is the repetition of the phrase that opens our passage this morning, namely, “*These are the generations of...*” These are sometimes called the *tôledôt* sections/headings because that is the term that stands behind the word “*generations*.” These words are how the author introduces a new section in Genesis, and they are usually followed by a genealogy (i.e., family tree). So the *tôledôt* of the book of Adam begins in Genesis 5:1, and the *tôledôt* of Noah in 6:9, and the *tôledôt* of the sons of Noah in 10:1, and so on. This language, in other words, helps us wrap our minds around the author’s own outline. And as such, we know that the section we are in will not wrap up until the end of chapter 4. And this section—called the *tôledôt* of the heavens and the earth—begins in Genesis 2:4.

In Genesis 1, we are presented with a God who is “the sole actor,” but here in Genesis 2 we are introduced in greater detail to “humanity as reactor.”⁴ Perhaps the shift in language signals this shift in perspective. Verse 4 begins by speaking of “*the heavens and the earth*,” which calls to mind the creation account of the previous chapter. But verse 4 ends with a reference to “*the earth and the heavens*.” The terms are reversed. Why? You might say that the first chapter was told from a heavenly perspective (with God as the subject of the verbs), but the second chapter is told from the perspective on the ground (with humanity and the world as the subject of some of the verbs). John Currid puts it like this: “Whereas Genesis 1 centres upon God and his creation of the universe, Genesis 2 stresses the place of mankind in earthly confines.”⁵

After the introductory formula in Genesis 2:4, the following two verses, as mentioned, supply the background material. The author begins by noting that at least certain plant-life had not sprung up. The language would seem to call to mind “inedible vegetation”—perhaps of the “thorns and thistles” variety mentioned in 3:18—and the more “cultivated” plant life—like harvested grains—that will sustain humanity in particular. Verses 6 and 7 introduce the solution to this state, which involved God’s provision of a “*mist*” (for watering) and the formation of “*man*” (for cultivating), the means and agent typically associated with the emergence of such plant-life.

Some of your translations may read “streams” (e.g., NIV) instead of “mist.” The word used is rare. In fact, it only occurs here and in Job 36:27 (where its use is also enigmatic), so translators are forced to speculate a bit what it conveys here in Genesis. It could be that God would cause a mist to gather from the moisture of the ground—like the rivers mentioned in verses 10 and following—or perhaps even the flooding and receding of the rivers (cf. the Nile in Egypt) that would provide moisture to the ground, but at this point lacked the irrigation needed for cultivation. It is difficult to know for sure.⁶ But the point is that even in the absence of rain, God provided what the ground needed—both water and mankind.

Of course, this raises a question—weren’t the plants created on day three? If Genesis 2 provides greater detail on the creation of mankind, which took place on day six, then where are the plants? Whether or not this is a difficulty to be solved will depend on one’s reading of chapter 1. We’ve discussed these possibilities in greater detail in the past, so we need not rehearse them today.

Simply put, for those who believe that Genesis 1 is not meant to be read in a woodenly literal (and, therefore, linear) fashion, but in a literary fashion that allows for the author’s choice of genre to convey truth in a different, more poetic way, this detail (and others later) present no problem. For those whose reading of Genesis 1 is chronological (and, therefore, linear), multiple suggestions have been put forth to explain this apparent discrepancy. Some, for instance, have argued that the state of the earth described in Genesis 2:5 is a depiction of the first part of day three of the creation account, after God had separated the land and water (1:9-10), but before He created the vegetation (1:11-12) and, thus, also before He created mankind (1:26ff).⁷ This is a viable solution. And there are others that we could work through as well, but our time is too limited today.

Instead what I would like to focus the remainder of our time on is what these verses contribute to our understanding of the Creator and Humankind.

The Creator of Mankind: Transcendent (Gen 1) and Personal (Gen 2)

Did you notice that in three out of the four verses of our passage God was referred to in a different way. He is called “The LORD God” (2:4, 5, 7). This is a combination of the personal name of God—Yahweh (*YHWH*)—revealed to Moses during the burning bush sequence of events in Exodus and the word *Elohim* applied to God in the very first verse of the Bible. We have discussed both of these words at length in the past, but here is the first time we see them used together, “The LORD God” (i.e., *YHWH Elohim*). This combination of terms occurs around twenty times in Genesis 2 and 3, which is about half of the occurrences in the entire Old Testament.⁸

Why the shift in language for God? I think the author is trying to clarify at least two things for his readers. First, if he had just begun referring to God as *YHWH* in chapter 2, then some of the readers may have wondered if the God of chapter 1 (*Elohim*) was the same as the God who had delivered them from Egypt and entered into covenant with them (*YHWH*). In calling Him *YHWH Elohim* (trans. “*The LORD God*”), Moses is making it clear to the Hebrews that the Creator God is one and the same as the God of their Covenant who rescued them from slavery.⁹ Second, I think the terminology also fits with what is being emphasized in each chapter. Chapter 1 underscores God’s transcendence.¹⁰ But in chapter 2 we see God getting in the dirt, so to speak, when He fashions man. It’s deeply personal and relational. So when these chapters are read together (as they should be) we encounter a God who is both transcendent and immanent, unique from His creation but intimately involved with His creation (especially those in His image), mighty but personally interested in His people (as the first Hebrew readers had recently learned firsthand). In short, in bringing these two divine titles together, Moses impresses upon his readers that “the transcendent God of Genesis 1 is the same as the immanent God of Genesis 2-3.”¹¹

How is His intimate involvement conveyed in verse 7? Through the actions He takes with regard to man—He formed and breathed into man. He takes more of a “hands on” approach (so to speak). Let’s consider this language a bit more.

Verse 7 begins, “*then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground...*” This language of forming introduces beautiful imagery. It is as though God takes up the role of potter and fashions man from the clay.¹² In fact, the participial form of this verb means “potter” (e.g., Jer. 18:2-4).¹³ “The image signifies deliberate, not accidental creation.” And the same imagery is used of all human beings, not just the first man, as when Job confesses to God, “*Your hands fashioned and made me....Remember that you have made me like clay; and will you return me to the dust?*” (Job 10:8-9).¹⁴

Next, we read that the Lord God “*breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature*” (2:7). Obvious, once again, we are dealing with some figurative language here since God is Spirit and doesn’t have physical lungs or mouth from which He breathes.¹⁵ But the imagery helps express the personal “touch” to this special creation of God. This stands out. This is not how God created other living things.

This forming man and breathing into man has given rise to much discussion on anthropology, the nature of man, particularly with the imagery of body and soul (cf. KJV: “living soul”). For convenience, we may speak of mankind as having two or more constituent parts, as the Bible sometimes does (e.g., 1 Thess. 5:23), yet we should also notice that there is not mention here of man “having” a body or “having” a soul. Instead, the sense is simply that “he is a unity.”¹⁶

The expression used here and translated “*the breath of life*” is used only here. A similar expression—“the breath of the spirit of life”—is used in Gen. 7:22 in reference to other living creatures.¹⁷ Yet the language here is unique. Derek Kidner describes it as “warmly personal, with the face-to-face intimacy of a kiss and the

significance that this is an act of giving as well as making.” He notes, that “[e]ven at our making, then, the pattern ‘God so loved...that he gave...’ is already visible.”¹⁸

Others have even wondered if God breathing “*the breath of life*” into the man’s nostrils is what imparts to him the image of God. Elihu says to Job’s three friends, “*it is the spirit in man, the breath of the Almighty, that makes him understand*” (Job 32:8), so perhaps this gift of God is the basis of the human capacity for spiritual understanding (which some have argued is part of what it means to be made in God’s image). Proverbs 20:27 says, “*The spirit of man is the lamp of the LORD, searching all his innermost parts.*” Could this indicate that mankind’s unique sense of conscience is owing to this act of divine inspiration, this divine inbreathing? Some have concluded yes. For instance, Allen Ross writes, “It probably is this inbreathing that constitutes humankind as the image of God.”¹⁹ What exactly is meant by “the image of God” is a discussion for another day, but, if you’re curious, I surveyed these debates in previous sermon in this series that you can find online. But the point to notice today is that this kind of interaction is unique between God and man. This is not how the Bible describes the origin of other created things. The language is far more personal when it comes to the creation of man and, as we will see in a later sermon, woman.

Taken together, the transcendence of God we encounter especially in Genesis 1 serves as a call to worship. The almighty Creator is worthy of our worship and praise. And in no way diminishing that reality, Genesis 2, with its more intimate and personal depiction of God’s creation of man serves as a call to personal relationship. When we read these chapters together—seeing God as both transcendent and personal—we learn that He pursues and invites our worship and relationship. What a beautiful God we serve!

With this in mind, let’s turn our attention to...

The Creation of Mankind: Dignity (Gen. 1) and Dust (Gen. 2)

There is a play on words in verse 7. The word translated “*man*” is *’ādām*, which is where we derive the name of the first man, “Adam.” The word for “*ground*” is *’ādāmā*. So the *’ādām* was formed from the *’ādāmā*. It’s a different word in Hebrew, but perhaps we could capture the poetry of it by speaking of God forming from the dust of the “earth” and “earthling.” And, remember, the creation of man is aimed, in part, at addressing the problem hinted at in verse 5. This “earthling,” therefore, is meant to take care of the “earth,” he is meant to “*work it and keep it*” (2:15). This is his service to God. This is part of how he fulfills the creational mandate given in Genesis 1:28—“*Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.*”²⁰ As one author put it, “The purpose of human beings...is grounded (pardon the pun) in Earth.”²¹

This passage “informs our self-perception” and helps us to avoid “two misconceptions.” First of all, it reminds us that we are not God or (little “g”) gods. We are creatures. We are part of creation.²² Indeed, much of the language of verse 7 should stir in us humility. We are made from the dirt and, because of sin, to dirt we will return.²³ Being “dirty,” so to speak, is a picture of our creatureliness since it is also from the ground that God also formed animals (2:19), and we are “*living creatures*,” in some sense, like they are (1:20, 24). We are made of the same stuff. Are marked by the same chemicals. Possessing many of the same limitations. Made fit for the same earthly existence. This should foster humility in us.

And yet, even in this depiction of man’s humble origins, there is still a note of distinction from the rest of God’s creation. God is presented as taking special interest in man. Making man in a unique and more personal way. He formed him. He breathed life into his nostrils. Adam’s formation was, therefore, an act of inspiration, in every sense of the word. And this personal touch is carried on in the chapter when it comes to the creation of Eve. In the words of the psalmist, we were “*fearfully and wonderfully made*” (Ps. 139:14; cf. Ps. 8:5). All of this fits well with description we have already encountered of mankind’s creation in Genesis 1, where we are said to have been made in God’s image. All of this should foster dignity.

We need both of these emphases—humility and dignity—to have a proper self-perception. And at times we need one emphasis more than the other. When we are growing prideful, we must be reminded that we are but dust and to dust we will return. When we are marked by self-loathing, we need perspective that comes from the knowledge that we have been made in the image of God and He has a purpose for our lives.

Furthermore, we need both truths to inform our view of other people as well because sometimes we esteem people too much and sometimes not enough. We spent a lot of time on the second of these tendencies when we studied the image of God. You will recall from those sermons that the fact that everyone you encounter is created in the image of God means that they should be treated with no small measure of dignity. I gave a litany of examples of how the image of God—and now we can add, the unique and personal way that God created humanity—should inform the way we treat them. It should change the way we speak of people who are different than us or sin differently than us.

Since we have looked at the topic of human dignity in such detail already, let's consider the humility side of things. Just as sometimes we need to be humbled by the reminder that we are merely creatures, so too sometimes we need to be reminded that the people in our lives make lousy gods as well. In other words, we need to not think too highly of ourselves or others.

There are some obvious examples, I suppose, or when our view of another person is far too elevated. You see this when people lose themselves in front of their favorite celebrities (e.g., artists or athletes) or shape their lives to conform to the life choices of their heroes. There is often a kind of idolatry in play. What does it say about us when we compare the effort and sacrifice that goes into acquiring a Taylor Swift concert ticket to the apathy and excuses that mark our failure to prioritize corporate worship. Is there more worship happening at such a concert or in the typical American church service? If you can't say "amen," mumble an "ouch." But who are those people that we put on these pedestals? They are but dust and their achievements a mere vanity. They make horrible gods.

But here's another way—a far more subtle way—this tendency toward idolatry materializes.... Think about our relationships with people we love. Do we elevate them too highly in our own eyes (or in their own eyes)? Sometimes parents are guilty of this when they live as though their kids were little gods. They sacrifice more for them and their desires than they do for the Lord and His. For example, how many parents sacrifice far too much—including family discipleship and involvement in the corporate church—in pursuit of the worldly dreams of their kids? Like there is nothing wrong with athletics. I love athletics. But, parents, the odds of your kids going pro is a fraction of a fraction of a percent—like among those currently involved in sports, there's a 0.02% chance—and less the more popular the sport is. The odds of becoming a *famous* athlete or celebrity? Far less. But there is a hundred percent chance that your child will stand before God and give an account. True story. One out of every one. No exceptions. Shouldn't we be investing at least as much time in discipling a knowledge and love for Jesus in our kids as we do encouraging and enabling these other pursuits? Again, I'm not saying sports and academics and getting that sweet job are bad things to pursue, I'm just saying what does it profit a man or woman if they get their name on the jersey, the honor roll, or the office door but forfeit their soul? Are we nurturing idolaters or disciples? If we forget what this passage says about us—from dust we came and to dust we will return—we might waste our lives in pursuit of the wrong stuff or inadvertently sacrifice our kids on the altar of our dreams for them.

Or what about our marriages? "Oh, you don't know my spouse that well, pastor, because if you did, you'd know they are not on a pedestal in my mind." But have you considered that maybe the reason you are so critical of your spouse is because you have a view of them that doesn't accord with their nature. You expect them to be godlike, and not a mere mortal? Maybe you have elevated them to idolatrous lengths and that is why you are so critical of their failure. You're expecting a god, not a creature. You'd never say it, but perhaps you are living as though you expect your spouse to meet all of your needs. But is that fair? No, it's idolatry. Your husband was never intended by God to complete you in that sense. God was! And your wife was never intended by God to

meet all your needs. Only God can! And husbands and wives make horrible gods. If you pursue them more than you pursue God, your marriage will suffer. If you look to them to meet some longing that God alone can meet, your marriage will suffer. They're not God. They're creatures. Stop expecting them to be little gods and your marriage will be better for it. I'm not saying you should treat them like dirt, but I am saying that we should learn from this origin story in Genesis 2 that they are not God. So stop faulting them because they make a lousy God when it's you who may have put that unreasonable expectation on them.

Or what about our dating relationships? Dating is kind of a weird animal in Western culture, isn't it? Paul David Tripp likes to compare dating to used-car sales.

"To put it bluntly and accurately, the idea in Western culture dating is to sell yourself. The last thing you want is for the other person to really get to know you. Consequently, a man who doesn't like to shop will suddenly be saying things like, 'Sure, honey, I would love to go to another twelve stores to look for those special shoes you have in mind.' A woman who doesn't appreciate sports will find herself volunteering to watch sports with her date and his buddies for hour upon endless, grueling hour."²⁴

After a few rounds of this they are convinced that they have found the mythical "one," their perfect match. If they get married, give it a few weeks and someone is bound to say, "that's not the person I married!" But actually it was. It was the person you dated who was the fake. But the reality is, for most young people today, the person they are dating is not the person they will marry. That person they're dating is the person who will become their "X" in short order.

But what happens when they break up? For some, they will take some time to grieve the end of the relationship, they'll seek refuge in their friendships, turn to the Lord, debrief themselves and discover that there were some things they didn't do right in the relationship, learn more about what is inside of them, repent as necessary, and come through the end of it wiser. They get through it. They process the adversity. They're wiser for it. It's normal to grieve for a while, but they get through it with God's help.

On the other hand, some just never seem to get over it, at least not any time soon. They get negative about life. Jaded towards the opposite sex. Down on themselves. "No one will ever love me." They grow bitter towards life and cynical about love. And they never can seem to trust another person. What's the difference? If you breakup with a person and you feel like you just don't want to go on living or you no longer have meaning in life, then, friends, the adversity of the breakup has pulled the curtain on the idolatry of the relationship. That person had become more important to you than Jesus. If that person was the greatest source of significance and security for you, then somewhere along the way they have become an idol. And it is the suffering of losing that person that will show you the inordinate attachment you give to love, romance, or that person. Jesus was not the emotional center of your heart. That person you are so fond of can be a blessing in your life if you will remember their creatureliness and live accordingly. But the moment they (or a relationship with them) becomes a god to you, it's going to break. Have you experienced that?

Now it is incredible painful to realize something like that. But it is a grace that you discover it and have the opportunity to repent of it. But never would have seen it had that adversity—the storm—not shined the light into your heart. It was the situation that took you off guard that revealed what you needed to see in your heart so that you could grow in your walk with God. C. S. Lewis has a brilliant illustration of this in his book called *Mere Christianity*.

"...surely what a man does when he is taken off his guard is the best evidence for what sort of a man he is? Surely what pops out before the man has time to put on a disguise is the truth? If there are rats in a cellar you are most likely to see them if you go in very suddenly. But the suddenness does not create the rats: it only prevents them from hiding. In the same way the suddenness of the provocation does not make me an ill-tempered man: it only shows me what an ill-tempered man I am. The rats are always

there in the cellar, but if you go in shouting and noisily they will have taken cover before you switch on the light.”²⁵

Well, friends, sometimes adversity helps us to jump to the bottom of our hearts and see the stuff, the rats, that you never thought were down there. To see the idolatry. To see the ways we have forgotten the creatureliness of other and elevated them to divine proportions. And that is grace. That is mercy. Because with that revelation comes an opportunity to grow, through repentance and submission to God, through faith and through preaching the gospel to yourself. In the Lord’s hands, the storm just might lead to you receiving the truth.

Remembering that we are created in the image of God and in the personal way that Genesis 2 describes, will remind us of human dignity—helping us to maintain a proper view of other and our self when we are overly critical and unreasonable. Remembering that we are creatures, made from the dust of the earth, will help to keep us humble—both in our estimation of ourselves and in our expectations of others. God has given us the truth what we need to live humble and dignified lives.

In fact, the Gospel should have this same effect on us depending on our posture. It humbles the proud and exalts the lowly. When we look at the cross of Christ we see that we are far more sinful than we ever imagined. Our rebellion against a holy God is deserving of death and hell. We are humbled when we see the cost that Jesus paid when He died in our place that we might live. Jesus was treated as we deserved to be treated as sinners, so that we could be treated like the sinless Jesus deserved. That’s the grace of the Gospel. It humbles and exalts. It makes the proud lowly by reminding them of the wage of their sin that they have been spared through faith in Christ. How can we now boast unless it is in Christ and Him crucified? And it exalts the lowly, reminding them that they are more accepted and loved in Christ than they could ever dream. It is the antidote to antinomianism and legalism, irreligion and religious moralism, pride and self-loathing.²⁶ In the words of Charles Hodge, “the doctrines of grace humble man without degrading him and exalt him without inflating him.”²⁷ More recently, David Schrock put it like this:

“Why is the Gospel of Jesus Christ so vital to the restoration of mankind? Simply put, there is no other message or medium, person or power that is able to elevate a man without making him an arrogant ogre. The gospel humbles a man to dust and raises him to glory.”²⁸

And this is why we never graduate from the Gospel. It is the message that, if embraced, can save you today, if you would trust in Jesus Christ alone for a salvation that is undeserved and all of grace. And it is the message that keeps the saved people of God growing up into the image and likeness of Christ. It restores to us a proper humility and dignity.

I love the way Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) captures the truths in his *Pensées* (which I’ll close our time with):

“Without this divine knowledge, how could we help feeling either exalted or dejected? The Christian religion alone has been able to cure these twin vices, not by using the one to expel the other according to worldly wisdom, but by expelling both through the simplicity of the Gospel. For it teaches the righteous that they still bear the source of all corruption which exposes them throughout their lives to error, misery, death, and sin; and [yet] it cries out to the most ungodly that they are capable of the grace of the Redeemer. Thus, making those whom it justifies to tremble, yet consoling those whom it condemns, it so nicely tempers fear with hope through this dual capacity.... Grace and sin! It causes infinitely more dejection than mere reason—but without despair, and infinitely more exaltation than natural pride—but without puffing us up!”²⁹

Amen! And lest you think that our passage in Genesis is only artificially linked to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, I hope to show you next week how Paul connects this passage to the saving work of Christ in a marvelous way. For that, we will have to take a bit of a detour to 1 Corinthians 15 and do some biblical theology. But it will be well worth the effort. To be continued...

¹ Consistent with the recommendation of Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996, 1998), 118-119.

² Ross (*Ibid.*, 120) notes that in each case the circumstantial clauses of each section involve two negative (1:2a, 5) and one positive (1:2b, 6).

³ *Ibid.*.

⁴ Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 79. He does note later, however, that God remains “the chief actor” throughout (*ibid.*, 85).

⁵ John D. Currid, *Genesis, Volume 1*, EPSC (Leyland, England: Evangelical Press, 2003), 93.

⁶ Andrew Steinmann, for example, believes that the word refers to “a rain cloud rising from the earth,” since the same word appears in Job 36:27, where it is connected with a rain cloud, and “elsewhere in discussing creation the Scriptures note [in different language] clouds rising from earth to provide water (Ps. 131:7; Jer. 10:15; 51:16)” (*Genesis*, TOTC [Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2019], 65). Bruce K. Waltke, on the other hand, is an example of one who believes that that “streams” is a more fitting translation, arguing, “Prior to the Fall, vegetation is not dependent on rain but relies on subterranean waters that rise, like the Nile, and irrigate the earth.” (*Genesis*, 84). A similar view, building off the Akkadian word *id*, is communicated by Currid, *Genesis*, 96-97.

⁷ The view of Currid, *Genesis*, 95; et al.

⁸ The only other occurrence of this collocation within the Pentateuch is found in Exodus 9:30.

⁹ Cf. John Goldingay, *Genesis*, BCOTP (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 55-56.

¹⁰ Though as I have noted in a previous sermon, called “In the Beginning God...(Part 2),” Genesis 1 also suggests that God is personal/imminent.

¹¹ Currid, *Genesis*, 95.

¹² Cf. Isa. 29:16; 30:14; 41:25; 44:9, 10, 12; 45:9.

¹³ Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 122. As Derek Kidner writes, “Formed expresses the relation of craftsman to material, with implications of both skill (e.g., Ps. 94:8, ‘He that formed the eye...’; cf. Ps. 139:14-16) and a sovereignty which man forgets at his peril (Is. 29:16; Jer. 18:4)” (*Genesis*, TOTC [Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1967], 60).

¹⁴ Waltke, *Genesis*, 85.

¹⁵ Tremper Longman III, *Genesis*, SIBC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 48.

¹⁶ Kidner, *Genesis*, 61. Similarly, Ross writes: “[A]ccording to Genesis 2:7, the combining of the physical body and the divine breath produces the ‘living being.’ This expression is often translated ‘living soul.’ The Hebrews, however, did not think in terms of a soul apart from the body. Rather, the word (*nepeš*, ‘soul,’ [*sic*] describes the whole person—the soul in the body, or a human being with all the appetites (*nepeš* may include the idea of ‘throat,’ in the sense of a breathing person))” (*Creation and Blessing*, 123).

¹⁷ Goldingay, *Genesis*, 57.

¹⁸ Kidner, *Genesis*, 60.

¹⁹ Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 123.

²⁰ Goldingay, *Genesis*, 56.

²¹ Kristin M. Swenson, “Earth Tells the Lessons of Cain,” in *Exploring Ecological Hermeneutics*, eds. Norman C. Habel and Peter Trudinger (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 33.

²² Longman, *Genesis*, 52.

²³ Cf. Gen. 3:19; Job 4:19; 10:9; Isa. 29:16.

²⁴ Paul David Tripp, *Broken-Down House: Living Productively in a World Gone Bad* (Wapwallopen, PN; Shepherd Press, 2009), 25.

²⁵ C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 2009). Keller also alludes to this insight from Lewis.

²⁶ See Tim Keller, “The Centrality of the Gospel,” accessed online at <https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/the-centrality-of-the-gospel.pdf>.

²⁷ Cited in David Schrock, “The Gospel Perfectly and Proportionately Humbles and Exalts,” accessed online at <https://davidschrock.com/2013/06/19/the-gospel-perfectly-proportionately-humbles-and-exalts/>.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Cited in *Ibid.*