

2. Tommy carried his newly-built sailboat to the river. He carefully set it in the water and let out the string. How smoothly the boat sailed. Tommy sat in the warm sunshine, admiring his handiwork. Suddenly, a strong current caught the boat. He tried to pull it back, but the string broke, and the boat raced downstream. He ran along the shore as fast as he could, but his boat soon slipped out of sight. He sadly went home. A few days later, on his way home from school, Tommy spotted a boat that looked just like his in a store window. When he got closer, he could see that it was his. He hurried into the store and said to the clerk, "Sir, that's my boat in your window! I made it!" "Sorry, son," the man said, "someone brought it in this morning. If you want it, you'll have to pay for it." Tommy ran home, emptied his piggy bank, and rushed back to buy the boat. As he left the store, Tommy hugged the boat and said, "Now you're twice mine. First, I made you, and then I bought you."

Isn't that the message that God shares with us in his Word? God took such special care and concern to create our parents, Adam and Eve. He gave them body and soul and his very own image. He made them male and female, each of them different, each of them beautiful, each of them unique, each of them his. How is that any different from you and me today? Who made the chromosomes that determine our sex, our eye color, our hairline, and all kinds of other characteristics? Who shaped our DNA to make us what we are and who we are? Who made it possible for a human male and a human female to carry in their bodies an infinite number of possibilities for children? The answer is God, a thousand times over, God. It is he who made us.

But we lost so much of this when Adam and Eve fell. In terms of our relationship with God, we lost it all. Paul writes, "*Just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned*" (Ro 5:12). Adam and Eve's sin in the Garden of Eden terminated their relationship with God forever, and it did the same to ours. It brought death into the world—temporal, spiritual, and eternal death in hell. But God's love and mercy weren't stymied by sin. "*You see,*" Paul writes, "*at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for us. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us*" (Ro 5:6-8). God didn't only create us; he redeemed us; he bought us back. In a very real sense, God can now hug each one of us and say: "Now you're twice mine. First I made you; then I bought you. I bought you with the blood of my own dear Son." Amen.

Genesis 2:4-7 – *Soul Searching: Origin* – 256, 260, 242, 237 (1-3)
09/17/17 – Pastor David M. Kuehl – St. Paul's, Muskego, WI

Let me begin with this statement: The book of Genesis is the most attacked book in the Old Testament, if not in the entire Bible.

It's understandable that the beginning—which, by the way, is what the word *Genesis* means—would be where critics direct their heaviest artillery. Genesis is a foundational book and, like a row of dominoes, if it falls, all of Christianity falls with it. If Genesis is just a fable or a myth, Christianity cannot stand. If we didn't inherit our sin from Adam and Eve, then we don't have a sinful nature, and there's no need for Jesus. If God didn't ordain marriage and create the family union, then our sense of morality is groundless. Jesus used the union of Adam and Eve as evidence of God's creating human relationships. If this didn't exist and Jesus was wrong, then both his identity and what he taught are suspect. Every foundational issue of Christianity originates in the book of Genesis. If Genesis is false, then the Christian faith is built without a foundation, and skeptics are right when they assert, "Who are you to say what's right and wrong?" "Who are you to say that there's only way to heaven?"

Today we begin a four-week series on *Worldview*. A worldview is like a set of glasses through which we see the world. Because our backgrounds, our culture, and our experiences are all different, our worldviews are slightly different. That being said, there are four questions that every worldview must answer: Where did I come from? Why am I here? What determines right and wrong? And where am I going? Today we answer the first question, namely, that of:

Origin: Where Did I Come From?

- 1. Genesis provides the answer.**
- 2. God answers an even greater question.**

1. As we begin our study of Genesis, it's important that we understand the timeline that's recorded for us in chapters 1 and 2. The first verse of chapter one is like the headline to a news story: "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*" The rest of chapter one is the article itself, giving us the specifics of each of the six days of creation. Then, in chapter 2, God steps back into chapter 1 and selects a number of items (a man, a woman, a garden, and two trees) for special emphasis. While Genesis 1 is a chronological record of the six days of creation, Genesis 2 is not. Genesis 2 provides the background we need for Adam and Eve's fall into sin in chapter 3.

As our text begins, Moses writes, *"This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, when the LORD God made the earth and the heavens. Now no shrub had yet appeared on the earth and no plant had yet sprung up, for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground, but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground."* From what Moses records, we can see that creation wasn't complete without Adam and Eve. The shrubs and plants needed cultivation. Moses cites two reasons why they hadn't grown: there wasn't any rain (thus a need for irrigation), and there wasn't anyone to cultivate them. God is establishing the fact that his created world needed human beings, which he soon remedied. *"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."*

A noteworthy item is that God uses a different name for himself here than he does up to this point in Genesis. 31 times in the previous 34 verses God calls himself by his exalted Hebrew name, *Elohim*, a name that describes God in all his power and majesty. He is an awesome God, who has existed forever and for whom everything and everyone exists. He is the God who created all things out of nothing, in six ordinary days, using only the power of his Word: *"Let there be."* Even the word *create* in these chapters reveals the power of God, for this word in Hebrew is *bara*, and is used only of something God does and always describes the origin of something extraordinary and unique.

In our text Moses combines this name for God with another Hebrew name, *Yahweh*. This name reveals God as the God of faithful and constant love. Centuries later at Mt. Sinai, God explained the meaning of this name to Moses, when he declared, *"The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin"* (Ex 34: 6, 7). This name for God in our Old Testament Bibles is spelled out in all capital letters, *L-O-R-D*. In our text Moses combines *Yahweh* with *Elohim* and says *"the LORD God."* In his creation of Adam and Eve, God displayed his mercy and love, as well as his incredible power.

And he does no less with us today. David says in our psalm today, *"You created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made"* (Ps 139: 13, 14). We were formed and fashioned by the very hand of God—using the natural process of conception and childbirth, to be sure—but still *"fearfully and wonderfully made"* (Ps 139:14) by God.

Have you ever wondered what it was like to be Adam and Eve before they sinned? Can you imagine them living in perfection—no anxiety, no fear, no pain, but only peace, love, and a face-to-face relationship with God? They lived with clean minds, clean hearts, clean thoughts, and direct access to their *Yahweh* God, who came to walk and talk with them *"in the cool of the evening"* (Gn 3:8) every day.

Sad to say, we live "after the apple," so to speak. We live with disease and divorce, pain and problems, terrorism and tragedy, war and a whole list of things that reveal our alienation from God. Our world and our lives are irreparably broken by sin. As a result, it may seem that God has turned his back on us, that he's forsaken us, that he doesn't care about us, or, worse yet, that he doesn't even exist. If there is one thing that I pray you'll take away from this *Worldview* series, it is this: You have a God who is very much alive and who is intimately involved with his creation, not absent from it.

Moses makes sure that we recognize this, for he writes, *"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."* Later on in chapter 2, we learn how God created Eve from one of Adam's ribs. How different this is from how God created everything else. Up to this point—with light and sky, plants and planets, fish, fowl and land animals—God simply spoke, *"Let there be."* But with the pinnacle of his creation, God, in a sense, got down on his hands and knees, shaped man in the dust of the ground, and breathed into him the breath of life. This was more than just oxygen; this was real life, the life that made Adam human, giving him body and soul.

Another part of Adam and Eve's composition is that God created them in his image. In chapter 1 of Genesis, God allows us to be flies on the wall at one of his heavenly board meetings, so to speak, where Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are making plans to create the human race. *"Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness"* (v. 26), we hear God say. *"So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them"* (v. 27). Our first parents were created in the very image of God, not looking like him, but possessing his holiness and having a happy knowledge of his will. At the very least, this helps us to appreciate the sanctity of life; at best, we recognize the value that God places on us, his handiwork. We are not some creatures who have evolved from an ancient ooze over millions and billions of years; we are God-made, created, formed, and fashioned by him to be his own and to live for him. We are his. Or, at least, we were his.