

Genesis 1-2

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[0 : 00] Now let's sing before we turn back to that passage we read together in Psalm 100. Psalm 100 from the St. Sam's version of the Psalter. Psalm 100, we're going to sing the whole psalm together, page 131.

We're going to sing this to the tune Carlisle. Shout to the Lord with joy, all who to earth belong. That's us, by the way.

Adore the Lord with joyful hearts and come to him in song. Psalm 100, the whole psalm, to God's praise. Shout to the Lord with joy, all who to earth belong.

Adore the Lord with joyful hearts and come to him in song.

No, that the Lord is not. He gave us as his own.

[1 : 20] We are the seed for whom we care. The people is not alone.

Many wash our sins. And ■ Your praises have we sing to Him, His name forever has.

For God the Lord is true, His love is ever sure, His constant truth and faithfulness through every age and youth.

Amen. Turn again to the passages of God's Word that we read together in Genesis chapter 1 and Genesis chapter 2.

I want to begin with a question tonight. That is, what is the most neglected area of our lives, of our Christian lives? What is the most neglected area?

[2 : 55] It is an area in which you are going to spend almost a quarter of your entire life, nearly half your waking day. And yet it is the area that you will find the fewest Christian books written about and the fewest Christian sermons preached.

Of course I am speaking about our working lives, our lives at work. Now this morning we put out a gospel call, called people to come to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

And perhaps someone came to know Christ. And when they came to know Christ, their hearts began to burn within them for a passion for Christ. The question is, a passion for Christ is like a plant which sprouts and which grows.

And it must be trained in certain directions in order to grow and produce fruit. And the Christian life must be trained in certain directions. And one of these directions is the life of the Christian in the workplace.

If you are to be a successful Christian believer, you must be a Christian, not just in church, but in your workplace also. And so what I want to do tonight is to talk about our attitude as Christians to the workplace.

[4 : 10] And I want to talk in particular about how God himself has created us for the workplace. And how God has created the workplace for us.

Because you see, too often as Christians we have divided the world up into the secular and the spiritual. The spiritual areas of our lives are the church, perhaps our families, our fellowships.

The secular areas of our lives are our work and our leisure. And it's tempting for us to believe, and I think as a church at times we've done this, is to preach that God is not particularly concerned with our lives outside this church.

God's concerned only with our spiritual lives, the lives we lead in our church, or perhaps the lives we lead at home. And that the Bible's got nothing to say about our secular lives, the lives we live in the football picture, the lives we live in our workplace.

But you know, that's not true. The Bible does not recognize a secular spiritual divide. Because in the opinion of the Bible, God is the Lord of all, or he is Lord not at all.

[5 : 26] God is the Lord of everything and every area of your life, or he is Lord of not one part of your life. And so you see, for the Bible, God is the God of the workplace.

He's created us for the workplace. He's created the workplace for us. And I want to focus on two areas tonight to try and give us an increased confidence that God is interested.

And concerned about your working life. And that the Bible really does have much to say from beginning to end about your working life.

I want to start by talking about God, the creator worker. God, the creator worker. Because the God whom we serve, the God whom we're here to worship tonight, the creator of all that we see around us, is a worker.

Our picture of God is so often one of idleness. With God, I say this with all reverence, busy doing nothing, working eternity through. But the biblical picture of God is one of activity and work.

[6 : 43] God is active. The passage of God's word that we read together lists 24 different types of activity that God engaged in when he created the heavens and the earth.

24 different types of work that God did. I just want to focus on two groups of activity. Two groups of work which God engaged in when he created the heavens and the earth.

The first are works of construction. Works of construction. For example, the word create.

God created. To create is a working word. The word bara in Hebrew. It's used exclusively of God's creative activity.

Genesis 1 verse 1. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. It's a summary statement there of how God created everything. It's used in chapter 1 verse 21 to talk of how God created the great sea creatures.

[7 : 51] It's used again in chapter 1 verse 27 to talk about how God created mankind as his image, as his likeness.

And you know, this is a verb in the Bible that is only ever used to talk about something God does. We as human beings, we never create, in this sense, anything.

It's a word that's only ever used of God. Yes, we human beings can be creative. But we can never create in the way that God does.

And you know, it's not often used in the Bible, this word create. This special word bara in Hebrew. And it's an indication. The very fact that it's used three times in Genesis chapter 1 of how special an activity this is.

It's an activity of God. And it's never used, as it were, combined with the materials that God used to create with.

[8 : 58] We're never told God used this in order to create. Or God used that in order to create. Because you see, as human beings, when we try and create something, the media that we're using to create always control us.

For example, we're writing, we're trying to draw a picture with paints and a canvas. But the paints and canvas control us. Just as much as we control them.

There's some things that we are not able to do with paints and canvas. They limit what we're able to do. But you see, God is never limited. God is never limited by anything.

He is able to mold everything precisely according to His divine will and purpose. So this is a work of construction, you see.

God created. I don't believe the word create necessarily means create from nothing. Although we could argue about that. But it's a definite activity which can only be predicated of God.

[10 : 02] God created. It's a work of construction. But also, you see God making things. There's another verb. To make.

Another work of construction that God does. It's the word *asa*. It's the word that's used most frequently in Genesis 1 and 2 to describe God's creative activity.

In Genesis 1, 26. Let us make man in our image. It's a very popular word in the Old Testament. It's used 2,650 times.

But it's translated in the Greek version of the Old Testament. The Septuagint. By a word from which we get our word. Poem. Poem. Poem.

And we can understand this word make. In a sense as God's great work of poetry. Because as we look around the world and the world that he's made.

[11 : 01] We can easily understand how it is poetry. Poem. The snow was falling today. There are no two flakes of snow which are exactly the same.

That's poetry. Can you not see the poetry of the stars? The poetry of the grass? Can you not see the poetry of great things?

And small things? We don't know anything really about what lies at the bottom of the ocean. We know more about the surface of the moon than we do about the bottom of our own oceans.

In the last 20 years. A completely new type of environment. Where the creatures that live and move. Do not depend upon oxygen.

Was found at the bottom. Two miles down. On the ocean bed. Where huge communities of bacteria. Which don't depend on oxygen. Can develop and support a whole new ecosystem.

[12 : 05] That kind of environment. Sheer poetry. For however many years the earth has existed. Man has not seen these stacks at the bottom of the ocean.

Yet God saw them. And they were poetry to him. You watch a bird flying in the air. And it's a piece of aerodynamic miracle.

It's poetry. Or a butterfly as it lands upon a leaf. It's poetry. It's God's poetry. It's God's workmanship. With all reverence what I want to say is that God didn't say the world into existence.

God sung the world into existence. And if we're working as poets. Or working with words. Or working with concepts.

Or wonder. Or music. In a sense. You can take God here as your role model. Because God himself. Is the great poet.

[13 : 08] Then you find. Chapter 2 verse 7. Another word of construction. The word to form. God formed the man.

The word *yatsar*. It's a word that's often used in the Old Testament. It's used in terms of craftsmanship. For example. It can be used of a potter.

Who's crafting or molding a pot. It can be used of a sculptor. With a chisel. Quietly honing his stones. It's used in Isaiah chapter 44 verses 9 to 20.

To talk about the activity of smiths. Not the smiths you have here. But blacksmiths. And that kind of smiths. Who shape their material with hammers. And that's the basic idea of this word to form.

But it's to an infinitely higher extent when it comes to God. As God the craftsman. Works with excruciating detail. On the minutest. Most intricate.

[14 : 07] Most beautiful. Part. And piece of his finished product. The human being. And he makes us like a sculptor. Like a sculptor sculpts.

And like a painter paints. What skill goes into the formation of a truly crafted object? The craftsman is a type of artist.

But the craftsman can only do art. Because. The God in whose image. He or she is made. Is himself. An artist.

The one who is himself. Dexterous. Unable to put the imagination of his mind. Into full. Visualization. With what he does with his hands. He's able to make beautiful things.

Like. Like you and I. Well. Like you anyway. He's able to make beautiful things. Pleasing to the eye. That's what God did. When he made human beings. And because of that.

[15 : 03] We can do that too. We're craftsmen. And then in verse. 22 of chapter 2. We have the word build. And then the Lord God made. Or built.

A woman. From the rib. The word bana. The word. The word that's used of God's activity. When he takes a rib from the woman. And puts it in the man. Sorry. Takes a rib from the man.

And puts it in the woman. And this. This. This word means that the word. That the. The creation of the woman. Is a work of construction. God made this woman. It's the same word.

That's used to talk of God. Of a human being. Building a house. Building a temple. We sang in Psalm 127. Verse 1. This morning. Unless the Lord. Builds the house.

Same word. It's builders. Labor in vain. God is a builder. He is in the construction business. If you're a builder.

[15 : 59] You work at your hands. You work in the construction industry. You're an engineer. You can claim God as your example. You can claim God as your role model.

So there we have words of construction. And secondly here. We've got works of communication. We've got works of communication. Construction. Communication.

The first of these is to say. To say the word amar. Used again and again. In the first couple of chapters of Genesis. Especially with regard to the way in which the Lord created.

He says things into being. And God said let there be light. And there was light. God's word is powerful. So later on that we discover that God's word.

Or the agency through this world was created. Is Jesus Christ. The eternal word of God himself. The important thing to notice. Is that God's saying is itself a kind of work.

[17 : 00] So much of your life. Whether it's in college. Or at work. Or whatever it is. Is involved with communication skills. And God is the ultimate communicator.

He is a speaking God. From the very beginning. He says things. And then we have the word. To see. God saw that the light was good.

Here's another part of this recurring formula. Of creating. God said. God created. God saw. God called. God saw all that he had made. And he judged it very good.

Seeing is an active word. It's an activity. Which requires concentration. And skill. Much of the work of management. Comprises the ability to see.

And analyze a situation. In God's eyes. All that he had made. Was very good. Whereas. In our working lives.

[17 : 57] Much of what we see. We see in order to point out. Areas of need. And areas. Of deficiency. Where work needs done. So. Seeing is a working word.

And God sees. And calling. To call. There's another. Active word. God called. The light. Day. God calls.

The darkness. Night. God calls. The expanse. Between the waters. Sky. God is a classifier. He classifies things. Into categories.

He makes things. According to their kinds. And he names them. According to their kinds. Reminds me of the work of. Well you would say. That's a fancy word in biology.

The word of taxonomy. The work of a librarian. Classifying things. Naming categories. Of literature. Or production. God calls. God classifies.

[18 : 51] We call. We classify. And in chapter 2. Verse 16. We see the word. To command. The word. Sawa. God commanded Adam.

That he must. Not eat. Of the tree. Of the knowledge. Of good and evil. Which is in the middle. Of the garden. This is the word. Command. And the way. That this command. Is phrased.

Leaves Adam. In no doubt. As to what. God demands. From him. God's. Communication. To him. Is not. Unclear. Clear. It's absolutely.

Crystal clear. Indeed. Everything. That we need. To know. God has made. Crystal clear. To us. And you know. This is an aspect. Of our working life.

That can make us. Or break us. The clarity. Of our communication. Misunderstandings. Can take place. But let it not be.

[19 : 45] Because. We have communicated. Badly. We have not. Told. And had. Commanded people. Properly. What we wanted. Because God. He commands.

With absolute. Calamity. So you see. Command. There is another working word. God. Communicating. Properly. You see. God is the great. Creator worker.

He is the example. To us. Of what. Good work is. And how to go about. Our work situations. We cannot. Be embarrassed. About our work. Whatever it is.

If we know. That our God. The God. The God that we love. The God that we cherish. He. Is a worker. Too. There are many other areas.

Which we could talk about. We will limit it to those two. God is a. God of construction. God is a God of communication. That's God. The creator worker. Now let's move on.

[20 : 40] Briefly. To talk about. Man. Or humankind. Let's be. Let's be. PC about this. Humankind. The creature worker. The creature worker. God is the great creator worker.

He creates. Now the highest point. Of God's creation. The zenith. Is mankind. We were. The last to be created. We are the pinnacle. Of God's creation.

Hugh Miller. Who was the great. Nineteenth century. Free church father. And geologist. He wrote in his book. The testimony of the rocks. Man occupies.

The central point. Of the great. Circle of being. So those lines. Which pass. Equally. Through the inferior. Animals. Stationed at its circumference. Meet. In him.

We are. At the center. Of God's. Creative. Activity. We are God's. Ultimate. Workmanship. You look at your hand.

[21 : 35] And you see. God's skill. You look at your toes. And you see. God's perfect wisdom. We are the zenith. The pinnacle. Of God's creation.

Hugh Miller goes on. To say something. Even more interesting. Man. Is the great. Creature. Worker. Of the world. It's one. Created being. That.

Taking up. The work. Of the adorable. Creator. Carries it. On to. Higher. Results. And nobler. Developments. And finds a field. For his.

Persevering. Ingenuity. And skill. In every. Province. In which. His maker. Had expatiated. Before him. You read that.

About 20 times. And you begin to understand. What he's saying. What he's saying. Is that. God. Made us. To be workers. God. Made us. To expand.

[22 : 29] And to develop. The work. That he. Had created. Just as. God. Is our. Creator. Worker. So. We. Who are made.

In. Or as. His. Image. Are also. Workers. We are not. Creator. Workers. We are. Creature. Workers. And I want to suggest.

To you. That from Genesis. One. To two. God. Made us. To be. Workers. According. To two. General. Principles. The first. Is in. Chapter. One.

Verse. Twenty. Eight. Work. According. To God's. Command. Work. According. To God's. Command. Verse.

Twenty. Eight. Chapter. One. We're. We're. Presented. With. Both. With. Both. God's. Blessing. To us. God. Blessed. Them. And also. God's. Command. To us. We're. To be.

[23 : 22] Fruitful. We're. To increase. In number. We're. To fill. The earth. We're. To subdue. The earth. We're. To rule. Over. All the beasts. Of the sea. And all the beasts. Of the air. And land. We're. To harness. The earth. In order. That it would.

Produce. Food. For us. Now. My question. Is this. What. Is. Our. Work. If. It is. Not. Obedience. To God's. Command. Here. Work.

Allows. Us. To be. Fruitful. And. Multiply. Modern. Medicine. Allows. Us. To enjoy. Longer. Lifespans. An infant. Mortality. Rates. The planet.

Practicing. Medicine. Is. Obedience. To this. Command. Nursing. Home. Making. Make a housewife. That's.

Obedience. To this. Command. Work. Allows. Us. To fill. The earth. And. To subdue it. We're. To be. Faithful. Stewards. Of God's.

[24 : 18] Creation. We're. Never. To. Overexploit. But. We are. To use. The materials. That God. Has. Given. To us. In order. To make. The world. Habitable. For human. Existence. And.

So. Mandated. Under this. Area. We have. The work. Of architecture. Engineering. Craftsmanship. Science. Teaching. Lecturing.

The mechanisms. Of government. I.e. Civil service. works. But. But. Subduing. But. Subduing. The earth. I'm filling. It. Also. Means. Developing. Cultural norms.

For the way. In which. The world. Works. So. It. Means. Music. Literature. History. Art. Law. All.

Of which. Any society. Needs. In order. To function. Properly. Work. Allows. Us. To rule. Over the beasts. Of the land. The sea. And the air. To carefully.

[25 : 11] Exploit. To carefully. Exploit. I don't mean that. In the worst. Way. Of which. It could be used. But. To carefully. Exploit. The resources. That God. Has given us. In these areas. Work.

Allows. Us. To harness. These resources. That God. Has given us. In the plants. And the animals. Of the world. Farmers. Crofters. Fishermen.

Vets. So. It. Goes. On. There's some figures. In the Bible. Let's go through. Some figures. In the Bible. Let's. Let's just go through. Some of them.

And say what their jobs were. And to show that. That all these people. Have been obedient. To God's command. In Genesis chapter 1. Verses 28.

Cain. He was an arable. Farmer. And then the builder. Of a city. Abel. A livestock farmer. Jubal. In chapter 4.

[26 : 06] Verse 21. A musician. Tubal Cain. Chapter 4. Verse 22. An engineer. Noah. Chapter 6. Verse 14. A boat builder. Nimrod. Chapter 10.

Verse 8. Army. Military. Joseph. Prime Minister. Mordecai. Mordecai. Nehemiah. And Daniel. Civil servants. Mary. Homemaker.

Jesus. Carpenter. James. John. Peter. Andrew. Fisherman. Luke. Doctor. Paul. Tankmaker. Lydia. Salesman. Or saleswoman. Cornelius.

Professional soldier. Don't work in a vacuum. Work because God's commanded you to work.

It's what you're made to do. And through the work that you do, you are expressing your obedience to this first command of God. To be fruitful and to increase in number.

[27 : 01] To fill the earth and to subdue it. And to rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air. And over every living creature that moves along the ground. So. Work according to God's command.

And then lastly in chapter 2 in verse 15. Work according to God's covenant. The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

In this verse we are told that God deliberately took the man, placed him in the garden of Eden to take care of it and to work it. To take care.

And to work. Now these may seem innocent enough words to you, but there's far more to them than meets the eye. This is the language of covenant. I'll explain what I mean.

And to say a few words to you here. And this is going to conjure up an image in your mind. Penalty. Goalkeeper. Corner. Striker. Goal.

[28 : 05] Substitute. Celtic. Rangers. What do you think? Football. Exactly. They're football words. They come up in every conversation about football. You immediately think of football when these words are used.

There are certain words in the Bible which every time they come up, you are meant to think by God who wrote this Bible of covenant. Covenant.

Work. Work. Work. Which is really the word for serve. That's one of them. And take care. Which is really the word keep.

Covenant. Is another of these words. There are two words here. To work and to take care. To serve and to keep. Now a covenant is a deal.

It's a deal between God and mankind. That God's going to be their God. And that he will look after them and be good to them and they will be his people. And the deal is based upon God's commitment and God's promise to stick to his side of the agreement.

[29 : 09] And man's promise to stick to his side of the agreement. So here in chapter 2 in verse 15. What we've got is man's side of the agreement. We've got the word work or serve.

It's used in lots of different covenant contexts in the Old Testament. Psalm 134 verse 1. Psalm 19 verse 11. Where the servant is the one whom the Lord God is bound in covenant to.

The word keep is in covenant documents like Deuteronomy 11 verse 22. Deuteronomy chapter 27 verse 1. Where the people of God are commanded to keep God's law.

This is our responsibility as God's people who are in covenant to him. We are, as our side of the agreement, to care, to work rather, and to take care.

To serve and to keep. What I'm trying to say here, and not very well, is that living out the covenant for Adam. It didn't just refer to eating or not eating from the tree in the middle of the garden.

[30 : 19] It didn't just involve his relationship to that tree. It involved his whole lifestyle. It involved his relationship with his environment.

It involved his relationship with his work. Similarly, our covenant, your covenant with God, isn't just concerned with what you do inside this building.

The religious aspects of your life. It is concerned, not just with the spiritual side. It's concerned with every area of your life. Because God's covenant is a living covenant.

To be lived out in the whole of your life. God wants us, by the way in which we live, and that includes our working lives, to live out the covenant that we have with him, by faith in Christ.

You see, you can't live in covenant with God, and neglect one area of your life, which comprises covenant life.

[31 : 25] You can't say, well, I'll tell you what, I'll be a Christian in church, but not in my workplace. That's like saying, I'll be a husband at home, but not in my workplace.

You can't do that. You're a husband at home, at work, wherever you are. You're a Christian at home, at work, at the church, wherever you are. God wants us to live in true covenant with him, by putting the covenant principles of working and caring into practice in every area of our lives.

This is the way in which we work out our faith in practical terms. By living for Christ in the workplace. The Christ who loved us and gave himself for us on the cross.

By his grace, working and taking care of the environment that God has placed us in. Whether that's by architecture, or farming, or engineering, or music, or poetry, or any of the above.

Whatever it is, that is our covenant obligation to God. And of course you'll notice before we take leave of this passage, the working environment into which God brought us, Adam and Eve.

[32 : 41] It was a garden in which all the trees that sprung up were pleasing to the eye, good for food. God didn't call us to work in a pit.

God didn't call us to work in a pit.

Monday is no different from you from any other day of the week. Go to work tomorrow with renewed confidence. You are repeating a pattern which has been going on since the creation of mankind.

Tomorrow morning you are doing what you were created to do. You are doing what your creator did and does. He works. You are doing that in which you will find fulfillment.

You are doing that in which the Lord Jesus Christ did every day of his working life. And if work wasn't too good for him, or if he wasn't too good to work, neither are you.

[34 : 06] Go. Do what you were created to do. Work. And by working, by so doing, bring glory to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The one through whom the heavens and the earth were made. And through whom your hands, your hands which do your work. And your mind which thinks your work.

And your tongue which speaks your work. Through which all these things came into existence. Go and show everyone you work with. Go and show them all. The love of the Lord Jesus Christ.

By the way in which you, the great creature worker. Model. The great creator worker. In all the work that you do. Let's pray together.

God and Father, we thank you for your word and for what it teaches us of your work. We thank you, Lord, for all that we've learned about these works of construction and communication.

[35 : 16] We thank you, our God, that you worked so mightily and powerfully and perfectly in bringing this world into existence. We pray, O Lord, that through the grace and strength of Jesus Christ.

By faith in him from minute to minute. Each one of us would be enabled in our workplaces. To so work that we bring glory to your name. And that our colleagues would turn to us.

And ask what the difference is in the way in which we work. Help us to be scrupulously honest. And help us in every situation, O Lord. To think of what will bring most glory to you.

Give us energy for all the challenges which lie ahead, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen. Let's close now by singing to God's praise in Psalm 72.

In the traditional version of the Psalms. This is on page number 314.

[36 : 20] We're going to sing from verse 17 to 19. The tune being Effingham. Of course, this is the desire of every Christian.

That the whole earth would redound to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. And this is the sentiment of the psalmist here. And we pray that this would be the case also. That the name of Jesus Christ would forever endure.

Last like the sun it shall. Men shall be blessed in him. And blessed all nations shall him call. And we pray that God will be blessed and glorified in our workplaces. So let's sing Psalm 72 from verse 17 to 19.

We'll stand to sing and remain standing for the benediction. And now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. The love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. One God.

Rest and remain with each one of you. Now and forevermore. Amen.