

**Garden**  
*With Us, Pt. 1*  
*Genesis 2:4-25*

Allan McCullough  
*Grace Hill Church*  
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# I. SLIDO.COM

- i. #917
- ii. Tuesday @ 2pm

## II. INTRODUCTION

**a. As many of you know, my wife and I have spent a good portion of our marriage serving as Foster Care parents in Fairfax County.**

- i. And we have mostly cared for newborns.
  - And as we have gotten more experienced with fostering newborns, we have learned a lot about the trauma that can occur to a child when their relationship with their birth mother is not a safe and nurturing.
- ii. For two of the newborns that we have fostered, we brought them into our home when the child was only about 2 days old.
  - And it's easy to think and believe that because child protective services intervened and prevented this child from going home and being raised in an unsafe environment, that the child was spared from trauma they would experience now that they have been born.
  - But one of the things you learn when you foster newborns, is that trauma can occur to a child even in utero, if their birth mom is carrying that child in an unsafe and volatile environment.
    1. Because that child is so physically present with that mother while in utero.
    2. And so, this experience in utero can have long terms impacts on a child.



iii. Now, a newborn child cannot survive without someone else caring for it, right?

- It has to be fed. It has to be kept warm. It has to be protected. Or it will not survive.

iv. But even more than just the most basic needs, a newborn child can't thrive without a parent providing gentle care, nurturing physical touch, affection, attention...right?

- Even while they are in the womb. That's how dependent we are on others.
- Listen, a child must have a caring parent who is near to them at all times.

## **b. Today marks the first day of Advent.**

i. Where we, as the church, remember and celebrate the first advent (coming) of Jesus.

- We remember and celebrate how Jesus, God Himself, drew near to His people who were suffering because they had been separated from their heavenly Father.

ii. And this year, we are titling our Advent series "WITH US"

- Because I want us to study in the Scriptures, from cover to cover, the reality that we as God's creation, as humanity, we cannot live, we cannot survive, and we especially cannot thrive without the nearness and the nurturing of our God.
  1. In the same way that a newborn is utterly helpless and will wither away without the nearness and nurturing of a parent, so we as God's creation need the nearness of God.



**c. We need God to be WITH US...or we return to dust.**

- i. This is a theme that we will be tracing throughout the whole Bible during the next several Sundays as we celebrate Advent.
  - That when we are near to God, there is life and vitality.
  - But when God is distant, when we are separated, we become parched, dry, thirsty.
    - 1. And as Genesis 3 says, we came from dust and apart from God, we will return to dust.
  - And this is what Christmas is all about...God drew near to us...so that we may live.

**d. And so, this morning, I want us to study Genesis 2, that the Matheney family just read for us....**

- i. And I want us to see how God created us...designed us...to need to be near to him...and that apart from him...we thirst until we wither away.
  - And my hope for our time together this morning is that maybe we could identify the ways in which we feel like we're dry...
    - 1. Thirsty.
    - 2. Cracked.
  - And that our souls would be encouraged to draw nearer to Christ this morning rather than keep our distance.



### III. GENESIS 2 – THREE REASONS WHY WE NEED THE GOD TO BE WITH US

a. Genesis 2, that the Matheney's just read, is a poetic account of God creating humanity and the rest of our world.

- i. And what I want to do is I want to pluck out three truths from this chapter that teach us how we were designed to thrive when we are near to God.
  - So, from Genesis 2, I have three reasons why we need God to be with us...
    1. And as we walk through these three reasons I want you to be encouraged that this is what God wants for you.
    2. This is what he created you for.
    3. This is what God is working to bring about in your life as we'll study in the Scriptures through this Advent Season.
    4. God's will for your life is not that you would dry up with thirst in your soul...but quite the opposite.

b. So, the first reason that we need God to be with us is because **He quenches our soul.**

- i. Look at **\*\*Genesis 2:7\*\*** with me.
  - What is the difference between humanity and a clump of dirt...is that God has intentionally formed us and breathed life into us.
    1. God is who gives us life.
    2. It is the breath of God that makes us who we are.



3. In other words, apart from God, we are dirt. Earth. That's where we started and that's where we'll return.
- Just like a newborn feeds on its mothers breasts and receives nutrients and vitality...we as humanity receive life and vitality from God.
    1. We were never created to be self-sufficient.
    2. Self-sufficiency will return you to dust.
- ii. **This is such a simple truth but with such massive implications.**
- If we read verses 8-14 here in Genesis 2, the text goes on to describe the lush creation and paradise that God created.
    1. It's this image of a creation that is full of life and vitality because the presence of God is near.
  - And the massive implications for us as humanity and for all of creation is that it is God's presence that gives us life, that makes us flourish, that quenches our souls.
    1. Without God...we and all of creation...dry out...we thirst...the life in us shrivels as we return to dust.
  - In response to this passage John Calvin, the famous 16<sup>th</sup> century theologian said of this truth from Genesis 2:7:
    1. *"He must be excessively stupid who does not here learn humility."*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> John Calvin, *Genesis*, trans. and ed. John King (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1965), p. 111.



iii. **We are nothing without God! Our souls will relentlessly thirst without God!**

- And to view ourselves as if our life is possible apart from God...is the utmost of ignorant arrogance.

1. Look at Isaiah 29:16b - *"16...Shall the potter be regarded as the clay, that the thing made should say of its maker, "He did not make me"; or the thing formed say of him who formed it, "He has no understanding"?"*

2. As Calvin says, to understand that we are formed by God and our life is literally the breath of God should humble us and should draw us near to God.
3. Because if this is true, then only God can quench our souls.

iv. **And if we just evaluate our lives...and if we just observe the world all around us...**

- I think we'll discover enough validating evidence that what the Bible says is true.
- That apart from God...we thirst...we're unsatisfied...we don't experience the life that we all long for.

v. **We spend our lives chasing something that will quench our souls, right?**

- Will money quench our souls and prevent us from turning back into dust?
  1. Why is there never enough money?
- Will the praise of other people quench our soul and give us immortality?
  1. Why is there never enough praise?
- Will accomplishing something big and grandiose satisfy the thirst?



1. Why is there always something bigger and better?
  - Will dropping that weight, meeting that right person, getting that job breathe more life back into your restless soul?
- vi. **What is it for you? What does your soul want? What has it been chasing?**
  - Because although we are reading in Genesis 2 this morning, next week we're going to read from Genesis 3...
  - And we're going to read about why God had to remove his presence from us.
    1. Why it is that the souls of humanity have been left to roam around the earth, thirsty, looking for something that will breathe life into us...something that will quench our thirst.
- vii. **And creation teaches us that only God can do that...by design.**
  - There's no work around on this.
  - If we are to live and thrive, we must have God with us.
- c. **I have to confess to you, over these last several months during this pandemic...I have not cared for my own soul by drawing near to God every day.**
  - i. I have not availed my soul to sit underneath God's Word every day, to commune with God through prayer, to be aware of his presence and asking for his guidance as I go about my days.
    - I've allowed my soul to get thirsty because I have not drawn near to God.



- And as I wrote this sermon this week, and God said...YO – THIS SERMON IS FOR YOU!
- ii. **And through this advent series we're going to talk about how, even in the midst of our sin, even when we are running away from God, God has drawn near to us that we might live.**
- But for right now, I want to press pause on this sermon.
  - As you know, this morning we are, for the first time, allowing people to participate and interact with one another in our worship service through Zoom.
    1. We are doing this because the reality is, we're going to have to livestream our services online instead of meet together in-person through the next few months.
    2. And we don't believe that means we should not be together and interact, encourage, challenge one another.
  - So, if you are on Zoom, I want to put you into some breakout groups right now...and I'm going to give you 10 minutes to discuss one question...
    1. **Have you drawn near to God throughout these last few months? If so, how has God quenched your soul? If not, what has your soul been thirsting for?**
  - If you're not on Zoom but joining us on YouTube or Facebook, you can spend this time reflecting on that same question for a few minutes...maybe even journaling on that question...we'll put it on the screen.
    1. And in a about 10 minutes, we'll come back and continue to study Genesis 2.



## IV. ZOOM BREAKOUT

### V. GENESIS 2 – THREE REASONS WHY WE NEED GOD TO BE WITH US

#### a. Alright, I hope it was good to engage with one another.

- i. And my prayer is that none of you who are with us this morning feel alone...
  - That you don't feel alone in this pandemic.
  - And that you don't feel alone in the thirst of your soul.
  - And my prayer is that as a church we'll point each other to the only who can quench our souls.

#### b. I told you that from Genesis 2, I have three reasons why we need God to be with us.

- i. And the first reason is obviously because He quenches our souls.
  - And my next two reasons are direct implications of the fact that it is God alone who can quench our souls.

#### c. **#2 - Reason #2 that we need God to be with us is because when He quenches our souls he changes the why behind what we do.**

- i. Why do we do what we do?
  - Have you ever pondered that question?
  - Why do we work? Why do we learn? Why do we commute around this place for all the things that we do? Why do we busy ourselves?



1. What is its purpose?
- ii. Look at **Genesis 2:15** with me.
2. (These two Hebrews verbs here are also used in the book of Numbers to describe the role of the priests in the Temple...
  3. The kind of work God called Adam to in the Garden was fundamentally an act of worship to God...)
- To work and keep the garden here in creation was not something that had to be done out of necessity...it wasn't something that had to be done for survival...but it was a calling by God and it was something that was done out of worship to God.
    1. This was an act of vocational worship...not an act vocational drudgery.
- iii. And here's why this is so important for us to see this morning...
- Because so much of our work today...the reason that many of us have a vocation...is because we look to that work and to that vocation to quench our soul.
    1. To give us something to live for.
    2. To help us continue to survive.
    3. To climb our way to some sort of standard of living that we believe will be what will finally quenches our soul.
  - See, in our fallen, dry, thirsty world today...we work in order to be filled...
    1. Genesis 3 will actually teach us, that separation from God means that our work is now cursed and will make us thirsty.



2. But here in the garden...in paradise...in a place where God is near...in the place where our souls are full...we work not to be filled...but because we are filled.
  3. The reason we do what we do in the garden is worship and service to God.
- iv. **We don't know what it's like to not be waiting for and working towards something better in our lives.**
- Have you ever thought about that?
  - How much of our lives do we spend waiting for and how much of our labor is spent hoping for something better...for something to finally quench our souls?
- v. **I remember when I had to wrestle with this about 12-13 years ago.**
- My dream was to become a strength and conditioning coach for a collegiate or professional football team.
    1. And that's what I was studying...
    2. And I got some great opportunities.
    3. Ended up doing some coaching for the University of Maryland Football Team.
    4. Even had an offer to intern with the Washington Football Team (the NFL one).
  - And I was working hard. I had to do school. I worked as a manager at a Starbucks early in the mornings and then commuted to College Park and worked will late at night.
    1. And it seemed as if I was on track to realize my dream.
  - But I hit a depression...



1. Something was wrong. I wasn't happy. I was dry. I was thirsty. And I was frustrated by that because everything seemed to be going according to my plan.
  - And I remember God asking me: Allan, why are you doing what you're doing?
    1. Yeah, it seems like everything is going well for you but why do you think that is going to quench your soul?
  - And I had to ask some major questions about God's will for my life...and he had something different for me.
    1. And I was convinced that chasing this worldly dream would quench my soul.
    2. And I had to accept the fact that I was dead wrong.
- vi. **Are you in that place?**
- Are you doing what you're doing because you think it will fill you?
    1. And your unwilling to question it.
  - Are you willing to pray and ask God what His will is for you?
    1. Because God's desire for you is that you would do what you do from a place of fullness rather than trying to be filled.
- vii. **When God is near...the why behind what we do changes...**
- And our labor...and our daily activities...are no longer defined by restless waiting...but rather joyful service.
- viii. **What are you waiting on...what are you working for...that you believe will quench your soul?**
- What is the why behind what you do?



**d. And finally, the last reason from Genesis 2 that we need God to be with us is because He allows us to draw near to one another.**

- i. Look at **\*\*Genesis 2:18, 21-23\*\*** with me.
- (So again, I want you to notice the intimacy between God and man. It is God who forms the woman in order to be with the man. It is God who gives her life)
  - (And God creates the woman...and I love this word helper in v.18 – oh believe me, this does not communicate that the woman is subservient to man. It literally means she will be strong where he is weak)
  - (And look at what Adam says when he sees her...
    1. In other words...this woman is like me.
    2. I have a someone to share life with who is like me.
    3. We are the same. We are united. We are companions. We are strong where the other is weak.)
- ii. See, in paradise where God is near, and where our souls are quenched, in the same way that we don't have to look to our work to quench our souls...we also don't have to look to each other to quench our souls.
- How often do we look to other people to be the ones who will quench our souls?
    1. We look to others to fulfill us, to approve of us, to make us feel like we have value and worth.
  - And the problem with looking to others to quench our souls is that they can't...



1. And when I place an expectation on someone to do something for my soul which they fundamentally cannot do...
  2. I push that person away rather than draw them near.
- iii. **\*\*Genesis 2:25\*\*** says that the man and the woman were both naked and were not ashamed.
- (This word naked here...it of course means they were unclothed...but it also means their souls were naked...this is a word that is also used as a military term in Genesis 42:12...Joseph has become the Prime Minister of Egypt. His brothers, who sold Joseph into slavery, travel to Egypt to get food because there is a famine...
    1. And Joseph recognizes his brothers but they have not recognized that it was Joseph yet.
    2. And when they arrive, Joseph accuses his brothers of traveling to Egypt to spy out the nakedness of the land.
    3. Same Word.
    4. He accuses them of coming to scout out where the land would be vulnerable to a military attack.
  - This word, naked, means vulnerability. Defenses are down. You are exposed. Not protected.
    1. And the text says that Adam and Eve were in this state, their souls exposed, and not ashamed.
    2. Because their souls were quenched...full of life in God who was near.)



- When we look to other people to quench our souls, we will always have our defenses up, we will be ashamed, and it will break our relationships.
    1. We ironically believe that we must not allow people to know who we really are so that they won't be scared to draw close.
    2. And it actually pushes them away.
- iv. **I remember early on in my marriage my wife and I kept fighting and bickering...fighting and bickering...fighting and bickering...**
- Until finally one day, we had this heart to heart talk where we spilled our souls out to one another, we confessed our fears, we confessed what we expected out of the other, we exposed our souls to one another...
    1. And it didn't heal everything overnight...
    2. But it started a trajectory of our marriage healing...
  - When our souls are quenched in God, it allows his people to draw near to each other, to share their stories, to be who they are, to reveal their struggles, and be unashamed.
  - And to “help” each other draw near to the only one who can quench our souls.
- v. **Who in your life do you expect to quench your soul?**
- That very expectation is actually pushing them away.



## VI. CONCLUSION

### a. This is how God created us...

- i. He created us to live a life where our souls quenched in God alone...
  - And our work and our relationships are not strategies to quench our souls.
- ii. But we know the next chapter of the story.
  - Something happened.
  - We got separated from God.
  - And souls have become thirsty.
  - As Jeremiah 2:13 says...
    1. *"[we] have forsaken [God], the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for [our]selves, broken cisterns that can hold no water."*
    2. We look to other things to quench our souls.
- iii. And the glory of Advent...is that God did not leave us in that place.
  - But He drew near to us by sending His Son, Jesus.
  - And this is Jesus' invitation to you:
    1. John7:37b-38 - *"If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. <sup>38</sup>Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"*
  - This week as we begin Advent, let's draw near to Jesus...

## VII. PRAY

