

## THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

### Week 1 - Day 2: Our Heavenly Father

**Genesis 1:26-28** Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, “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.”

The day my first born came into the world was one of the most surreal moments of my life. Holding him for the first time was unbelievable. I kept going over and over in my head “This is my son. My own flesh and blood. He looks like me, smiles like me, and even cries like me.”

This is the same way our Creator, who made us in His image and His likeness, sees us in His Kingdom family!

The story of Genesis 1 paints a beautiful picture of how God’s creation was extraordinarily designed! We are reminded of this as we look at the beauty of the heavens and the earth all around us. These specific passages, however, show us that God is going to express His *rule* over His image-bearers by entering into a loving relationship with them and by allowing His *people* to extend that loving rule throughout His creation. What is remarkable is that God could have easily been in the heavens doing whatever He pleased. Instead, He creates the world, He creates us, and begins a divine relationship with humanity that is made to be eternal. And through this divine relationship, the King extends His rule through humanity as we are commissioned to spread His glory throughout all of creation.

This is what it means to be a part of God’s Kingdom family!

**Genesis 2:5-8** 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, and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground— 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. And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.

Prior to the birth of my son there was a nesting process. It was so fun to see my wife and I embrace the excitement of having a baby. Painting the room, decorating, organizing, setting up the crib, and anticipating when our newborn was going to come home. What a moment it was as we brought our son home into his room and into our lives. Genesis 2 paints the exact same

picture of a God who loves His people and prepares a kingdom **space** for them before bringing them home. Consider this passage in John:

**John 1:12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.**

God's people are called His children and welcomed into His kingdom family inside of this kingdom space! We did not have to prove anything to Him. Rather, God accepted us and brought us into His presence for who we are. We were not only made in His image, but as the masterpiece of all His creation with a divine purpose.

**Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them**

Our status as God's beloved image-bearers ought to remind all of us that we were designed to be in relationship with our Heavenly Father and that our purpose can only be found when we embrace the mission of our Lord's Kingdom. In this sense, our hope was, is, and always will be found in the Lord!

**Genesis 2:15-19 The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.**

Home at last! The moment we brought our son home a new life began! Feeding, cleaning, changing diapers, and minimal sleep was not necessarily what we wanted to do, but it was all worth it when we saw "first times" for everything in our son. We would do whatever it took to raise our child and give him the best opportunity to thrive. In the same way, our King desires a relationship with us, blesses us, and then gives us responsibility so that we might flourish in His kingdom! Genesis reveals this "very good" world where there is work to be done, but we have a God who is with us every step of the way to love us and direct our steps. This is what our **covenant** relationship looks like between the King and His people.

**Colossians 1:16-17 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.**

God's **people** bear the image and likeness of God Himself. Humans are welcomed into God's kingdom **space** so that He can **rule** us through a loving relationship, through His guidance over every one of our steps, and by equipping us with the mission to further His Kingdom. This is what it means to be human in God's kingdom!

-Austin Foxworthy

**Share the Gospel:** Genesis 1 and 2 show us that God's image bearers (humans) were designed to thrive in God's place (heaven and earth, but more specifically the Garden of Eden) under the loving rule of God. This rule included an eternal and divine relationship with Him as well as a unique purpose; to live in intimate relationship with Him and spread His glory throughout all of creation!

Personal Observations, Reflections, and Prayers: