

## CHRIST IN GENESIS ADAM'S TREE

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GENESIS 1:26; 2:8-9  
ROMANS 5:19-21

The first book of the Bible, Genesis, is a book of biographies. Sometimes we think of the Bible as a book of doctrines, of teachings, of truth. That is true. But when you open the Bible, the first book of the Bible is a book of biographies. It is true there are teachings, doctrines, and truths there. But it is not written as a book of teachings, a book of doctrines, or even a book of truth. It is written as a book of biographies. Why is that? It shows that God's interest is not primarily on teaching. God's interest is in man. He is interested in man. The purpose of God is towards man. The work of God is in man. God does his work in man until man comes to what God has originally designed for him.

The book of Genesis is mainly the biography of eight persons even though there are a number of people mentioned. God did some work in the lives of these eight persons and there is a special feature in each person. There is a characteristic, a symbol, a trademark, as it were, revealing what God has done in that life. And when you

put all these eight persons together, you get the man after God's own heart. In a sense, all these eight persons are a type of Christ. In each of them you see a little bit of Christ. When you put them together, you find Christ, the man after God's own heart. And then you can enlarge it and say God's purpose concerning man is not an individual; God's purpose concerning man is a corporate man. Therefore, whatever God has done in these eight persons, which are just the expressions of what that man is, God will do in each of us. And together, as the body of Christ, we will reveal the same trademarks to the glory of God. That is what Genesis is all about.

The first person of course is Adam, and with Adam it is a tree, Adam's tree. God created man in His own image. By that it does not refer to the outward appearance, because *image* means that inward quality—that inward moral and spiritual likeness or assimilation. When God created man, He created man in His own image, with the same inward moral and spiritual likeness. Because of this, man has a capacity for God. Man is able to contain, as it were, God in him and be united with God in life. That is the beauty of God's creation.

When God created man, He just used the red earth to form the outward body of a man. The material is very cheap, just the red earth. And yet, in Psalm 139 we are told that we are fearfully and wonderfully made, and that is true. When you consider the

body of man—if you analyze the earth and analyze the body—you find it contains the same chemicals. God made man with the red earth and yet he is so fearfully and wonderfully made. Our body is a marvel, but that is just the smallest part of it.

Man is not only a physical being, and that physical being is a wonderful being, but man is a moral and spiritual being too. In other words, because man is created in God's image, man is different from all the other creations. God used the red earth to form the body of man and God breathed the 'breath of lives' into the nostrils of that form. And the Bible says, "Man became a living soul." In the creation of man, there is the body, which is made of red earth. With that body we are conscious of the physical world around us with our five senses. Then, when the breath of God entered into that form, man became a living soul. A soul simply means he becomes a living being. There is an animated life within him, a created life within him. He can think. He can express himself. He can feel. He can decide on things. There is volition, thought, and emotion. Through that soul, man is conscious of himself. How do you know that you are? Because you think, you feel, and you will. It gives you a self-consciousness.

Then, the breath of life that enters into you becomes your spirit, a human spirit. You have a conscience, intuition, and communion with God. Because God is spirit and we are made

with a human spirit, we can worship God with our spirit. God is a spirit and whoever worships Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. We have a spirit and that spirit gives us God consciousness. This is the way that man is marvelously made—a wonderful body, a marvelous soul, and a tremendous spirit.

So far as God's creation of man is concerned, when man was created he was created complete. But so far as God's purpose in creating man is concerned, it is yet to be fulfilled, yet to be perfected. This is very important. So far as the act of creation is concerned, when man was created, he was perfect. There was nothing missing or lacking, just like a baby. When a baby is born, he is perfect, so far as all the members of the body are concerned. And yet, that baby needs to grow into maturity, into manhood or womanhood. That is the purpose concerning a birth and that needs to be gradually developed. When man was created out of the hand of God, he was created perfect and complete, but so far as God's purpose for creating him is concerned, it has to wait to be perfected and to be completed. How do we know that?

God actually created man as a vessel. A vessel is not an end; a vessel is a means to an end. A vessel is for the sake of being filled with something. When the vessel is filled with the right thing, then the purpose of that vessel is fulfilled. Suppose you made a drinking cup. You may

make a very beautiful cup but if it is not filled with water, then so far as the cup is concerned, its purpose is never fulfilled. But when that cup is filled with water, then we can say the purpose of that cup is fulfilled.

So remember that man is made as a vessel for God, not for any other purpose. Only after man is filled with God can the purpose for the creation of man be fulfilled. That is why if a person is not filled with God, he is always empty. You may fill him with gold or silver, but he is still empty. Just as Saint Augustine said, "Oh, God, my soul will never find its rest until it rests in Thee because it is made for Thee." For this reason, after God had created man, He planted a garden, the garden of Eden. The word *Eden* means "pleasure." God planted a garden of pleasure. In that garden God planted all kinds of trees with fruits. They were not only good to look at, they were also good for food. All the fruits were for the nourishment of the physical body of man. God prepared all the trees in the garden of Eden and in the midst of the garden, He planted the tree of life, and by the side of that tree of life, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

And God said to man, "Of all the trees of the garden you may freely eat except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. For on the day that ye eat thereof, ye shall surely die." Why is it that after God had created man, He put man in a garden? Well, we would say God wanted man to enjoy what He has created. That

is true. But why is it that in the center of the garden that God planted was the tree of life? Did man not have life already?

Man is a living soul. Man has an animated life in him. Man can walk, talk, think; man can do many things. Man has life. Why is it the Bible specifically says that in the midst of the garden God planted the tree of life? Because the tree of life is symbolic of the divine life of God. In other words, God as it were, put His own life in the form of a tree. Why does God put His life in the form of a tree? It is because that makes His life available for man. Man can pick the fruit of the tree and eat. Then man can get the divine life into him. God makes His life available to man. God was not satisfied just to create man, giving him a created life. God's purpose was to give His own uncreated, divine, eternal life to man, so that He and man would be united in one. That is God's purpose. So in the center of the garden, there was the tree of life. It shows us the real purpose of God creating man. God created man in order that man may receive God into himself and be united with God in life, in love, and in purpose. That is God's purpose.

"Whom He has foreknown, He has predestinated to be conformed to the image of His own Son" (Romans 8:29). God wants us to receive His life and be conformed to the image of His only begotten Son, to be like Him. But by the side of that tree of life, God put another tree. It is called the tree of the knowledge

of good and evil. That is not a common tree; it is a very peculiar tree. It is not an apple tree, or a pear tree, or a peach tree. All these trees are good for food; that is, they can supply the needs for the physical body. At that time man did not eat any meat; his food was fruit. God provided man with a body and God provided him with all the good foods to support that body. All the trees in the garden are for food for the physical body, with all the different tastes so it does not get monotonous and tasteless. God really loved people.

Then there is the tree of life. It is a different kind of fruit. It gives us divine life; it gives us life for our spirit, that in our spirit we may have God's life in us. Then you find the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This tree is a different kind of tree. It is the tree of knowledge. What kind of knowledge? The knowledge of good and evil.

Sometimes people think that there was one bad tree in the garden of Eden—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Do you think God would plant any bad tree in the garden of Eden? All the trees are good. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is not a bad tree. As a matter of fact, it is a better tree than all the rest of the trees, except the tree that is best, the tree of life, because the tree of life is the food for our spirit. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is the fruit for our soul. And the other trees are the food for our body. Knowledge is for our soul. Of all the knowledge in the

world, there is no knowledge higher than the knowledge of good and evil.

Today, we boast that we are in the Age of Technology. We boast of all the science and scientific inventions that we have. We think so much of science as if science is everything. But remember, of all the knowledge in the world, the highest knowledge is not science; it is not the knowledge of physical things. The highest knowledge is the knowledge of good and evil. It is the knowledge of discerning what is good and what is evil; what is right and what is wrong. It is moral knowledge, ethics, logic, philosophy, rational knowledge. There is nothing higher than rational knowledge. We call ourselves rational beings because we are so rational, so logical. We can know what is good, what is evil. That is the highest knowledge. As a matter of fact, in China, in all our Chinese literature and culture and learning, we consider rational knowledge the highest knowledge. It is not a bad tree, but it means death if it is taken apart from life.

Why did God put man in the garden of Eden with the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the midst of the garden? Why did God say that man should never eat this tree of the knowledge of good and evil, because if he did eat he would surely die? I think that it is because God created man in His own image. God is a free will. In other words, God is free. He has

a will. He can do whatever He chooses. And when God created man, God created man as a free will. God gave us a will and because we have a free will we are free. We are free to choose what we want to choose. God respects our free will. So God gave man the opportunity to exercise his free will to make his own choice. God did not plant the tree of life in the garden of Eden and tell man: "Now eat it. There is no choice. You have to eat it." God did not do that. Instead, He put another tree on the side of it. On one hand, God said you can eat all the trees. Of course, if you are told that you can eat of all the trees, no doubt, the tree that is in the center of the garden would attract your attention. In other words, the hint is: that is the tree. And God said, "Now do not eat the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Do not eat that." By saying that, God was trying to tell people, "Why not eat the tree of life?" Unfortunately, man did not get God's hint. Certainly man knew about it.

God put man under a command for another reason: "You shall not eat the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, because on the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die." God loved man and did not want man to die. But another thing we need to remember is that man is over all creatures, but under the Creator. Sometimes we forget; we think we are above everything, even above God. So God put man under a command to show that even though it is true that man is above all things,

there is One that is above him. There is One he should obey, so that man could know his place in the universe. God did not force man to do His will. God put His will before man and let man freely choose. If man wanted to choose the tree of life, he could do it. If man wanted to choose the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he could also do it. God gave man that liberty to choose because man was created a free will. What would a free will be if there were no choice, or no way to choose? God respects the man whom he created. Man stood before two trees—the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And God put man before these two trees and let man choose his own destiny. Would he choose the tree of life, thus receiving the life of God in him, being one with God, fulfilling God's purpose in creating him? Or would he choose the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, that is to say not desiring the life of God but wanting to develop his own soul? Would he want to increase his own knowledge and make himself a god, independent of God, declare independence of God? He can do that too, saying: "I do not need God. I make myself God."

Knowledge is not bad. The knowledge of good and evil is certainly a good knowledge. What is disastrous is to have the knowledge of good and evil and yet not have the power to do the good and refrain from the evil. That pronounces death and that is what it is. There is nothing

wrong with knowledge, nothing wrong with the knowledge of good and evil. You should have it. But unfortunately, apart from the life of God, knowledge only brings death and not life. It is because you have the knowledge, but you do not have the power to do what you know is good and not to do what you know is bad. In Romans 7, that man cried out and said, "Oh, wretched man that I am, why am I so wretched? I know what is good, but I cannot do it. I know what is wrong, but I do it. I cannot help doing it, therefore I am condemned." It brings in death.

With the life of God, there is knowledge, but that knowledge brings life. "To know Him and to know the one who is sent by Him is eternal life" (John 17:3). What is eternal life? Eternal life is a knowledge too, but it is a living knowledge. In other words, you not only know, but you have the power to do it or not to do it. That is the difference. And God so loves man that He wants man to have His life. And with His life he will have knowledge, but with the knowledge will be the power to do what he should do.

Man can choose whether he wants the life of God or the knowledge of good and evil. What is the difference? The tree of life speaks of the divine life of God. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil speaks of a rational knowledge developed in man apart from God. If we take the tree of life, then the life of God becomes the life of our spirit, because the life

of God dwells in our spirit. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil dwells in our mind, in our soul. The life of God in us is a life of faith. The life of rational knowledge is a life of reason. The tree of life in us is a life of obedience, but the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in us is a life of in-dependence. The tree of life in us is a life of union with God, depending upon God, walking with God, following God. And the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is a life of standing apart from God trying to develop itself to be a god. One will bring us to eternal life, the other brings us to death. That is the difference between these two trees, and Adam was to make the choice.

Unfortunately, our forefather made the wrong choice. Instead of accepting the tree of life, man declared independence from God. Man was tempted to develop himself and try to make himself a god. The result was that he made himself not a god, but a devil. Instead of being conformed to the image of God's Son, he was deformed into the image of the devil. Man was cast out of the garden of Eden, and the way to the tree of life was guarded by cherubim with flashing swords. In other words, the way to the tree of life was completely blocked to man. That is the tragedy of human history. By the disobedience of one man, all were constituted sinners. We were born with the knowledge of good and evil in us. In Adam, the knowledge of good and evil is the life principle. People live according to the principle of the

knowledge of good and evil. That is the best you can live. And because of that, we are all under the sentence of death. But thank God, God sent a second Man into this world—Christ. This second Man that came into the world is life. He is the tree of life, and He came to offer life to mankind. God gave us a second chance. On Calvary, Christ was crucified on the cross.

What is the cross? Today we think of the cross as if it is something beautiful, something glorious. People use gold and make a cross to hang around their neck. But when Christ was crucified on the cross, it was not smooth and beautiful. As a matter of fact, in I Peter chapter 2:24 it says, “He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree.” When you crucify a criminal, you cut the tree. You do not try to smooth it and make it very beautiful before you put that criminal on the tree. No. It is just a tree that is cut down, rough, rugged.

Our Lord Jesus was crucified on a tree. Because we have eaten the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, therefore Christ tasted death for us on the tree. He died to sin. So that tree, in the first place, represents the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. You and I should be crucified there. We ate that fruit and we would be crucified on that tree, but instead our Lord Jesus tasted death for every man, every creature. He was crucified on that tree in our stead. But thank God, after He was crucified on that tree, it turned into another tree, the tree

of life. Out of His death, out of His side came out blood and water—blood for the atoning, the remission of our sin, and water to give us life that we may receive a new life. Through His death and resurrection, He released His divine life, His own life to us. He makes life available to us by the cross—the tree of life. Without the cross, His life just remains in Himself. What did the Lord Jesus say when the Greeks came and wanted to see Him? He said, “The Son of Man is to be glorified.” But what does it mean? He said, “Unless a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone. But If it should die, it will bear much fruit.”

Without the cross, the divine life of God is in Christ, but it is only in Him. He lived a life according to the indissoluble life of God. What a life He lived! But it is only in Him. It is through death, through the cross, that that life is made available to all who believe in Him. Through the cross His life is released so that we who believe in Him may receive His life in us. On one hand, the work of His redemption has to get rid of the effect of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in us. He has to take our sins away; He has to taste death for us that we may pass out of judgment, out of death into life. He has to do that negative work of clearing the ground. Then He does the positive work of giving His life to us.

Through the cross of Calvary mankind is given a second

chance. You may choose. Don’t blame Adam and say he made the wrong choice for us. God gives you another opportunity to choose for yourself. Whom will you choose? In Adam is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In Christ is the tree of life. By the disobedience of one man, many were constituted sinners, but by the obedience of one man, many are made righteous. Will you choose the tree of life or do you still want to remain with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? What do you want?

The gospel of Jesus Christ is that He came to take away the effect of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which is death in our lives. He came to offer His own life to us that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. Thank God, you have made the choice, you have chosen Christ, you have chosen life, and you have received His life in you. His life in you is your principle of living today. So here we come to the two different principles of life. They are two different ways of life, two different laws of life. One principle of life is that you live by the divine life. The other principle is that you live by the knowledge of good and evil.

Before we believe in the Lord Jesus, we live by the knowledge of good and evil; that is the best we can live. If we consider something as evil, we say, “Don’t do it.” What we consider as good, we say, “Well, that is something you should do.” You just think of it; you reason it out.

And according to what you reason out, you think that is what you should not do. Your reasoning is probably irrational, but you think you are very rational. Even if your reasoning is rational and it is right, what do you find? You find that what you think is right, you do not do; what you think is wrong, you do it. That is what your life was, and that is why you are condemned. But after we have received the life of Christ in us, after we have eaten the tree of life, from now on the principle by which we live should not be the knowledge of good and evil anymore. It should be the divine life. Do we not see it?

Now it does not mean that a Christian should make light of what is right, what is wrong; what is good or what is evil. Certainly not. Some people become so super-spiritual, as if they are above any moral standards, as if they can do the bad things and it is still all right. No, certainly not. You are not pseudo spiritual, in the sense that you can neglect even right or wrong or good or evil. Of course not. But, as Christians, you have to live by a higher principle. And it is the principle of the divine life of God. That is the principle by which we live. In other words, good is not good enough for you.

How unfortunate that many Christians today ask the question: "Is it wrong?" Lots of young Christians will come to you and say, "I am going to do this thing. Do you think it is wrong? Do you think it is right?

Do you think it is good? Do you think it is evil? Do you think it is sin?" What does he mean? He means if it is not sin, if it is not bad, if it is not wrong, if it is good, then he can do it. He is still governed by the knowledge of good and evil. In your dealing with people, is that still your criteria? If you think that you have done something good, and people misunderstand you, do you think that you have the right to fight because you have done something good? If you have done something bad, you know you are bad, "All right I accept it." But if you are good, how will you react? Do you react according to the divine life of God in you, or do you act or react by the standard of good and evil?

Remember, to us Christians, the governing principle of life is the divine life of God. Our question is not whether it is right or wrong. Our question is: "Is it of life, or is it not of life?" It is not a matter of "What about me?" It is the matter of what does God think. We are living on a higher ground because in Christ is the tree of life. This is the principle by which we live. How unfortunate that we find ourselves often fallen to the level of good and evil. We are still arguing about who is right, who is wrong; you are wrong, I am right. This is good; this is evil, as if that will settle the question. No, it has to be higher than that. Something may be good, but it may not be God's will. We have to ask: Is it of life? Sometimes, you may suffer

a little bit, but you feel full of life within. At other times, you may argue very strongly that you are right, but the more you argue that you are right, the more dead you feel within. Now that is Christian, because Christians live according to a different rule.

So, it is more than just a matter of receiving life. After we have received the life of Christ in us, then it behooves us to live by that life. Do not be governed just by the knowledge of good and evil. It has to be higher than that. We have to be governed by the divine life of God in us. If we are, that divine life in us will begin to take shape. We will be gradually transformed and be conformed to the image of God's Son. What is the image of God's Son. It is moral, spiritual character. God wants us not only to receive His life, but also to follow that life, live by that life. As the life is being lived, that life will grow into maturity, and we will grow into a full-grown man, into the measure of the fulness of the Christ. That is God's purpose.

In Adam's tree you can see God's purpose in man. Even though he failed before that tree, in Christ God has offered us the tree of life. As a matter of fact, the flashing sword came upon our Lord. He was slain on our behalf that the way to the tree of life may again be opened and we may be invited in. And after we have taken that tree of life, we may walk in that life. So may the Lord help us.