

- In 1990 the space probe Voyager took a photograph (SLIDE)
- Here it is...
- And if you were alive in 1990 this is a picture of you... (SLIDE) – The pale blue dot is earth...
- Here's what American scientist Carl Sagan said about it...
- *That's here. That's home. That's us. On it, everyone you ever heard of, every human being who ever lived, lived out their lives.*
- That's the view of humanity that we get in chapter 1 of Genesis.
- God's cosmic activity in creating the heavens and the earth!
- In chapter 1 we see him make the stars and the sun and the moon
- We see him create the earth and the sky and the sea.
- and mountains and the valleys and the rivers...
- and we see him create humanity as a tiny part of ALL OF CREATION...
- and yet... the pinnacle of creation... made in God's image...
- the completion of creation...
- We see humanity as the high point of god's plans...

- We see that humanity is FOR GOD...
- But in chapter 2 we see that **God is for Humanity...**
- Because chapter 2 get's personal...
- The tone changes.
- It changes from the cosmic language of grand scale creation...
- to the personal language of God's love and care
- and his provision for **Tiny little humans...** on a pale blue dot
- In chapter 1 verse 1 it talks about the creation of the **heavens and the earth...**
- But chapter 2:4 talks about the **earth** and the **heavens...**
- In chapter 1 the word for the creator is the far off impersonal "God" a word that can describe other gods... in the bible. (SLIDE)
- But in chapter 2 we see God's personal name "Yahweh" or the LORD God added to the Elohim (SLIDE)
- (but) There's an obvious move from the cosmic... in chapter 1 to the personal and the relational... in chapter 2...
- God is for Humanity...
- God is for US...

- And you see the love... and the nurturing care of God for the man as the story unfolds...

## 2 peas and one carrot – the textual proof

### *Prelude – proof of preparation ( v 5-7)*

- Starting with verses 5-6 (verse on screen)
- 5 *No shrub of the field had yet grown on the land, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the LORD God had not made it rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground*6 *But water would come out of the ground and water the entire surface of the land*
- Before the man was even there, God is preparing the earth for humanity...
- Creating it, getting in ready, wetting the soil...
- And then comes verse 7 (Verse on screen)
- *Then the LORD God formed the man*
- Verses 5-6 are leading to this point...
- The whole point of God making the earth is to provide a place for humanity to live...
- It's like new parents getting the room ready for the new baby...
- God's preparation of the earth is **FOR humanity...**

### *Creation – proof of creation create (production – but doesn't have the right flavour) (v 7)*

- Lets read verse 7 (SLIDE)

- *Then the LORD God formed the man out of the dust from the ground and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and the man became a living being.*
- Have you ever made anything?
- I once made a table with my hands... I measured it and cut it, I put it together
- And in my opinion it was better than a bought one...
- Not because it actually was better, but because I made it...
- There was love in it...
- We see here in verse 7 God forms the man out of the dust...(SLIDE)
- He uses his own hands...
- God is involved in the detail of the man's shaping...
- There is a great intimacy in God's formation of man...
- but more than forming and shaping him, He gives him his very life...
- He breathes life into the man...
- And at that moment, he becomes more than a beautifully molded and shaped sculpture.
- He becomes a "living being", formed, designed, shaped, by God... and given life by God's breath....
- You can see that God is **for** humanity...

*Provision – proof of provision v 8-16*

- But God goes further... in verses 8-9 (SLIDE)
- 8 *The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there He placed the man He had formed.*
- 9 *The LORD God caused to grow out of the ground every tree pleasing in appearance and good for food, including the tree of life in the midst of the garden, as well as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*
- and then in verse 15-16 (SLIDE)
- 15 *The LORD God took the man and **placed** him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree of the garden,*
- I like the word abundance
- I always order 1 too many dishes when I get takeaway.
- I don't want to run out.
- And so the idea of abundance makes me feel calm...
- And I think of the word abundance when I read those verses...
- God's provision for the man is abundant...
- He plants a garden... he puts the man there...
- He makes trees grow...ones that are pleasing to the eye and good for food...
- Not just sandwiches... but sweet pastries...

- And God says in verse 16 – you are free to eat from ANY tree in the garden...
- there are presumably thousands of trees in the garden... and he can eat from almost any of them...
- Freedom!
- ... provision!!!
- Abundance!!!
- I'm imagining the man... prancing around skipping from tree to tree trying all the different kinds of fruit...
- taking one bight and throwing the fruit away...
- there's just such and abundance of it...
- GOD IS FOR HUMANITY...
- He keeps saying yes to the man...
- YES have a world that I've created just for you...
- YES let me mould you with my own hands...
- YES... let me personally breath life into you... so that you'll be alive...
- YES... have a garden that I've planted... just for you...
- YES have all these beautiful trees... and all their beautiful fruit...
- Rule over this place... it's yours!!!
- YES YES YES YES
- NO

## 2 trees

- Because at the centre of the Garden there are two trees... vs 9
- *the tree of life in the midst of the garden, as well as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*
- The tree of life... shows God's abundant provision ... there is nothing the man needs that God has not provided... including LIFE ITSELF...
- But the NO comes in verse 17 (SLIDE)
- *17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die."*
- And with this verse... everything seems to turn around...
- God's given the man... freedom and abundance in seemingly unlimited supply... but now he says... no... (SLIDE)
- You can't eat the fruit from that tree... that's so "pleasing to the eye and so good for food"
- And as I was reading this, it really hit me hard...
- Because in our society... choice is important...
- autonomy is important...
- my freedom to express myself however I want... by making whatever decision I want is important...

- I can choose my car, my career, my boyfriend or girlfriend...
- I can choose the food I eat... the beach I swim at the country I travel to...
- In our society, I can even choose the gender I want to be...
- And so when God all of a sudden limits something that has been described as good... I start to question his goodness towards the man...
- Is god really FOR HUMANITY?
- Is God really for the man... when he says no... when he limits his freedom...
- Is God really for *us*?
- Is he really for us... when he says no...
- When he says no to lying
- Or to... sex before or outside of marriage
- or to drinking too much
- or to viewing pornography...
- or to anger
- or to unkind words
- or to being ashamed of his ways...
- see WE see goodness in all these things... because they'll get us what we want!

- Whether excitement or fun or vindication or satisfaction or the avoidance of pain, awkwardness or ridicule.
- That's why we do them...
- But Sometimes you get the **no** through life circumstances...
- You've been unemployed... you're still single... you've run out of money...
- the life you thought you were going to live... is not what God has allowed to happen... and it hurts...
- And with each NO the temptation is to question God's goodness...
- Is God really **for** me...
- And here's the thing... the answer is absolutely yes...
- EVEN IN THE LIMITS god puts on us... EVEN IN saying no... he is for us...
- You see the tree is there as a choice...
- with the command not to eat of the tree, the man can now either choose to believe that what God said... and what God wants for him is GOOD...
- Or he can decide for himself what he thinks is Good or evil... without reference to what God thinks is good...

- With the tree in Garden... and the command not to eat... Humans can Choose to trust God... even though the fruit was pleasing to the eye and good for food.
- The tree says... you **can** determine what's good and evil... you've been created in God's image...
- But God warns them too... he says... you're dust... you're limited...
- If you do determine Good and evil without me it won't go well
- God is the one who set up the very idea of good...
- goodness radiates from him...
- and so when God gives a command... even when he says no... it's part of his provision for humanity...
- And so we see God's abundant provision... IN THE LIMITS... in him saying NO...
- God is for humanity... so we need to trust him...

**Garden to Garden – One who got it right – and in his getting it right gave us the freedom to make mistakes.**

- But it's so hard... because the benefit of not trusting him is so immediate...
- and it's so easy... and it's so enticing...
- and we reason with ourselves that it won't that bad... or that actually it will really be good...

- That's what happens in chapter 3... the fruit just looked SO TASTY... and so Adam and Eve steal a quick peak to see if God's watching... and then take a big juicy satisfying bite...
- And so trusting God... when he says no means admitting that you don't know everything...
- it means sacrifice and humility... it means giving up the immediate... for the good...
- Like Jesus did...
- He's the one who... was in pain and anguish in the garden of Gethsemane... he's the one who said... Father take this cup from me... I don't want to do it... I don't want to die on the cross...
- But the father's answer was "no"...
- And what was Jesus response? (SLIDE)
- "Not my will but yours"...
- he gave the immediate good avoiding shame, torture, abandonment and death...
- For the ultimate good of your salvation...
- He trusted God's goodness and his ways...
- Will you trust God like Jesus did... ?
- The answer is sometimes...

- But there's 3 beautiful things that help us as we look upon Jesus in the Garden
- 1) He helps us trust God like He did because his death on the cross proves the extent that God actually is for us...
- 2) It shows us the way to do it...
- 3) But it also gives us hope when we fail... because... Jesus died for our failure to trust God...
- He died for our failure to believe that God is for us even when he says no...

## Conclusion

- God is for you...
- He provides for you like a father...
- He sustains your life...
- He is so for you... that in his son Jesus... he gave up his life for you...
- Like a father, part of his love and care and provision for you is in saying no...
- Will you trust him the one who really knows what good is... and what is good for you.
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