



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.” 29 And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. 30 And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. (Gen. 1:28-30)

I. Review

- ◆ Goodness originates from the essence of God and is manifested in his creation (Psa. 34:8-10; Jer. 31:10-14). The physical world is not inferior; it is good and intended for our enjoyment (Gen. 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31; 1 Tim. 4:1-5). Jesus coming in the flesh serves as God’s affirmation and sanctification of creation (1 John 4:2-3; Eph. 1:9-10; 4:9-10; Col. 1:15-20). God’s complete restoration of creation will occur at the second coming of Christ (Rom. 8:18-25).

II. The State of Grace

Human beings were created in a state of grace, fully dependent on God for every good thing. (Acts 17:24-25)

Biblically, the idea of “grace” is **God’s disposition of favor** toward a person.

Did Adam and Eve do anything to earn their place in paradise? God created Adam and Eve to relate to him through grace, not through works. The commandment comes after grace (Gen. 2:17).

When Adam and Eve sinned, mankind fell from grace into judgment. **Through the gospel, God is restoring us to a state of grace** (Rom. 5:1-2; Eph. 1:3-9; Psa. 23:1-6). Salvation is not by works.

If we did not earn God’s gifts, then we cannot boast in ourselves (Eph. 2:8-9). **Confess that there is nothing you can do to earn Christ’s acceptance.** This message of grace does not mean you can keep sinning without consequence. True grace trains us in godliness (Tit. 2:11-12).

- ◆ The glory of God is demonstrated through *grace* from the beginning of creation. This is the foundation of the gospel and what makes the Christian faith unique among the worldviews.

III. Grace Extends through Blessing (Gen. 1:26-27, 5:1-2)

God’s blessing is the extension of his goodness and grace. God blesses Adam and Eve and calls them to bear fruit and rule as his representatives and priests. **God blesses them so that they will be a blessing.**

“Blessing is a performative utterance, or speech act, that brings good upon someone or something in contrast to cursing, which is maleficent [to cause harm] to its recipient.”¹

¹ F. Rachel Magdalene, Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible, s.v. “BLESS, BLESSING,” 192.

- ◆ **Christian, you are called to good works and to bless!** (Rom. 12:14; 1 Pet. 3:9; Eph. 2:8-10). God has designed the human heart with a deep desire to make an impact and live a meaningful life.
- ◆ **The Call of Abraham:** Through Abraham, we begin to see God's plan to bring about redemption to the nations after the fall of Adam and Eve.

Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. 2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Gen. 12:1-3)

These words are not only for Abraham; they are for you! God wants to use you to be a blessing. Abraham's name is made great so that through his life God's blessing would reach the fallen world: "so that you will be a blessing" (Gen. 12:2). True greatness and impact are extending God's goodness to the world through good works.

In Genesis 22, we see the importance of Abraham's obedience (Gen. 22:16-18).

1. In this incredible moment, Abraham trusted in God's goodness. God unfolds the foundation of the gospel; he will provide the sacrifice.
2. The sacrifice references God's clothing of Adam and Eve with animal skin, anticipates the sacrifices of the temple for Israel's atonement, and foresees God's Son as a sacrifice for everyone.

On the foundation of grace, Abraham's obedience brought God's blessing to the world. (Gen. 22:14). God preached the gospel to Abraham, saying, "*In you shall all the nations be blessed*" (Gal. 3:8).

- ◆ Our deep desire for impact is a desire to be a blessing! This leads to a radical prayer: **"God use me!"** (1 Chr. 4:10)

The enemy distorts our deep desire for greatness and impact.

We learn from the story of Abraham that, as revealed in the Garden, grace comes before the command. God will provide and return your offering 100-fold (Mat. 19:27-29). The Lord uses our obedience to bless the world and bring about redemption and salvation.

Take a moment to marvel at God's goodness. He chose you and saved you "*to the praise of his glorious grace*," not because of your works or your performance. How does that impact your heart?

Will you pray the prayer: "God use me!"? What is he saying to you?