

## adams charge

All right, we'll take your Bibles this morning and I invite you to turn with me to Genesis. Genesis chapter two, and we're gonna continue our study here in this garden of great abundance and delight. Pick up kind of where we left off last time.

Read this morning beginning in verse eight. The Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the East, and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground, the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food.

The tree of life was in the midst of the garden and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden and there divided and became four rivers. The name of the first is Pishon.

It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. And the gold of that land is good. Bedellium and onyx stone are there.

The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows East of Assyria and the fourth river is the Euphrates.

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.

This morning, we're gonna explore the garden together and we're gonna remind ourselves of what a good garden this was and we're gonna look at these two trees in particular and then we're gonna see Adam's charge. And I really think all of that ties together this morning, entitled this morning's message, Adam's Charge. And that's kind of where we're headed is the focal point there, verses 15 and 17.

Just to remind ourselves of this garden scene, because it's significant where this charge comes. This garden is a good place. God's original design and creation was good.

The Lord each day was talking about how good his creation was and then he creates man and he recognizes that it's very good. And then God puts Adam and Eve in a perfect garden. And we said, this is a hard place to get our minds around because this is pre-fall.

This is what creation looks like. And so just to kind of remind you of what life was like in that garden, we know that the animals are gonna be there because we see some of them come past Adam in chapter three. So you have an environment where all the animals get along with each other.

That's a no cat fight. Sometimes at night you hear two cats out fighting, never happened, okay?

The dogs and the cats get along, the lion and the lamb. And not only that, but there's harmony between people and animals, okay? Everybody's getting along and then there's harmony amongst people.

Adam and Eve are getting along. Never a moment of tension, never anything going wrong, no pain, no fear, no disease, no death, no issues. I mean, this is a problem-free life.

How much would you love even like one day of just one day of a problem-free existence? This is what it would have been like in the garden. They would have had a problem-free life. No physical problems, no practical problems, no pressure to provide and no spiritual problems.

And this garden, as we saw, was a place of abundance. It was a rich land. There's an abundant water supply.

Now that's part of what we're understanding with all of the rivers that are there. Water is needed for life. You had beautiful trees to look at that produced beautiful food that tasted delicious and was nutritious.

And so everything is healthy. There's an abundant supply. Really, the whole earth is producing at this point, and yet on the earth is this particular garden that stood out even for its beauty and for its abundance.

And we saw that there were trees that were pleasant to the sight and good for food. And so we saw just a taste of this to recognize, first and foremost, that pleasure is not a bad thing, that God has designed you and I to experience pleasure, to experience the goodness of God and how he designed us. Assuming it's within the boundaries that God has designed it and we're gonna see that even today.

And so God has provided all kinds of sensory perception that you and I have and then a creation by which we might enjoy through our senses. And so the fact that you enjoy sitting in the sunshine on a warm day or maybe enjoying a warm blanket and a good book and a roasty fire on a day like today, a cool breeze on a hot day or drinking a nice cold lemonade, these are all things that we enjoy and experience as part of God's good creation. And so there in the garden, Adam and Eve are enjoying pleasure.

The key is that that pleasure is not to be supreme or insisted upon, you're not entitled to it or to be enslaved to it. It wasn't to be greedily consumed, but rather enjoyed as unto the Lord, enjoyed within the boundaries of God's design, enjoyed for his greater purpose, to be enjoyed with gratitude. And part of the lesson that we're to understand as we see the garden here is the depth of the distrust of our first parents and how inappropriate that was in light of the environment that they were in.

John Calvin would say that it was an inexplicable cupidity. It means it's a greediness that really can't even be described because essentially they had it all. And so we saw that you and I are prone in our hearts to distrust God.

And oftentimes we think if our circumstances were a little bit better or different, perhaps we would not feel so covetous or so greedy or be so unbelieving or distrusting of God. And yet the example here in the garden testifies that the problem is not circumstantial. And in fact, if you were put in the perfect circumstances without any needs or wants, that your heart would still want.

I mean, it's just astounding to see that. In the Proverbs, King Lemel would say, Lord, don't give me so little that I'm tempted to steal. Adam and Eve are not tempted to steal right now.

There's an overabundance of food. And then to top that all off, we saw that this garden environment that was so abundant and so perfect also had the very presence of God. This garden had the presence of God.

If you remember when the Lord came looking for Adam and Eve, he's personified there in verse eight of chapter three, when Adam and Eve hear the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. So this garden had the presence of God. And the presence of God is a delight to his people, is it not? Nearness to God, fellowship with God.

We talked about this last week just briefly, but the Psalmist says that the presence of God is satisfying to his people. Psalm 16, 11, in your presence, there is fullness of joy. Psalm 84, how lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts, my soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the Lord.

And so Adam and Eve had everything in terms of practical provision, perfect relational harmony, and then to top it all off, they had fellowship with God. I'm just thinking your own Christian experience, the joy of those moments of experiencing the near presence of God. I mean, when you're reading the scriptures and something just comes alive to you, you're calling upon the Lord in prayer and your heart's suddenly oriented to things above, times when you're just struck in awe or maybe even moved to tears.

I mean, whatever it is that you might associate with the feelings of nearness to God, it's a delight. It's a joy to experience that. And so it's almost unfathomable here for Adam and Eve to be in perfect fellowship with one another, perfect fellowship with God.

And it starts to give us a little sense as we're here in the garden of what it is that we've lost and what it is that we have coming. What it is that we've lost and what it is that we have coming. I mean, just think about for a moment about what is lost and forsaken.

I mean, our life is very dimly reflecting this garden, is it not? I mean, I would just actually say life is pretty hard. We need to get to that in chapter three. And it's filled with relational difficulties and pain and physical suffering and unmet needs and unmet desires.

And it's hard to provide. And just think about the amount of moral evil on the earth that we see. You have babies that are born blind.

And you have people all around the world that starve to death. And you have violence and you have broken homes and you have war and you have crime and everyday frustrations of the groaning of creation. And yet there was a time where things were not like that.

And the testimony of Scripture is that Jesus comes back to redeem us and then to bring us back into that type of fellowship with God and one another. Revelation 21, John hears a loud voice from the throne and hears what that voice says. Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.

He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will be with them as their God. And he will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more. Neither shall there be mourning or crying nor pain anymore for the former things have passed away.

And then he's gonna say, the one who's seated on the throne, behold, I'm making all things new, fresh start. And yet this is gonna be even better than if we were merely returning to Eden because in this new place of fellowship with God and joy, we're also gonna be praising God, not only because of his work as creator, but also as redeemer. And so Adam and Eve are experiencing the garden right now, apart from the knowledge of evil, at least at this point.

You and I are gonna experience that joy one day and in the backdrop is gonna be the moral evil that God has rescued us from, the evil that he triumphed over. And so it's gonna be even more glorious. One commentator says, seeing this connection between the original garden and the final glory reminds us of the value of studying the book of Genesis.

Not only do we learn about our origins, but we see the beginning of what God has determined to achieve in the end. And so when we come to this garden, we recognize, boy, it's hard to relate to what Adam and Eve experienced initially in that garden. And yet, if you're in Christ, it will be yours one day too, only even better.

So this is a good garden. Adam and Eve are in a good garden. They have no unmet needs.

It is an abundant place. And if you noticed, as we went through verses eight through 14, there was a little detail that we skipped over. That was the matter of two trees of prominence.

So this garden was filled with trees. There were many trees. And yet there were two trees in particular that get honorable mention.

And so in this good garden, there are two prominent trees of great importance. And these are gonna relate to Adam's charge. Verse nine, Moses writes, and out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life was in the midst of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

And so these trees have been a source of great fascination and discussion and speculation. And so we're gonna look at each of these trees separately. First, I wanna look at the tree of life.

The tree of life is listed first. What is this tree? Well, at the outset, I just wanna prepare you. We

don't know a lot about these trees.

So you're probably gonna be disappointed in my explanation as much as I would love to venture into speculation. Good rule of thumb in Bible study is to go as far as the scriptures take you and then just park it, okay? Don't go beyond what is written. And so what we see is this tree of life is not spoken of a whole lot in scripture.

It appears here in Genesis. It's gonna be a tree of life at the end of Revelation. And then the tree of life is used as a metaphor in Proverbs, but there it's really just kind of talking about blessedness and vitality and fruitfulness.

It's not really talking about a particular tree. And so what is it that we know about this tree? Well, first of all, we know that it was, in fact, an actual physical tree, okay? It was a real tree. Notice the description comes right there in verse nine as God is describing this garden.

And we've already seen this is a real garden. It is in the region of Eden. It is in the east.

There's particular named rivers. There's regions. It's a physical garden with physical trees.

And then among those physical trees was the tree of life. So this is a real tree. Furthermore, you would like a little bit more evidence if you weren't convinced by my previous explanation.

In chapter three, verse 22, the Lord makes provision because man would be capable of eating of the tree of life. So this is not an imaginary tree. It's not merely symbolic.

It is an actual physical tree from which you could take physical fruit and eat. The second thing we know about this tree is that access to this tree changes after the fall. So pre-fall, there's no conditions put upon eating, nothing explicit in the text.

The tree is available there in the midst of the garden after the fall. Adam and Eve get kicked out of the garden. Then the Lord puts a cherub with a flaming sword, according to chapter three, verse 24, to guard the way to the tree of life.

So right now, there is access to the tree of life. After the fall, access will become restricted. And so there's various conjectures that come about.

You know, what would have happened if Adam had not eaten of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, then he would have been able to eat of the tree of life and he had to pass the first test in order to get to the second. I think those are conjectures that begin to wade into. And so I would say that what we do see is that God here is represented in Scripture as the source of life.

And then in this case with Adam and Eve, he grants to them the opportunity to eat from this tree in the original creation. In fact, the tree will have symbolic significance. And we see this later in Revelation, not as a fountain of youth.

I don't want you to think of it in that way, that if you eat this fruit, you suddenly feel younger.

You just feel the wrinkles smoothing and kind of youthful vitality coming back. That's not in that sense a tree of life, but rather it symbolizes access that God gives to his creatures for return of life.

In fact, that language is gonna be used later. And so if you wanna jot a couple of cross-references in Revelation 2, verse seven, John records to the one who conquers, Jesus says, I will grant to eat of the tree of life. So Jesus gives the right to eat from this tree.

That language is repeated, similar language in Revelation 22, 14. Blessed are those who wash their robes so that they may have the right to eat from the tree of life. And then likewise, that right is taken away in Revelation 22, 19.

If anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life. And so on the one hand, this is a physical tree, an actual tree that existed with real fruit. Yet the tree itself didn't really provide life like a fountain of youth, rather access to that tree was the means by which God was saying you have access to eternal life or you do not.

And so this represents an interesting moment in the garden. And I know we're kind of bouncing in and out here of pre-fall and post-fall. I think it's just kind of the best way to try to explain this.

But if you look down at chapter three, verse 22, we see what happens in relation to this tree after the fall. Then the Lord God said, behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil, now lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat and live forever. Therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken.

He drove out the man and at the east of the garden of Eden, he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life. So it seemed from this text that eating of the fruit of the tree, after eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, would have confirmed Adam and Eve in a perpetual state of fallenness. It would have confirmed them in a perpetual state of fallenness, they would have had eternal life.

And so when you read the account there of the angel being set upon the outsider, the cherub being set with the flaming sword, at first you think, man, that would have been so sad to be cut off from the tree of life, so sad. But I think it's best to see this as a mercy. And here's I want you to think about it.

Let me ask you this way, can you think of anything worse than dying, can you think of anything worse than dying? How about living forever in your sinful fallen condition? Does that sound like fun? Yeah, amen, it does not sound like fun, that's the right answer, bud. It's a mercy by God to keep Adam and Eve from finding themselves in this fallen state perpetually. And so I think to understand pre-fall, the tree served as a source of life, post-fall, that's cut off now.

That tree is no longer gonna be the source of life. Who's gonna be the source of life post-fall? It's gonna be our Lord Jesus, is it not? Who said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. John 8, 12,

he came and said, I am the light of the world, whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

John 1, 4, in him was life. Jesus said to her in John 11, 12, I am the resurrection and the life. First John 1, he is the word of life.

First John 5, 20, the Son of God has come, he is the true God and eternal life. So this tree of life, pre-fall, was the sign of God's gift of eternal life to man. When Adam and Eve sinned, God cuts off access to that tree so they're not confirmed in their fallen condition, which would be a terrible state, to be fallen with no hope of redemption because you're just gonna live into perpetuity in your fallen condition.

And then of course, the ultimate source of life is Jesus himself. So if you want eternal life, you need to know God through Jesus Christ. That is the only source of life.

So first tree that we see here is the tree of life. The second tree that gets prominence here, that's highlighted in this account, is the tree of knowledge of the knowledge of good and evil. This tree is also in the midst of the garden, and so it's an obvious tree.

It's a tree that everyone knows about, and everyone is Adam and Eve and the serpent. So this tree is easily identified. It had some desirable properties.

According to chapter three, where we see that interchange between Eve and the serpent, this tree was good for food, it was a delight to the eyes, and it was to be desired to make one wise. It was desired to make one wise. And so the same question here kind of comes about this tree.

Is this tree like a poisonous apple where when you bite into it, now it produces death, and now it suddenly produces magically some new knowledge, and it kind of explodes upon you as you take a bite of that fruit? No, rather, I think the best way to understand this is that when Adam and Eve were given this, when Adam was given this instruction, which we're gonna look at in a minute here, that this tree would represent crossing the boundary, and in crossing the boundary, there would be a new knowledge concerning moral good and moral evil. Think about it this way, maybe. I think this might give you a little just flavor of how to understand this tree, okay? Some sins that you and I commit are so familiar that they just feel routine.

They're just kind of almost like habit. You can't really remember a day apart from sinning in these ways. So maybe getting frustrated, or feeling irritable, or anxious.

Those are sins that generally we would just say, you know, man, kind of my whole life, I've seen parts and pieces of this. It's just kind of part of my character, so I'm not proud of it, but it's just part of who I am. They're kind of familiar sins.

And for many of us, it's hard to even remember a state of life where we weren't struggling with those sins. Yet there's also those sins where, where you can remember if you've lived a little bit of life, crossing the definitive line. You know what I'm talking about? I'm talking about the sins

where it was, you know, the first time that you snuck out of the house, or the first time that you told a bald-faced lie when there was a lot on the line.

Or maybe the first time you put something before your eyes. Perhaps the first time you looked at pornography, or the first time you committed a violation where it represented now an entry point into a new avenue of sin. Or you went a certain place, or you did something with someone, or you ingested a substance.

Whatever it might be, there was something that you experienced where you suddenly pushed into a new realm of sin. And in doing so, you had that combination of kind of the rush and thrill of sinning in a new way, combined with the sense of guilt and the pain of conscience. And in that, you became a little bit changed.

Your knowledge of good and evil was changed. You got a new knowledge of sin experientially. And I know in my own life, if I have those milestones that, frankly, I wish I did not have, of crossing very definitive boundaries, and then once on the other side being changed, that new taste of sin, that new area of temptation is awakened.

And in that moment, there's kind of a part of you that dies spiritually, and a part of you that also becomes kind of alive to sin in a new way. And so, I think that's kind of a way of grasping, then, what the Lord was forbidding in describing this tree as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, was to say, Adam, if you choose to eat of this fruit, you're gonna have a new knowledge of good and evil that, frankly, you don't want to have, that you wish you'd never had before. I believe Adam and Eve understood God's moral nature through this initial instruction and prohibition.

Adam knew that he didn't make himself. He knew that it was the Lord that made him. Adam was able to comprehend in the plain, unadorned language of the command, this is the instruction that I'm receiving.

God is telling me to do something very specific. If I do it, He's pleased. If I don't do it, He will be displeased.

And so, even if it was only an embryonic form, Adam comprehends, to some degree, God has a moral will, and violating His will would be wrong. But if Adam chooses to eat of that tree, he chooses treason. If he chooses to violate God's moral will, then he's gonna gain a new experiential knowledge of good and evil.

And so, Adam is given a specific charge in verse 15 regarding this one tree in particular. Verse 15, the Lord God took the man, and He put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and keep it. So, we see that this garden is a wonderful place to enjoy.

And yet, it's not merely a lawn chair and a pina colada. There's tools in this garden. This is prior to the fall.

We've talked about this before. Work is not a curse, it's not a punishment. A very important question, class, will there be work in heaven? Yes.

So, God takes Adam, and He puts him in the garden, certainly to enjoy. I'm sure the work was very enjoyable. Imagine work with no problems.

So, Adam is in the garden. He's put there by God. He's given the charge to work the garden.

And then notice this, he's given the charge of keeping the garden. We often take, in our Christian life, we kind of pick up Christianese, we pick up certain language, theological concepts. Some of them are not always biblical.

Hopefully, they're biblical if you're repeating them to other people. But sometimes, we repeat phrases, and we kind of know it's true, but we don't really know why it's true. So, if someone were to say, hey, could you just give me a passage to back up what you said? It's like, oh man, it's gonna be a little challenging.

So, sometimes we say things like, the man has the role as the protector, and the role as the provider. And then you say, oh great, so where does the Bible teach that? And they're like, oh man, I don't know. But I'm pretty sure it does.

Well, right here, God tells Adam to be the keeper of the garden. He gives Adam the role to protect that garden. I understand that seems like a pretty easy job, since there's no sin, no curse at that time.

But he's given the responsibility to tend the garden. It's his job. Eve's gonna come later as a helper to help Adam do his job.

But they're not co-charged with keeping the garden. Adam receives this role as the one who has the charge of tending the garden. So we see here that he has the role and the responsibility here as the man to care for the garden.

And then God commands him, saying, you may surely eat, verse 15, of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and of evil, you shall not eat. For in the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die. That's what it says.

Adam, verse 16, have at it. I mean, it's a command. You may surely eat of every tree of the garden.

So if it's meant for eating, you can eat of it. And the first part of the command here that God is giving to man, and I do not want you to miss this. The first part of the command is liberality.

It's generosity. It's not merely that God is gonna prohibit, but he's actually commanding a positive command here. As parents, like when we're teaching a parenting class here, I will say, parents, you know it's just a good rule of thumb.

Say yes to your kids whenever possible, okay? That's one of the things that we'll talk about as parents in parenting classes. But for clarity, that could be completely misunderstood and misapplied. What we're not saying is that we advocate spoiling children or indulging children.

In fact, we encourage parents, you need to teach your kids self-denial. Self-denial is not natural to the human heart. And it is not good for a child to go through childhood not experiencing disappointments and the fact that there's things that they want that they can't have.

So no is actually a very good word for children to learn. Parents would say, spare the rod, spoil the child. You do not want to leave a child to his own devices.

And so when we say yes, say yes whenever possible, what we're trying to address is say yes if you don't have a good reason to say no. That makes sense? Or in another way, say no as often as it benefits your children. And so as a parent, you have to say no a lot.

No, no running with sharp objects. No, no running with a sucker in your mouth. No, no rollerblading without a helmet.

No, no putting screaming hot food into your mouth. No, no speaking disrespectfully to authority or giving full vent to your anger. No, no, no, no, no.

We say no a lot and it's good. But we're attempting to correct in that statement, say yes whenever possible, is a stingy or miserly spirit that sometimes we're prone to as a parent that says, I feel like saying no because saying yes is going to cost not your benefit, but me. See, if it's in the best interest of the other party to say yes, whether it's personally costly or inconvenient, we want to say yes.

That's called a benevolent spirit, a generous heart. My dear brothers and sisters, beloved, that is the heart of God toward his children. Look at the language.

You may surely eat of every tree of the garden. Your Bible might say freely eat. What it is is the translators are trying to convey here a construction that doesn't come over real well into English, but the idea is to eat eatingly.

I mean, it means I really, really mean it, have at it. I'm commanding you. You're to really do it, you're to freely do it, you're to surely do it.

I'm giving you food here in the garden. I want you to go satisfy your appetites and go enjoy all of the beautiful and nutritious food that I provided for you. This is a genuine and sincere offer and a command.

Whatever looks good, eat it. One of my favorite childhood memories was the All-You-Can-Eat Buffet. And growing up in a big family with eight kids, we didn't do the All-You-Can-Eat Buffet very often, but I do remember still the King's Table on Lancaster Avenue in Salem.

That was the favorite spot of choice. And occasionally on Sunday afternoons, we would go to

the King's Table. And, you know, we'd be kind of all dressed up and we'd go there, and the joy of the buffet was whatever you were inclined to have, you could have.

So if you wanted chocolate pudding and vanilla pudding and tapioca pudding, you could. I mean, I always regretted the tapioca pudding, but the point was that instead of choosing between what meat you were gonna have, you could have the beef and the ham and the turkey. And for one meal, the normal constraints of life were gone.

Constraints of grocery shopping and meal prep and all of the things that prevent us. All the things that make that impractical in normal life. And here is God providing for Adam and Eve.

And it is like every day, All-You-Can-Eat Buffet. Every tree, have at it, it's for you. And I want you to understand that when God furnished Adam with all that he needed, he was free of charge.

I mean, you understand the generosity of God here? Adam is not an indentured servant, where he owes a debt by which he has to kind of work it off over time. In terms of obligations, there's only one that the Lord places on Adam. Verse 17, but, get every tree, it really, really wants you to eat of it, but, verse 17.

Of the tree, of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not, that's it, only one prohibition. It's the language of command, very clearly, it's the same language that appears in the 10 Commandments. You shall not, you shall not eat of it.

You shall not, Adam, eat of this one tree, that's it. That tree, then, is designed, the Lord is saying, essentially, to Adam, by me, as a test for you. It's gonna test your faith, it's gonna test your commitment to me, it's gonna test whether or not you really love me, it's gonna test whether or not you believe that I'm furnishing you abundantly, and get this, or whether or not I'm actually withholding something good from you.

And you understand the marvel of this? That the Lord said, there's one tree you can't eat of, and yet, there's nothing good that the Lord is withholding from Adam. That was a good no, that no is for his benefit. He says, the reason why, for, in your text, it says, because, he's grounding the instruction.

Adam, I'm telling you, you shall not eat of this one tree, and here's why, because when you do, in that day that you eat of it, you shall surely die. Of course, eating of that tree would bring about death. The full fruition of physical death was not immediate, but the effects of it began immediately.

I don't know what happened physically in Adam and Eve that they would have experienced if suddenly, it was like, man, I have a headache, and there's stress in my neck, and I feel like I'm gonna puke, because we just sinned, and there was suddenly the experience in the body of the very first taste of a body that would one day die. Certainly, the spiritual death effects would have happened immediately. The sudden rush of awareness that innocence is gone, corruption is entered, shame and guilt, suddenly now, tasting of all of that, and having evil in your heart

for the first time.

There's one forbidden fruit, that's it, and a garden of yeses. I'm just thinking about a few lessons that we draw from here, as we're looking at this initial instruction that God gives to Adam, his charge. I mean, first of all, do you view the commands of God as unnecessarily restrictive? I just think we're prone to do that.

We're prone to think God is withholding something good from me in his instructions. He's preventing me from maximum enjoyment. He's getting in the way of pleasure and what would be good for me.

Or do you view what God forbids and requires as your highest good? I said, no, he knows what's best. So you just think for a minute in an area that you might be struggling spiritually to believe the truth that God has revealed, particularly about God's instruction to you, and just be reminded here of the goodness of God in his instructions. I mean, it brought up the question to me as I was thinking through this this week, is the law of God gracious? We talk about the distinction between the law and the gospel, it's appropriate, but is the law of God itself gracious? I would say I believe the answer is yes, because the law originates from a generous, good, wise, and kind lawgiver, a heavenly father who hears instructing Adam for his own benefit.

The other thing that's interesting is to realize that you and I come to this, and it's so painful because we know where the story goes. And yet for Adam, he doesn't have any of that. Do you notice that? The Lord doesn't say, Adam, let me tell you what else is gonna happen when you eat of that tree.

You're gonna have a couple kids, and one of them's gonna kill the other one. Let me tell you about the difficulties that you're gonna have trying to work now to provide for yourself. Let me tell you about all the destruction that's gonna be reaped in your marriage.

I'm talking about how difficult it's gonna be for your wife to give birth to children and to raise children. Let me tell you about the entire human race and peel back by Genesis 6, how much evil will have abounded on the earth. The Lord doesn't say any of that.

He simply tells Adam, don't do it. Don't do it. If you do it, you're gonna die.

Trust me. And so I was thinking about how often in our obedience, we kind of wanna test by personal experience the consequences. Reminds me of that contemporary Christian music song from the 90s, some people gotta learn the hard way.

I guess I'm the kind of guy that has to find out for myself. I mean, Adam would have preserved himself so much pain and suffering to simply take the Lord at his word. Well, this is an encouragement to me of the goodness of God and to be reminded that in the Lord's instructions, even in his instructions and what he commands and in what he forbids, he's always good to his creatures.

Tells Adam, I want you to eat to command freely of every tree except for one. Now the challenge is, do I believe God's integrity in what he's saying to me? Do I think maybe deep down inside, he's withholding something good from me that would be for my benefit? My friends, that is the test right there. That is the test of obedience that you and I face day in and day out, the normal battle and sanctification of mind renewal, normal issues of wrestling with temptation.

That's the core of the issue, it has not changed. Will you pray with me? Lord in heaven, I thank you so much for this glorious scene. I thank you that you give us such rich instructions to shepherd our hearts, Lord, and to expose the folly of doubting your instructions and doubting that your way is best.

And so we just confess and affirm even corporately, Lord, that your word is good and it is a blessing and we wanna submit to it. We pray that you would help us to do that, Lord. And Father, I thank you so much for the Lord Jesus Christ who came to redeem us, Lord, and to bring us back to that environment that our first parents lost.

We love you so much and we thank you for these things. We pray them in Christ's name, amen.