

01-02-05b-Caring for the Garden-Part 2

creation, Incarnation, humanity, stewardship, leadership, work, ministry
Gen 2:15 (HCSB)

God made us in His image *on purpose* for us to live *with purpose*.

INTRODUCTION:

–**Gen 2:15 (HCSB)**, *The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it.* I said in my 1st message that **who we are is inseparable from what we do.** We bear our Creator’s “likeness” to reflect and represent Him by our own creative work. HOM.idea.
–I’m using 5 questions to explore this purpose. Here’s the 1st one...

- I. “Why did God create us as body-spirit beings in the first place?”**
- A. This cosmos is our home! *God made us from stardust*, calling the world of matter “good” and our material bodies “very good.”
 - B. Heaven is also home—when God “breathed” *spiritual life* into the *1st Adam*, He was creating a race of body-spirit creatures with both animal and angelic natures: we’re a physical and spiritual combo.
 - C. God made us in His image for a special purpose: *to represent Him*.
 1. Our job was twofold: 1) to populate creation with His “image” and “likeness,” and 2) to “have dominion” or to “rule over” creation.
 2. We began with just “the garden”, but the career of Christ as the 2nd Adam shows that this human government was intended to be both *cosmic* and *celestial* (over “a new heaven and a new earth”).

TRANS: As *participants* in both worlds, we’re meant to be *mediators* between them. As God’s *image-bearers*, we’re meant to “rule over” those worlds. At the outset, Adam failed in these roles. But God’s Son, *the 2nd Adam*, *redeemed* us and *reestablished* us as God’s *representatives*, to “work” and “watch over” His creation. ***But let’s explore this further....***

II. “How does the Incarnation define our calling in a fallen world?”

- A. Sin disrupted creation, but we are still body-spirit embodiments of *God’s image*. (Our *original incarnation* was the basis of *Christ’s Incarnation*, and *His Incarnation* restored the impact of ours.)
 1. Sin damaged, but didn’t eliminate our *incarnational* abilities: mind still worked with matter [**Gen 4:19-22** lists *tent-building*, skill with musical *instruments*, *animal husbandry*, mining and *metallurgy*, *tool-*

making]. (*Civilization's advancement and cultural development are a direct result of humanity's incarnational nature.*)

2. When God became one of us, He chose a *carpenter's family* and worked most of His life with mind and muscle in construction. (Jesus knew His business, when He said, "I will **build** my Church...")
- B. As the 2nd Adam, God's Son became the Prophet, Priest and King of a *new human race*. (He is both Savior and Example, not just fixing our failure as sinners, but calling us to follow Him in these restored prophetic, priestly and kingly roles.)
1. On earth, Jesus *spoke prophetically* for God. (Now it's our job.)
 2. His *priestly work* on the Cross calls to us: "Take up **your** cross!"
 3. And as King with "all authority in heaven and earth," He bids us, "Go!"

TRANS: Our destiny isn't to "*get past the pearly gates*" but to *serve in the throne room*. God's salvation has a remedial purpose: to *repair His lost human project*. We see no *church services* or *prayer meetings* in Gen 1-2. Our work was tending and guarding His work, naming and ruling over life forms, procreating more of ourselves for the gigantic job of governing the universe. Getting saved and growing spiritually aren't ends in themselves but the conditions necessary for getting us back on the job in our *Creator's workforce*. **So, now....**

III. "What material and spiritual tasks make up Christian ecology?"

- A. Gen 2:15 helps answer this— *The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it.*
1. Satan still cultivates the body-spirit schizophrenia he started in the garden by alienating us with shame about how God designed us (Remember God's question: "**Who** told you that you were naked?")
 - a. Through this alienation between body and spirit, Satan leads some people into materialism: "*Matter is all that matters.*" ("*Exploit it while you can! Who dies with the most toys wins!*")
 - b. Or he leads us into Gnosticism: "*Spirit is all there is.*" ("*To be holy, you must hate the flesh and despise all things physical.*")
 2. But "the Maker of heaven and earth" has **one will** for both realms: "Thy will be done on **earth** as it is in **heaven**." (Our *fleshly embodiment* is strategic for God's plan to manage creation! In our *body-spirit* natures, we're to be His *servant-leaders*, governing "**all things**."
- B. I addressed our call to tend and guard in a poem [DIVINE ECOLOGY

The creation longs for freedom
From a bondage not her own,
For the creatures in God's image
Brought the curse that makes her groan.
We, the race meant to attend her
And to govern her with care,
Have abused and plundered nature,
Adding grief to her despair.

But the LORD so loved the cosmos,
With His handiwork arrayed,
That He entered her Himself
To bear the image He had made,

Both to lead His image-bearers
Back to safety, by rebirth,
And to purchase restoration
For the heavens and the earth.

We were meant to serve in Eden,
Paradise beyond compare.
We were fashioned from her soil,
Our unfinished job is there.

The description of our duties
Was not changed the day we fell.
While awaiting her renewal,
We must work with her as well.]

- C. Before exploring the 1st word in Gen 2:15 that describes our job of *caring for the garden*, I want to look at the 2nd one: "to watch over."
1. [shāmar means to *keep safe, take care of, keep your eyes on, watch diligently, guard, protect, preserve, defend*.] It implies some threat in "the garden."
 - a. *Physically* (in terms of modern ecology), this *danger* might be a misuse rather than a preservation of the natural environment.
 - b. But *spiritually*, the context shows that an evil being was loose in creation and that a spiritually dangerous tree was in the garden. Creation needed protection from both.
 2. What does this "guardianship" terminology imply for us today?
 - a. In our physical work on earth, we're to be *preservers*, **not wasters**, *careful observers*, **not** unconcerned *passers-by*; *protectors* of all God brings under our care, **not slackers**.
 - b. Spiritually, we must protect against spiritual evil where God "*has placed*" us, and keep what's forbidden safe from *misuse*.

TRANS: God made us in His image on purpose for us to live with purpose. As *body-spirit* beings, we *guard* in two realms. On an earthly level, we're to be better *ecologists* than those who don't believe in the Creator. In heavenly terms, we should be skillful *spiritual warriors*. As *God's image-bearers*, we represent Him *bodily* through our ecological watch-care over creation, and *spiritually* by using His authority over evil worldly forces. That's what this 2nd term in *caring for the garden* is about. We'll look at the 1st term in the next sermon.