**Family Service Talk 9th June 2024**

**Genesis 2:4-10**

 ***4This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, when the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.***

***5Now no shrub had yet appeared on the earth[***[***a***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%202&version=NIV#fen-NIV-36a)***] and no plant had yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground, 6but streams[***[***b***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%202&version=NIV#fen-NIV-37b)***] came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground. 7Then the Lord God formed a man[***[***c***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%202&version=NIV#fen-NIV-38c)***] from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.***

***8Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. 9The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.***

***10A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters.***

I hope you all enjoyed the cup of water that you were given as you came into church this morning. I hope there were not too many spillages!! Maybe it was quite a while since your early morning cup of tea and you were quite thirsty and therefore thankful for something to quench your thirst. Certainly, for some little people it is a long time since breakfast and you are ready for a drink and snack (the biscuit will come later!!)

Water is an amazing substance quite apart from being very refreshing and pleasant when you are thirsty. What else do we know about water ….? *(Pour water into bowl encourage children to help!)*

* It splashes, spills, flows - and goes everywhere when spilled!
* It changes things when it is added – it moistens, dilutes
* It helps growth of plants
* It is vital for all living things – including humans!
* It is used for washing, cleaning, showering
* Industry needs it – e.g. cooling towers
* It can be water, steam or ice

It is a pretty amazing (and vital) substance which God provided freely as he created the earth. And, of course even today, God continues to bless the earth with rain. Sometimes more than we think is necessary and sometimes less but we give thanks to God for it …. and all that it enables us to do.

So having reminded ourselves what an amazing and essential substance water is, let’s have a look at another type of water….

In the Family Services over the next few months, we are going to be hearing about water in the Bible. The stories will often be set near a well or maybe on the sea or near a river. But all the stories will then point to a different type of water which Jesus spoke of when he was on earth – the water of life. This water of life is what Jesus offers us when we believe and trust in him. We can’t see it or touch it but our story from Genesis this morning tells us why we so desperately need it.

In the Bible water is often used as a picture of God’s blessing which is poured over us, refreshing us spiritually … just like a bucket of cold water (or even a hose!) splashed over you on a hot day would refresh us physically! In the book written by Jeremiah (2:13), God calls himself the spring of living water – what a lovely picture! Ezekiel describes water flowing out from the temple. It becomes a river where there are many fish and along the banks of the river there are numerous fruit trees all year-round producing food and leaves that heal. Another wonderful picture of God blessing his people with all that they need.

In the New Testament the water of life is spoken of in Revelation (22:17) as a free gift, a blessing from God that leads to eternal life with Him. It is a water that will completely satisfy our thirst for something good and fulfilling and wonderful – we will never be thirsty again if we accept God’s offer of the water of life.

But let us just go back to the passage from Genesis that Nancy read to us because that helps us to understand what the water of life is, why we need it and how we can get it!

In chapter 1 of Genesis, we all know the description of God Speaking and the world being created …. “Let there be light,” and there was light! (1:3). And we know that this went on for 6 days with plants, birds, sun, moon etc being created in the same way until God declared himself happy with all that he had created. “God saw all that he had made and it was very good.” (1:31)

In chapter 2 of Genesis, one or two details of how creation happened are added. What is important to note is that in the process of creating the earth, God provided all that was needed for the man, who was the pinnacle of creation, to survive well and indeed be blessed.

Although initially there were neither plants nor shrubs in the fields and no rain from the sky, there was water coming up from the earth and this watered the land. And it was in this environment that God created man out of the dust of the ground – no special ingredients and initially lifeless. God then breathed the breath of life into his nostrils and the man became the first living being! God then took the man to the garden he had created ready for him to live in. It was full of trees with food to eat on them and a river watering the garden and indeed flowing out of the garden into 4 rivers. Everything was provided that the man would need in order to live in the garden and work the land.

As we read on in chapter 2, we see that God decided that it was not good for the man to be alone and so he made woman from one of the man’s ribs and she became the man’s companion and helper.

God had provided all that was needed and, even better, he was with them in the garden! The garden of Eden was definitely a great place to be! Indeed, the word Eden means ‘delight.’ **BUT …** as we know, things then went very wrong …

God had given Adam and Eve the freedom of the garden of Eden but, as all good parents do, he had also provided a boundary for their own good. They were free to enjoy all the blessing in the garden but just could not eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God knew that having that knowledge would make them proud and want to be in control. He knew that having sinful, proud humans in control would not in any way bring the blessing that only the loving, sin-free God was capable of pouring out. Sadly, our lives today reflect how true that was and still is.

And … as we read in chapter 3 of Genesis, Adam and Eve (the man and woman God created), made the wrong choice and ate from the forbidden tree. From that moment, the perfection of life in the garden with God was taken away from Adam and Eve and their lives became so much harder. God continued to maintain his creation (and still does today) but men and women continued to make wrong choices (and still do today). The perfect balance of God’s creation had gone with tragic results all over the world. Sin had crept in.

Worst of all, when Adam and Eve were told to leave the garden of Eden, they left behind their opportunity to live eternally in God’s presence …. What a sad moment. **BUT …** God loves the people he created and, further on in chapter 3, we can see that his plan to restore that relationship was already in place. (3:15)

Over and over in the Old Testament, the people were given the opportunity to repent of their sinful ways and turn back in obedience to God. He gave them rules to live by so they would know when they were making wrong decisions. But, as God knew, the people couldn’t get it right on their own. They needed rescuing!

And throughout the Old Testament years, God spoke through his prophets about the one whom he would send to rescue his people – the Messiah … who would come to earth and bring the people back to God. But when Jesus, the Messiah promised by God, was born and started to speak of the need for people to repent and turn back to God, the people mocked and sneered and questioned even when Jesus clearly told them that **He** **was** the way back to God (John 14:6) …. “The way, the truth and the life.” He even said he could give them the water of life but they didn’t understand.

Finally, Jesus, who had done nothing wrong, was killed on a cross and it seemed that all was lost. The rescuer was dead and the way back to the Father was closed for ever to sinful humans. But God is merciful and loving … and in raising Jesus from the dead, he opened the door to all who repented and believed and trusted in Jesus …. Jesus would give them the water of life they needed to live eternally in God’s presence.

And for us today …. all who believe and trust in Jesus, will know the blessing of the living water giving eternal life with God and all the blessings that brings. The joy and blessing of the garden of Eden will be restored, sin will be no more (paid for by Christ’s death on the cross).

Can we, today, let go of the desire to be in control and equal with God that can consume us and that resulted in Adam and Eve making a very wrong choice? Can we, today, simply trust that God will provide all that we need and will be with us in all that we do? Can we let ourselves bathe in the water of life – our eternal relationship with God restored?

Father God, I pray that, for each one of us, the answer to those questions is ‘yes’. May we know ourselves repentant, forgiven, loved and blessed by you today. Amen