

4236

TORONTO EASTER FRATERNAL GATHERING - 1993

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Study #2

The Two Trees in the Midst of the Garden

How would we feel if all of us here, were completely naked? Would we be unashamed? Adam and Eve were and they were standing in the presence of the angels of God. Would we feel ashamed, brethren and sisters, if we were standing in the presence of the angels of God, completely destitute of clothing? Well, they didn't. And it tells us something about them. If we were to replace all the people in this room with so many boys and girls of two years of age completely naked. Would they be ashamed? The answer is very different. It's telling us something about Adam and Eve. It's telling us, brethren and sisters, that there was a very special condition of mind which prevented the outworking that came as a result of their disobedience.

They were told, 'Do not eat of a certain tree'. God doesn't seem to have told them why and sometimes we don't tell our children why, not at a particular stage anyway. We've got an intention to tell them later because there are certain things we don't tell little children. They can't understand. And Adam and Eve, brethren and sisters, were like that, and the facts that the scripture testifies about them, tells us that we ought to think a little bit. We ought to think what God is saying when He says, 'that the man and the woman were naked and they were not ashamed'.

Now in our first class, we looked at the man, we thereby looked at the woman as well. And yet in another sense, we didn't look at the woman. We know brethren and sisters and young people and friends, that when God made the woman, He made the most beautiful thing that has ever been made. He made the most beautiful thing that has ever been made. He saved His last creative act for that. She was made, we are told, in the New Testament, for the man. The man was not made for her. She was made for the man. She was made out of the man. The man was not made out of her. And that tells us that she has always been made to be a creature of dependence. And we'd like now to turn over to 1 Timothy chapter 2 because the apostle Paul, if we are careful in what we read about what he says, tells us a very beautiful secret in 1 Timothy 2:9, he says, 'In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.' Suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence'. Now brethren and sisters, we stop there for a moment and we try to gravel with what Paul is saying.

If the man and the woman are equal, in their ability to reflect the honour and glory of God, and they are, and if the one is just as eligible for the gifts of God as the other, and they are, why should Paul say that? Well, he says that brethren and sisters, on the basis of the reason given in the next verse. 'For Adam was first formed, then Eve'. That's the reason he gives for saying, 'I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man'. He doesn't say anything about Eve sinning. He doesn't say anything about the judgment that came on Eve as a result of her sinning. He's made one appeal, and the appeal is, that which was from the beginning. No other reason has he given. So therefore, this is what we understand by what God is telling us through the apostle Paul. And there is a very interesting word, the Greek word for 'usurp authority', it actually means in our English language 'to be an auto worker', 'to work independently'. That's what it means. And Paul says that's not correct. When a woman works independently that's not correct, because God said it from the beginning. He's basing his teaching on what God did on the sixth day. Adam was first formed then Eve. The man and the woman are equal in their potential to manifest their Maker. They are entirely at one, as regards their ability to receive the gifts of God, but they are different. And God said they were different. And because they are different, God gave to them different roles. And when a woman manifests her role, there is nothing sisters, more glorifying to God. And whether you may think, because of the conditioning of our minds by the media of this age, that it is dreariness and drudgery and endless round of monotonous toil, God says, that is the greatest form of glory you can give.

And when a man fulfills his role, brethren, there is no higher ideal unto which we could attain. And God says through the apostle Paul, 'that is what has been ever since God put man and woman on the earth'. And we need, brethren and sisters, to take stock of ourselves in a world, that wants to treat the roles as optional. That wants to turn the roles upside down. They are inverting the order that God established and we, likewise, need to be very careful that the man and the woman know exactly as God defined it from the beginning, what we ought to be about.

That's what Paul says, and he says it for the reason that, 'God did it in the beginning'. There are no other questions to enter into it. It's as simple as that, brethren and sisters and young people. We need to read our bibles carefully. Don't stop in the middle of a verse. Don't stop in the middle of a thread. We're going to come back to this verse later on, because the apostle Paul enlightens us much, about what went on in the garden in the subsequent verse, to that which we have already read in verse 13.

But it is our subject for this present session, to look at the two trees that God placed in the midst of the garden. And we turn therefore, to Genesis chapter 2, and we are now going to embark on an examination of the circumstances into which God placed these two people that He had made. In verse 9 of chapter 2 we read, 'Out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the (eye), and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil'. That's the tree to which God appended a law. And He said, 'I do not want you two people to eat of that tree'. But it is a tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If God's wise, if God's

right, if He really is intent on making Himself responsible for the affect of the laws which He pronounced, why is He going to forbid something which He Himself says, is good? Did He really mean that? Well, brethren and sisters and young people, the answer to that question is begun to be seen in the affects that it had. Eve, unwisely, listened to the serpent and she took of the forbidden fruit. And what were the results? They began to understand, because immediately, as if scales had fallen from their eyes, they saw that they were naked. And they became ashamed, and they became afraid, and they were subsequently expelled from the garden. Was that good that they should become afraid? and that they should become ashamed? and that they should know they were naked? and that they should be placed outside the fellowship of the angelic beings? Was that good for them? Decidedly, brethren and sisters, to ask the question is to answer it. IT WASN'T AT ALL GOOD. Did God mean what He said when He said, 'Do not eat of that tree?' He obviously meant, brethren and sisters, exactly what He said. Do you think that God was unaware of the affects of disobedience? Did He want those people to obey or to disobey? Was it just words when He said, 'Do not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil'? Then why would He say, 'do not eat of a tree which is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? It is altogether because, brethren and sisters, that the good and the evil which God is talking about, are not separate and opposed ideas. They're one idea. And the one idea is this, that if we turn over to the first of John chapter 5, we'll read certain words, which have a very great bearing on our considerations at the moment.

1 John chapter 5 and verse 2, let's start at verse 1, 'Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him, loveth him also that begot him, even as he is begotten of him'. Now verse 2, 'By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments'. John is telling us there is a practical test that we can place upon ourselves. Do we keep the commandments? Does God really want us to keep His commandments? Did God really want Adam and Eve to keep His commandments? The answer must be an unqualified 'YES'. He wanted them to keep His commandments. And the only two kinds of love that we can be participants in, brethren and sisters and young people, is either 1 John 2:15, 'loving the things of the world' or 'loving the things of God'. Did Adam and Eve love the things of the world or the things of God? What caused them to break the law? And we still haven't answered why God would ever forbid something which He Himself describes as 'the tree of the knowledge of good and evil'?

Brethren and sisters, if we are outside of these walls and we asked the people out there in mass, are they enjoying life? They say 'yes'. They say, 'we are thoroughly enjoying ourselves'. They live by a principle which is 'if it's good for your sensations, do it'. If it's good for your sensations, do it. They live by a principle, brethren and sisters, which brings what in its train? Everything we see out there, through the eye of faith, is what that kind of good brings in its train. And God is not saying, 'I don't want you to eat of a tree that is the knowledge of good over there and evil over there'. He says there is a kind of good that is good to the flesh, that only brings evil in its results. Don't eat of that. And brethren and sisters, we talk about laws, and we say that laws are made to be broken, is that what God thinks about His laws? There is only one thing that God wants

to be done with His laws and it is this, He wants them to be fulfilled.

And there was another man came along, who was called Jesus Christ. A special man, an unique man, and He fell under the same law. That law has never been repealed brethren and sisters. That law is still in operation today. THOU SHALT NOT EAT OF THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL. Still in operation today. It has never been taken away and its been fulfilled in one man. Jesus Christ. Because, never in all of his life did He participate in the kind of knowledge that only brings evil as its result.

We're under that law today. We're in the midst of a community of people who is eating of nothing else than that tree. And we are desperately, brethren and sisters, trying to feed ourselves rich on the things of God that will prevent us eating it too. And you see on Monday morning when you go to work, how good the results of that kind of indulgences are. That's the evil that comes as a result of eating something which God has forbidden. And God wanted them desperately to stay away from the tree, as a matter of fact, brethren and sisters, when we come into Genesis chapter 3, we find that the law has even been extended from what God originally gave unto Adam. He was told, 'Don't eat of the tree', but , in verse 3, the woman said to the serpent who had deceived her at this stage, she said, 'But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden God hath said,'ye shall not eat of it neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die'. Just refraining from eating, said the woman to the serpent, is not enough. Don't touch it. And if that was not what the Elohim actually said to the man and woman, she's told a lie. And we can't have her, brethren and sisters, telling a lie at that stage, because the thing that was forbidden was 'don't eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil'. And God meant it. He meant exactly what He said. He said exactly what He meant, and He wanted them to stay away from the tree.

And that tree can be rightfully called 'the tree of death'. The tree of death because that was the result of their eating. We are going to come to that in much greater detail in some of our future classes together, but that very briefly is what the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is all about. DON'T TOUCH IT, BRETHREN AND SISTERS. Don't eat of its taste. YES, it is very sweet young people to the taste and the end thereof is that you will only serve a monster. That's all you will serve. You may gratify some of your sensations by the power of your intellectual choice now, but you'll serve a monster. And he'll pay you exactly what you earned. He'll pay you death forever in the ground. Don't eat of that tree, young people. It's very alluring. It's pleasant to the eyes, that's what God said, but don't touch it. And God meant it and He wanted for His children not to go in that way. Are we going to trust a God like that, brethren and sisters? How could we not trust a God like that? And that's the issue of our lives today. Are we going to believe Him or are we going to try and say, 'Well, you know, it really doesn't matter whether he was eating of it or wasn't eating of it? It really is an optional extra. NO, brethren and sisters, these pair were being very specially and carefully nurtured. Nurtured by a Father, who's never made a law that's unwise. And He wanted them to follow it out in the implicit trust that little children in their nudity show to their parents. And you can see that the Father is gradually leading these people along a

path. He's getting them to mature, He's getting them to understand, He's causing their faith in Him to grow. He's desiring a development of a character that will be pleasing to Him, that He will be able to display as His own work, because He has extended Himself in no greater way, than to get us to believe. He wants us to believe and the only way that we can believe Him, brethren and sisters, is by having an absolute confidence in that whatever this Word of God says, it means. And you know, sometimes when we come to the pages of this Word, brethren and sisters, we think we know exactly what it's going to say. And we read it with goggles on, blindfolds, and we miss what it means, because we haven't opened our ears to what God wants to say. We've got to let Him say what He wants to say. We've got to surrender completely to what He wants to say, and sometimes, in the babble of our own voices, and in our own minds and imaginations, we don't let Him in edgewise to say what He wants to say. He hasn't got room to talk. And that's a sad thing, but it's very often true.

And so we want to have a look at that other tree, that other tree which is likewise mentioned in verse 9, the tree of life. And look at what the scriptures say about this tree. Verse 9, 'And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil'. Where are those trees? They're standing side by side. They are both described as being in the middle of the garden. Two trees. Right in the middle of the garden. One of which Adam and Eve are told, 'don't touch it on pain of death' and the other one, brethren and sisters, that is never once spoken about to Adam and Eve. NEVER ONCE. It was not a subject of angelic instruction to them. You search the record. You'll never find where that tree was pointed out to Adam and Eve or spoken about to them.

Now, what's the tree of life all about? Well, I suppose we can already guess, can't we? If that one is the tree of death, this one's a tree of life. And we must turn over to the Revelation to try and find out what this tree of life is all about. This was no law about it back in Eden. But in Revelation chapter 2 and verse 7, the record says, 'He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the ecclesias; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.' Now we all know, brethren and sisters, that is not talking about a literal tree. They were literal trees in the garden. The tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but here is not a literal tree. But, what we are concentrating on now is that God is telling us, what is the quality of the tree and under what conditions, participation can be made. Under what conditions a person is able to participate in the eating of that tree. And He says, 'to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God'. To him that overcometh. Now, brethren and sisters, just let's think about our own period of probation. In the normal course of events, we know roughly how long that is going to be. Do you think that you would continue in a life of probation if you knew that it was going to go on and on and on and on and on and on? Would you trust a person who wanted to try you for all that period of time and never let you know there was going to be an end to it?

It would be distinctly unfair. So, therefore, taking that idea back into Genesis, we know

this, but we don't know how long, God had determined a period of time, under which He would place those two people, so that they could have their potential as glorifiers of Him developed to maturity, with the obstacle in their way, 'don't eat of the tree', and when they had come to the end of that period, as defined, but not revealed, He would say, 'You've done a good job. I want to reward that. You've overcome the test'. He does no different to us for a job well done. There'll be a reward. And what's the reward for overcomers? It's to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God. And when we come back into Genesis chapter 3, we find what the angels say about this tree.

Genesis 3 and at verse 22. And here is the situation where after Adam and Eve had sinned and they have been brought to the bar of judgment, and the three parties involved in that transgression, the serpent, the woman and the man, have all had their sentences pronounced upon them, Adam finally having been told in verse 19 that in the sweat of his face, he would eat bread until he returned unto the ground, for out of it was he taken, for dust he was and unto dust he should return'. And then in verse 22 it says, 'The Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us'. He now knows something that God didn't ever want him to know. He knows, his sensation has tasted of the good which brings evil in its train. He's tasted of that, he's in a state of nakedness and fearfulness and shamefacedness. If he eats of the tree of life, he'll be forever in that state, so the angels said in their wisdom, 'we must act swiftly, we must act decisively, we must expel him from the garden, we cannot afford such a thing to happen, to have a man who is ever living in a state of fear and of shamefacedness before His God. We will not allow that to proceed. So they drove him out of the garden so he couldn't eat of that tree. And why couldn't he eat of that tree? Well, it's because he wasn't an overcomer. The woman and the man had both succumbed to the philosophy of the serpent.

A sad end, brethren and sisters, but that's what happened. And did that mean that God would now admit defeat? Did that mean that now He would only have one alternative and that's to press button 'A' and push them out of existence? NO! That's where the wisdom of God begins to be seen, because what we are looking at now, brethren and sisters, is the complete upturning of what God wanted. What He wanted has been completely inverted. He wanted them to obey. He made them in a fashion so that they could consistently receive the instruction of the Elohim from infantile stance before Him, up to adulthood. But unfortunately, that's been preempted. That's been preempted, and God now witnesses the things that He wanted to see in operation, completed turned around. And it's a standing testimony to the wisdom of our God, brethren and sisters, that God was subsequently able to use those very circumstances as a springboard, and as an impetus to get us, to hope for something that is better than we have.

Can you imagine, brethren and sisters, trying to tell Adam and Eve to hope for something better than what they had in Eden? Can you imagine? Could you think of something better than Adam and Eve had in the garden? Free and unfettered conversation with the Elohim of God, in the most beautiful place that you could ever

imagine in your wildest dreams? Could you ever imagine something better than that? And if God is going to make an invitation, that involves a hope of something better to come, then, when we stand back and take the divine view of the foreknowledge of God, please don't get me wrong, something had to go wrong. God didn't make it go wrong. He didn't want it to go wrong. But, when it went wrong, He said, 'I can manage this, and I can manage it, both to My advantage and to the people of the world's advantage.

And He's done that. He's given to us a hope of something better. And a whole system of things came into operation when Adam and Eve sinned. And a whole system of things, brethren and sisters, 'the ways of the lust of the flesh, the eyes, and the pride of life, are the background upon which we learn, to love what's right and to hate what's wrong. And God had that in the garden. We haven't yet talked about the serpent, we'll talk about him tonight, God willing.

Do you know, brethren and sisters, that the serpent was absolutely essential for God to work out His purpose. And it's utterly profound that God wanted them to hear that word of the serpent, but He wanted them to reject it out of hand, because He said, 'Do not partake of the tree of the knowledge that seems good but only brings evil in its train.' 'BE AN OVERCOMER', because if we're an overcomer, brethren and sisters, we shall eat of the tree of life, which has been reserved for those who are overcomers. And it is planted in the midst of the paradise of God.