

BASIC HUMAN NEEDS

Genesis 2:4–25

Dr. George O. Wood

Genesis 2:4–7 (NIV)

“This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created. When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens—and no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth and no plant of the field had yet sprung up, for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no man to work the ground, but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground—the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.”

I. Intellect versus experience

If you follow along in the accounts of creation in Genesis 1 and 2, you’ll recognize that there is a doubling back in sequence. In the sixth created day recorded in Genesis 1, we see the creation of man. But now in Genesis 2, we are reintroduced to the subject of creation. This time the perspective is more closely knit to the formation of man and, finally, woman.

Some look at this and see a conflict in terms of sequence between Genesis 1 and Genesis 2. For example, in Genesis 1 we have the creation of the heavens and the earth in six created days.

Particularly in regard to living organisms we find this sequence: plants, animals, and man. When we come to Genesis 2, however, you find a different sequence—the creation of man and *then* the creation of plants. Finally, in Genesis 2:19, you see the creation of animals: “The LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field” (NIV). Some look at these two sequences and assume the Bible has contradictions in it. People outside of faith say, “Here’s a glaring contradiction.” Those who have adopted a more liberal view toward the Bible say these are simply two different authors and their accounts aren’t meant to jive.

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However, as you really begin to take Scripture at its word, it would be important to note the reason why this passage provides these two separate accounts. There is a beautiful relationship between them. Genesis 1 is geared more toward a rational understanding of how the heavens and the earth came into existence. We have to appeal to our reason. In fact, in the six created days described in Genesis 1, God is concerned with the making of life in three dimensions. The dimension of the universe is seen in the first day as the creation of light. The dimension of the waters and the air on the second day is described as the firmament. The waters are separated from the air. The third day involves the third dimension, the creation of the land mass itself on earth.

The creative days really begin to flow into one another. The first three days provide a sort of form into which God is going to place the fullness of what happens on days four, five, and six. The expanse of the universe is created in day one; in day four we're told that God fills the expanse with the sun, the moon, and the stars. The creation of water and air occurs on the second day; on the fifth day—the matching day—God fills the water and the air with fish and birds. On the third day was the creation of the land mass; on the sixth day God then put something on the land mass. He filled the land mass with animals and man.

It's a perfectly sequential rendering. That is, except for those who take the position—which is forced—of reading their own ideas into Scripture and saying there's conflict. Also, some scientists make assumptions they can't prove. But if you take away the assumptions from both, there is basic agreement. There is a sequence of how life was created.

Actually, when we come to Jesus Christ, we make that jump beyond the level of science and say God created directly. But that is something we say by faith. There is no concrete evidence other than comparative organisms to really prove the sequential jump when it comes to man.

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So in Genesis 1 we're dealing with something that is very rational and understandable. Even in the modern scientific arena, it makes sense.

We've been taking the long shot view of God's work in creation. Now, however, we take the zoom lens and come in close and see directly God's work in the creation of man. Genesis 1 is really cosmological. It asks how God is related to the heavens and the earth. But Genesis 2 is really zeroing in on the level of man. It's not so concerned with the six creative days; it's concerned with the creation of man. Notice that Genesis 1:27 says that He created man—male and female created He them. So on the sixth creative day, God makes man and woman. Woman is as fully in the image of God as is man. Woman is not made in the image of man. She also is made in the image of God.

But in Genesis 2, with the zoom lens effect, we close in and see that indeed there is separation of time between the creation of man and woman. Rather than so much addressing the intellectual aspect of man, Genesis 2 addresses us on more of an experiential level or more of an emotional level. More on a feeling level. This is particularly seen in the reversal of man being at the end of the pinnacle of creation as seen in the six creative days. In Genesis 2, man is found in the center of God's creative activity. How can we understand this?

The more we read the Bible, the more we understand that often the Scriptures use terms of God that are manlike, yet they help us to understand God better. They're called "anthropomorphic" terms, meaning they are man-structured or man-formed. We use them all the time in our faith, like when we sing "He Touched Me." You can get all hung up if you take that from the standpoint of a physical touch. Someone's going to ask, "What did the hand of God look like?" When you say, "He touched me," you never meant to convey the idea that God reached out with a hand and clapped it on your shoulder in some way. When you sing "He lives within my heart," it doesn't mean that if you could take a camera inside your heart you'd see the physical form of

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Jesus. We're speaking anthropomorphically. We're saying that the only way we can understand God's qualities is to put them into man's language and appreciate them.

This is more meaningful to us than to simply talk about the Lord and not use any humanlike terms. These kinds of terms help draw us closer to God. If we only used rational or high-sounding scientific language or talked to God in terms of pure math or something like that, He'd be so remote we'd never be able to feel Him. But the miracle and the wonder of the Bible is that God speaks to us in our language so that we can understand Him. There's no use talking to children about the omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent God. They cannot grasp that at all. It's meaningful to say Jesus is with you wherever you go, whenever you go. It comes down to language.

Therefore, when we look at Genesis 2 and see these emotional needs within man, what is going on? We're seeing what Scripture is saying from an emotional view.

I don't think there is anything more inspiring than a grove of redwood trees. There are signs of the trees' age. Some trees were saplings when the Lord was preaching in Galilee—that's how old they are. Intellectually, from the Genesis 1 standpoint, I know that sequentially I'm last. Those trees were there long before I was. But from the emotional, experiential standpoint of Genesis 2, I stand there and say, "As far as I'm concerned, until I came here that tree didn't exist." That tree makes no sense to me; it has no meaning to me unless I stand there to behold it.

That's kind of what's going on in Genesis 2. This is the Hebrew way of thinking: things are real as I experience them. That's a very important thing in philosophy today. I experience, and something becomes real. Genesis 1 says there are things real outside your experience. But Genesis 2 is reaching into that level of saying things are real as I experience them.

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In beautiful human language, God is spoken of in terms of first, a potter—He takes man from the dust of the ground. Then He's spoken of as a planter—He puts into Eden a garden. He's also spoken of as a surgeon—He takes from Adam the rib.

He takes the dust from the ground. Genesis 2:7 is quick to confess that man is taken from the ground. Not only is man taken from the ground, but also vegetation comes from the ground.

Later, in verse 19, the animals are also taken from the ground. There's a basic linking of the ecosystem—an interlinking between man, animals, and plant life. They're all taken from a basic source, yet what God does with the basic matter is far different.

Man becomes a living being made in the image of God. Man therefore has a destiny that's higher than any other work that God created. But if you take man apart chemically and let him deteriorate, if you let a plant deteriorate, if you let an animal deteriorate, a hundred years after they died you wouldn't be able to tell which was the plant, the animal, or the man. We all go back to the same source, but there's a difference in man.

As Genesis 2 moves in upon us at the emotional level, we're tipped off by the use of the name for God used in verse 4: "When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens" (NIV). If you read closely, you'll find that earlier in Genesis the term for God used is the Hebrew word *Elohim*. Now, beginning with verse 4, you find an additional name. He's not simply *Elohim*, the creative God; He's also *Yahweh Elohim*, or "Jehovah," as we say in English. This is the name consistently used for God for the next number of chapters. What is happening is Yahweh, or Jehovah, is the name by which God made a covenant with Israel and disclosed himself. As Genesis 2 introduces God from man's setting, He's the God who makes promises. He's the God who makes covenants and who relates to you personally as an individual. Here's God who will make a promise to every one of you, God who revealed himself fully in Jesus Christ when He

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said, “Come unto Me. I will give you life. I will give you rest. Taste and see.” God reveals himself personally and is speaking to everyone through this passage of Scripture.

II. Basic needs of all people

Genesis 2 kind of takes us into a strange world. It’s almost like reading science fiction in the sense that we are brought into dimensions of things we do not currently experience. The reason why we don’t experience them is told in Genesis 3—the fall of man. But there are also some basic needs that the first man had—needs that you and I have—that come forth clearly in this second chapter.

A. “Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. And the 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. A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters. The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there.) The name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush. The name of the third river is the Tigris; it runs along the east side of Asshur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates” (Genesis 2:8–14, NIV).

What is the Bible saying about one of man’s basic needs? He needs a place. He needs a home. It’s not sufficient that God made the whole earth. What’s that to man? He needs someplace specifically in the earth where he can glue himself down. So in Eden God plants a garden. The text does not say *all* of Eden was a garden, but simply that *in* Eden was a garden. We don’t know how large the Garden was. It’s hard to say. It’s hard even to say where it was. We know from two rivers, the Tigres and the Euphrates, that it would be located somewhere in the Mesopotamia area—perhaps to the north of the Persian Gulf. But the other two rivers have ceased, and we

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don't know where they were. Perhaps they were inlets into the Persian Gulf or perhaps there was a different topography before the Flood. The channels of rivers that existed then were wiped out. We don't know. But the important thing is that God saw one of the foundational needs of a human being was to have a place.

This place had some great characteristics. For one thing, it was beautiful. Genesis 2:9 indicates that God made every tree that is pleasant to the sight. God had a feeling for aesthetics in man and woman. What a great quality to have in your home. To make the things you have as beautiful as they can be. It's restful.

Another great quality was that it was peaceful. No division of any kind existed within Eden. Everything served the purpose of peace.

It was permanent. Man was meant to be there and, if he had walked with God, to stay there.

There was no lease, no points to pay down on Eden. It was simply a place.

Security is a kind of foundational human need. To feel secure—to have a place. I can identify with the need for security. I think we all can. Even though we may have to move from place to place, we still need someplace to hang our hat. God saw this for Adam.

B. The second need that Adam had was a need for food; therefore, the Lord provides food. In Genesis 1:29 and again in Genesis 2:9 we see that the trees were not only pleasant to the sight but good for food. You have to eat, no matter how spiritual you are. No matter how created in the image of God you are, you still must eat.

Before the Fall, the diet evidently was vegetarian. Nothing is said in these two chapters about eating animals. Adam simply ate of the herbs of the fields, the plants, or that which was from the trees. I'm not coming out for a vegetarian diet, because we see that the Lord ate lamb at the Passover meal. But as a result of the Fall, man turned not only to a different way of life but also to some different eating habits. Of course the witness of Scripture is that when man sins against

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God, it not only affects him but also the whole environment. Other things begin to suffer. What had been peace now becomes unglued by tension. In the future age, we're given the beautiful picture of the lion lying down with the lamb, which is what I would understand Eden to be like—without conflict. God placed man in a garden. Ever since he left the Garden, man has been turning God's world into a garbage heap. That's the problem.

Also, in Eden there was not only a kind of vegetarian diet, but evidently the diet also was filled with variety. There were many things to eat. Man didn't look at the same food every day. He had different choices.

C. A third fundamental need that is seen in Eden is found in Genesis 2:15–17. The need for freedom.

“The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the LORD God commanded the man, ‘You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die’ (Genesis 2:15–17, NIV).

In chapter 3 we'll look more in detail at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life. Simply let it be said here that man's nature is so different from the animals. Their nature operates on the basis of inbred instincts. They're in bondage to the created order. Man, however, is the one thing on earth that is able to rise above his inbred urges and desires and the incoming impulses and to think—to set a course and stay to it. God made us free. Free to choose. He does that in terms of giving commands that can be disobeyed. Freedom is one of the greatest privileges that a person has. Of course, the New Testament goes on in a discussion of freedom to indicate that without Jesus Christ no one is free. But when Jesus Christ comes into our lives, He makes us free. He makes us free to again have eternal life. He makes us free to be made in the

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image of God. He makes us free so we can rise above sin. Jesus said, “Whom the Son sets free is free indeed” (John 8:36).

We know so little of freedom; it seems like an unattainable thing. We think of Eden as utopia.

The Greek word *utopia* literally means “no place.” The reason why we call it utopia is because nobody believes it really exists. We have a rough time understanding Eden or something as simple as freedom because we have we experienced so little of it in our fallen condition.

Home, foods, freedom. These are things God is providing. Basic needs of the man He has made.

D. Another basic need that God sees is meaningful activity for man. This comes through in Genesis 2:18–20: “The LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.’ Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field” (NIV).

God provided two kinds of meaningful activity for man. One was physical and the other was intellectual—the use of his mind.

Some of us have the viewpoint of life that it would be paradise if God would just put us in a place with food, freedom and a hammock so that we could get up in the morning, eat our breakfast, and then just kind of leisurely sleep away the day. The Lord, however, made us and He knows what it takes to keep us going. He says man has got to be involved in something meaningful. So even in Eden, before the Fall, man set to work physically. He was to till the field and keep it. The first activity of man is a farmer.

A great thing to recognize is that physical labor can be exceedingly meaningful. As society goes along and picks up more knowledge, there is a constant temptation to suppose that people who work with their heads are more meaningfully involved in their work than people who work with

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their hands. That's not true from Genesis. The most meaningful thing the first man was given to do was to work with his hands. If God has given you a job in which you work with your hands, that is what God has given you as a meaningful task in life and you can be fulfilled in that area of your life. God doesn't want you to feel frustrated because you're not in an office. God has given you that activity to provide for your family and yourself. Through that activity you are being God's missionary on that job and with your coworkers. You're finding something meaningful in your life. Part of the way God made man is to find something that is meaningfully done.

Meaningful activity is not a waste of time.

God also gave man mental tasks. Genesis 2:19 goes on to indicate that the Lord God brought the animals before man to name. The naming of the animals is a far more intellectual activity than one might initially imagine. It's more than just peeling off a sticker and putting a name on a living being. In the Hebrew culture, to name something was to describe its essence. To name something could only be possible if you've studied its nature, its characteristics, and the way it behaves. When you knew it thoroughly enough, then you could give it a name. So a name is something more than just an isolated word. It is a word understood in context with every other thing.

Names are important. The name "Jacob" means "supplanter." His name was the essence of what the man was. "Christ" is the essence of the name "Messiah." Jesus is the essence of the name "Savior."

So when the animal is called before man, man sets into motion the imaginative processes God has given him for meaningful activity. And he names the animals.

We use animals also to describe human behavior. Animals help us understand something about ourselves. Again, that's why naming is so important.

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Man's nature is higher than the animal's nature. When we start using the animal's nature in our language, we begin to understand that man is higher, no matter if people say that we're animals. Many names are used to describe man as less than he is. Yet when we fall away from ourselves, these names help us understand what God designed us to be. So the use of language is an incredibly important thing. God intended for man to have meaningful activity in the use of his imagination and the use of his mind.

God also wants us to sharpen our minds within the areas of life that He has given to us. Paul told Timothy to study to show himself approved. Study, even if you're working with your hands. Study, because when you quit understanding or trying to understand the greatness of God and the marvel of life in which He's placed us, you stop growing spiritually and with your mind. Then life kind of comes to a crash, an end. So the Lord says, "Keep on going. This is what I've given you as a meaningful activity."

E. The Lord sees another need within Adam—the need for a companion. In Genesis 2:21–25 we read: "So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called "woman," for she was taken out of man.' For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame" (NIV).

It was not sufficient for man to have a place, to have food, to have freedom, and to have a meaningful activity. There is another dimension within man. That is the need for another—for fellowship and companionship. The intent of God in making woman was twofold. One is that woman is meant to be a companion to man, or maybe that could be said vice versa. God said, "It

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is not good for the man to be alone” (Genesis 2:28, NIV). This is the first time in the creation narrative that the phrase “not good” is used. Everything else is good. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7 that God has a special calling on some people to be single. But even if you’re single, you cannot exist without companionship.

Nothing is said about Eve being a child bearer at this point. She is valued for herself alone.

That’s a cardinal teaching of Scripture. Scripture elevates woman.

Not only is woman seen as a companion to man, but she’s also seen as a helper or a complement.

She is a helper fit for him; she glues into what he is doing. She shares in Adam’s physical and intellectual task. He has the charge of the Garden and the charge of naming the animals. When she comes along, she is a helper. She participates in those activities. She is not some dummy.

She is not a beast of burden. She is not a biological laboratory for the production of children. She is not a thing outside of man that he can use and dispose of as he might wish. No, she’s more than that. She is meant to be fully his complement. For those of you who are married, one of the difficulties that comes in marriage is that we’re not involved in one another’s lives as we ought to be. Scripture tells us to be involved.

God intends married life to be a wonderful companionship, a helping, complementary relationship. That’s the intent of God for marriage. I’m not talking about a perfect marriage, but a growing, trusting, living relationship in which we accept one another with all of our imperfections. That may be an aspect of love Adam did not have the opportunity to know until he fell.

The process God used for the making of woman is fascinating. On one hand, it immediately opens oneself up to be defensive. We don’t know exactly how to handle this. But let’s look at the beauty of what’s happening.

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If I were using a scientific word, I'd say God did a cloning operation on Adam. There are two ways to reproduce. One is sexual reproduction; the other is cloning. In effect, what God does is create woman through a cloning operation on man. Sure, there was more. You can't explain the mystery of human life through biological reproduction—the marvel of how a fetus develops into an adult. That's a marvel that you can hardly understand. So how in the world can you understand this? God uses a process that is simple; that's the tip of the iceberg. But it's fascinating because it is saying that man and woman share an identity together.

III. As our text in Genesis draws to its close, we see some qualities of marriage that unfold.

The first thing we see about marriage is that here were some people who were happily married. What does Adam do when he sees his wife for the first time? You can't tell too well in a King James Version. It's hard even in the Revised Standard Version. But what Adam says in verse 23 is in the form of a poem. That's what it is in the Hebrew—a poem. He sees woman for the first time and he breaks out in a romantic poem. Poetry wasn't written till man saw woman for the first time. Then poetry started and the romantic element began. Man is singing. He's happy. The Hebrew language records thirteen words here. The word for "this one"—in our translation we find "This is now bone of my bones" (Genesis 2:23, NIV). But in the Hebrew, it's "This *one* is bone of my bones." "This one" is the first, middle, and last word in the thirteen-word poem. He keeps saying "This one, this one. Woman is at the beginning, the center, and at the end of my life." He's overcome with joy.

That's what marriage is meant to be. Be happily married. It takes a lot of work, more work for some than for others. But that's what God designs. He doesn't want our marriages to be unhappy. Maybe more marriages would be happier if we would see one another with the purity and the eye of love that took place when Adam saw woman. That's how we are meant to see and feel about our marriages.

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With this marriage there was to be complete identity with one another. She was bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. They began using a new term—“ours.” No longer mine or yours. Through this we understand Paul’s words that the man who harms his wife is hurting his own body.

There’s such closeness that to hurt one is to hurt oneself. Sadly, many people do not recognize that this is the case.

For man, in marriage there is to be a leaving, a cleaving, and a one flesh. God referred to leaving in respect to Adam’s progeny; therefore, a man leaves his father and his mother. Adam had no father to leave, but from then on children were to have fathers and mothers to leave as they marry. Many in our culture and society today say it’s OK to have a secret marriage, to try something out for a while. If it doesn’t work, why mess with marriage? But in the Scriptures, marriage begins with a public act.

In the biblical culture, when one left his father and mother, it meant more than getting in a tiff and moving out for the weekend. They were to part—period. It was public and it was known. The sexual relationship between man and woman comes after the leaving. It is associated with the cleaving, the being together.

Henry Ford was once asked, “What makes a successful marriage?” He said, “The same thing that makes successful car—stick to one model.”

The Lord intended this. This is His design for marriage. Again we see how much man has been ruined by the Fall. But as we come to the gospel of Jesus Christ, we come to someone who’s far removed from Eve. John 4:1–26 tells of a woman who’d had five husbands, and the man she was living with was not her husband. Yet Christ gave her the opportunity to put her life together again. That’s the beautiful thing about the gospel that we should see. If your life has been racked with failure before God and now you’ve come to Him, He can do something in your life to put it back together.

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Finally, in Genesis 1:25, the man and the woman were both naked and were not ashamed. This beautiful text describes the openness that existed between the first man and the first woman. Nothing was hidden. We know well enough that troubles begin to arise in marriage when we keep things to ourselves, when we do not let that part of us that is troubling us or causing us to fib or sin be known to the other. Gradually we start closing ourselves off and building a wall around ourselves. Finally the other person in the marriage relationship does not even know who we are. It's like living with a stranger. Through this beautiful verse the Lord is saying that there is to be complete and total openness of communication—openness together in respect to man and woman. There is nothing secret to each other. In the fullness of that sharing, marriage really takes its most beautiful and sublime level. When we begin hiding, trouble begins to ensue in our lives.

It's kind of fascinating that not too much is said in this passage about the spiritual needs of man. There's man's need for a place. Man's need for food. Man's need for freedom, which is related to the spirit. Man's need for meaningful activity and man's need for work.

Perhaps the reason we don't see much stress on the spiritual aspect is that before the Fall, man was such a tremendous spiritual being that it is a matter of fact that a spiritual relationship is going to be there.

How terrific it is to go to the New Testament and find that when one or even all of these dimensions to life are not being met, Christ steps in to meet the dimension that is lacking. If a person is lacking a companion, perhaps through grief, the Lord Jesus Christ steps in to fill the void. He's the friend who sticks closer than a brother. If there is a lack of a place, Christ is there. Paul wrote about this in 2 Timothy. He's in a dungeon cell, but in his heart he is in Eden. If the early Christians were without food because they were hounded for their faith, Christ made the difference and met that level of need. If there was lack of meaningful activity—many of the first-

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century Christians were slave laborers and their jobs were not meaningful—Christ made life meaningful. All through the Scriptures we see how Jesus Christ fulfills the basic needs of life. Beyond the simply physical and emotional and intellectual understanding of the passage, we recognize that deep within the center of us there is a magnet that calls out to the fact that there is a vacancy in us that only God himself can meet and fill. In Jesus Christ, full revelation of God has taken care of those of us who live on the other side of Eden.

Closing Prayer

Today, our Father, we thank You for the counsel of Your Word, which is life to us. Especially, Lord, I bring petitions before You today for those within our body who feel their basic needs have been unmet in these last days, weeks, or maybe even years. Talk of marriage reminds them of something that no longer is. Talk of a place reminds them of someplace in the past that was pleasant, but now the current situation isn't. To speak of meaningful activity is no longer appropriate. Lord, by the power of Your Spirit, minister deep within the level of our inner needs so that we would find the Christ who is all in all and all-sufficient for everything. Let us as a body be an extension of You to meet the needs that are apparent. We marvel, Lord, at the beauty in which You created man and woman. The glory. The wonder. We've lost so much through disobedience. A time like this helps us get a bead on the future because we look forward to the day when Eden will again be seen. We thank You that already You've taken a fragment off of Eden in the future and placed it in our hearts so that the kingdom of God is within us. It is not only out there yet to come, but also within us where You reign and rule and where You turn the desert gardens of our lives into places where wonderful trees of flower and fruit grow for You. Bless Your people richly, Lord. Let us continually take strength from Your Word, which is a sure light to our path. Through Christ our Lord we give thanks. Amen.