

## WHAT'S IN A BREATH?: The Breath of Life<sup>i</sup> Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7; 2:22

### FAMILY DEDICATION

Thank you, Candy! What an awesome group of parents. We are so excited to celebrate alongside these families in our church that are dedicating themselves to raise their children to know and love Jesus. Scripture teaches in Deuteronomy 6 that parents are to be the primary spiritual educators of the home and God entrusts us as parents to raise our children in The Lord.

Family dedication is modeled for us in the Biblical text. In 1 Samuel, Hannah dedicated her son, Samuel, to The Lord. In a prayer she says, *“I prayed for this child and The Lord granted me what I asked. Therefore, I give him to The Lord. For his whole life, he will be given to The Lord.”* What an incredible prayer! That is the same prayer these parents before us are voicing publicly this morning.

Joseph and Mary presented Jesus in the temple as a baby. When our Lord was just 8 days old, Scripture said His parents went to the temple for the purpose of dedicating Him to God.

So, we join in the biblical tradition alongside these families as they dedicate, they give, their children to The Lord. These parents are making a commitment to do what is vitally needed, to raise their children in the nurture and admonition of The Lord.

This is a very difficult task. And Church Family, this isn't just something for these parents. The reason they stand here before the Lord and His Church is because we, the Church, are also making a commitment today. We are committing to join these wonderful parents in a couple of things. First to be prayerful in supporting them and to love them. We are also committing to help disciple both these parents and their children. Family dedication is a very sweet celebration for a church family. It is a two-way celebration and commitment.

So, with that understanding, parents, do you commit to raising your children in the nurture and admonition of The Lord? Do you commit to teach them about God's great love and plan for their life? Is it your desire to create a home that models the Scripture's teachings? If this is your promise, state we will.

And church family, do you commit to coming alongside these parents? Do you promise to lift them up in prayer? Do you commit to assisting these parents in this awesome responsibility? Do you promise to invest in their children by serving them, teaching them, and pointing them to Jesus? If this is your promise, state we will.

There you have it. We are proud of you. This is an often-overwhelming task, but these children are God's blessings to you. He has entrusted them to you. And 100 years from now, the only thing that will matter in these kids' lives is that they know, love and serve Jesus. And know that you are not alone. Our church has just made a commitment to serve you in any way we can.

Allow me to pray over these families this morning. And church family, I want to invite you to stretch out your hands toward these families as a signal of your prayerful support. Let's pray. [Pray]. Let's give these parents a hand of praise this morning...

### SERMON

#### INTRODUCTION:

Good morning, Trinity! What a great day!

#### SERIES INTRO:

I want to invite you to grab your bibles and turn with me to Genesis chapters 1 and 2. We are beginning a new teaching series today that we have entitled, “What's in a Breath.” There are several places in the Bible where it is said that God breathes.

Breath is vital to life. Without breath, there is no life.

#### **ILLUSTRATION: Apple Watch**

How many of you have an Apple Watch? I don't know if this is your experience or not, but about once a day my watch reminds me to breathe. As if I need another reminder to do that which is vital in life. But if you click on the prompting, it leads you through a series of deep breaths.

And apparently, there are many different benefits to daily deep breathing. It helps to alleviate stress. It is known to relieve pain. Lower blood pressure, increase energy, and improve digestion to name a few.<sup>ii</sup> When I have had moments of heightened panic or worry, taking a few deep breaths really help.

Throughout the Bible, there are several moments where the Breath of God is mentioned.<sup>iii</sup> Over the next 5 weeks we are going to take a look at some of those instances. Today we are going to look at the breath of Life, then we will examine, God's breath, His Word, Jesus' breath on the cross, the breath of the Holy Spirit, and the resurrection of Jesus where he breathed again. I'm really excited about this series and I hope you will make plans to be a part and to invite a friend to join you.

I don't know where you are in your spiritual journey or what all may be going on in your life, but I am sure we can all identify with needing a fresh breath of God to fall on our lives. When God breathes, something supernatural happens. God moves. Perhaps you need God to breath on your marriage, your job, your family, or on a medical condition. The truth is we are all in desperate need of a fresh breath of God.

I think what has me excited about this series is that it gives us an opportunity to talk through some doctrinal matters. Key believes that drive our faith. And I want to look at the doctrinal teaching of the breath of life in Genesis 1 and 2 today in 3D. We are going to examine the design, the distinction, and the destiny.<sup>iv</sup> Then I want to draw a couple application points from our study.

### **MESSAGE:**

Let's read our passages of study this morning and then work through them together. Genesis 1:24. ***24**And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. **25**And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. **26**Then God said, "Let us make man **in our image**, after **our likeness**. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."**27**So **God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.** Skip over to Genesis 2, verse 7. ***7**then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils **the breath of life** [there it is, the breath of life], and the man became a living creature.* Skip down to verse 21. ***21**So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. **22**And the rib that**

*the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.* Lot's here. Let's first look at...

### **1) The Design**

God made man. He designed us. And there are a few things that I want to point out in these verses about God's design of humanity. These are doctrinal truths that we hold near and dear. First, ...

#### **A) There is harmony in Genesis 1 and 2.**

Skeptics have suggested that there is conflict between chapters 1 and 2 of Genesis. They say that Genesis 1 presents a creationist account while Genesis 2 speaks of an evolutionary account.

This is not the case. There is harmony between the two. Genesis 1 provides the scope of creation, the totality of it. Genesis 2 zooms in on a sequence of a particular creation; mankind. Genesis 1 describes the creation of the entire universe while Genesis 2 narrows the focus on humanity. And chapter 2 gives us important details regarding the creation of man.<sup>v</sup> You see the harmony here.

The second thing we learn here is that...

#### **B) God alone created man.**

Humanity is not an accident. We are not the result of a cosmic collision that gave way to a complex organism. In chapter 1 of Genesis, God purposed to make man. He held a conversation within the Godhead, The Trinity, that illustrates that. Genesis 1:26, ***26**Then God said, "**Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.**"*

Then, in Genesis 2:7, we read that, *"the Lord God **formed** the man of dust from the ground..."* The word translated as "formed" in the original language means to mold or shape. The idea is of a potter who has intelligence, ability, and the power to create. King David echoed this very thought in Psalm 139:13, *"For you **formed** my inward parts; you **knitted** me together in my mother's womb."*

Then in verse 22, we see that God purposed to make women. ***22**And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he **made** into a woman.* You see the intentionality of God's creation. The word translated in my bible "made" in the original language carries the idea of being built or fashioned. Perhaps your

version even has “fashioned” as the translation. Now, this explains a lot. That men were formed but women were fashioned. Can I get an amen, fellas?!

And the intricacies of the human body, down to the very genetic code coursing through our veins, is proof of God’s handiwork.

When we consider the design, we acknowledge the harmony on this in both Genesis 1 and 2 as well as God’s intentionality in creating mankind. Thirdly, ...

### C) Humanity is God’s prized creation.

In the biblical account of creation, we see a building, a crescendo,<sup>vi</sup> to the pinnacle. Notice something in Genesis 1:26, the first two words, *“<sup>26</sup>Then God...* In those two words, the rhythm of creation changed. All other instances of creation say, “And God...” But when it comes to humanity, “*Then God...*” There is a hard turn here<sup>vii</sup>; then, finally, the pinnacle.

#### ILLUSTRATION: Saving the Best for Last

Now, I’m just curious, how many of you have ever eaten at Texas de Brazil? You guys know what I’m talking about? The Brazilian restaurant where there is no menu, they just keep bringing out meats. You eat and eat and eat the finest cuts of meat until you get the meat sweats. If you are a vegetarian, don’t go. Texas de Brazil is a carnivore’s dream. Cathy and I only get to go on a special occasion, but we love it.

But when we do go, my favorite cut of meat is the Picanha. Oh, man, it is so good. Get it medium. Is there any other way to eat meat?! So, when we go, here’s what I do, I make sure to end my dinner with that cut of meat. I want to save the best for last. Ever do something like that? Well, in a sense, that is what God did. God saved His best creation for last. It is the climax of the creative story.

Paul, echoes this idea in Ephesians 2:10. *“<sup>10</sup>For we are his **workmanship...**”* The word translated as “workmanship,” is the word *poiema*. Where we get our word for poem. It is a masterpiece. Paul is saying we are God’s workmanship, we are skillfully and artfully designed.

There is harmony in Genesis 1 and 2, God alone created man, and we are God’s prized creation. Finally, ...

### D) God is the source of life.

The breath of life from God communicates that God is the source of life. Look at Genesis 2:7 again. *“<sup>7</sup>then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, **and the man became a living creature.**”*

When God formed Adam out of the dust of the earth, Adam was a lifeless body. It’s not until we read that God breathed His own breath into Adam that he became a living creature. What’s more is the term breathed means to inflate, to blow hard, to kindle.

#### ILLUSTRATION: Campfire

Have you ever blown into a campfire when you are trying to get it started? It is a forceful blow. This is the picture described for us when God breathed into Adam’s nostrils. He kindled life, He blew life into Adam.

While it is only said of Adam that God breathed into his nostrils, it is implied that He did the same for Eve. If Adam was a lifeless body after being formed, then Eve was lifeless body after being fashioned. The breath of God was necessary to make them a living creature. God is the source of life.

So, we’ve talked about the design. Let’s move quickly to, ...

### 2) The Distinction

Not only do we see the special design of humanity, but we also see the distinction. No other creation contains the breath of God. Humanity differs from all other animals.

#### ILLUSTRATION: Jax<sup>viii</sup>

Now, we love our dog, Jax. He is an awesome dog with a great personality. We like to think that he is pretty smart. But Jax is not like humanity, though. Dogs are obviously different than humans. That’s because we are created differently. There are 3 main ways humanity differs from all other creation.

#### A) Only humans have the ability to relate to God.

Our precious Jax is not seeking a relationship with God. And God is not seeking a relationship with Jax. The very longings of our hearts demonstrates that we are searching for something to fulfill us. That can only be filled by God. Only humans have an ability to relate to God. Secondly, ...

## B) Humans are set above all other creation.

We are distinct from other creation in that we have been set over all creation by God. Genesis 1:26, *“<sup>26</sup>Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”* We have been tasked to manage creation because we are above all other creation. Plus, it is only said that humanity is made in the image of God. That is not said of any other creation. Thirdly, ...

## C) Relationships with others is greater.

The Bible is full of instructions about how we are to treat one another. This is not the case of other animals. For example, animal-on-animal violence is not litigated. But murder is. Why? Because humanity is distinct. The value of mankind is elevated above all other creation.

So, we've considered the design and the distinction. Now, let's look at...

## 3) The Destiny

When I say destiny, I'm referring to eternal life. The Hebrew word for breath can mean wind, air, or spirit. In fact, in many places in the Bible, the word is translated as spirit.

Now, God is Spirit. And when He breathed His breath into humanity, He gave us a spirit, a soul. And part of being made in the image of God means that we are spiritual beings. Humanity is much more than physical substance. We are much more than dust, more than a rib. We possess the very breath of God.

And here's what that means. When God breathed His breath into us, He made us with a soul, and He designed us to live forever. That is our destiny. Because of the breath of God in us, you and I will live forever.

Yes, our bodies will die, they will expire. But our soul will live on into eternity. 2 Corinthians 5:1-2 gives us this great picture. Paul says, *“<sup>1</sup>For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home [our body, flesh] is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. <sup>2</sup>For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling.”*

The idea here is understanding the battle with our physical bodies and the longing we have for our spiritual bodies. The fragility of our earthly tent, and the things we endure in the body, is a reminder of the fact that there is much more awaiting us. And this gives us hope. The material part of humanity will perish, but the immaterial part of man, given in the breath of God, was designed to live eternally. Therefore, the question is not *IF* you will live eternally, but *WHERE* your soul will live for eternity.

## APPLICATION:

Now, in the short amount of time we have left, I want to draw a couple application points. How does the breath of God in mankind impact the way in which we view the world? 2 main things.

### 1) All human life is valuable.

By breathing into mankind, God has elevated the value of human life. We've talked about how we are His most prized creation. As a result, we are to hold *ALL* human life in the highest regard. Regardless of socio-economics, national origin, ethnicity, ability or disability, strength or vulnerability, all life is to be valued and protected. We are to celebrate human life and stand opposed to all life-destroying measures.

The imago dei and the breath of life from God is why, as Christians, we care about racism, human trafficking, abuse and abortion. Those things ought to grate against our hearts. Because every human, by nature of their creation, is worthy of dignity, compassion and hope. And we are called by God, driven by this very doctrine, to value all human life from conception to the grave. Scripture is clear. From the womb to the tomb.

A couple weeks ago, this over-the-counter drug became available. [\[Show Julie pill graphic\]](#). This brightly and strategically marketed drug is the new “morning after pill.” It is over-the-counter, meaning anyone can purchase it without a prescription.

I wanted to make mention of this today for a couple of reasons. 1) There is a lot of confusion about what this drug is and does, and 2) It specifically infringes on what we are talking about this morning.

I asked a local physician about this drug. I was told that it is designed to not only prevent pregnancy, but hear me, it *TERMINATES* pregnancy after

conception. It is, in effect, an over-the-counter abortive pill. How is it that birth control pills are regulated by prescription, but this is not? Listen, this is not a political issue. It is an image of God issue.

One of the responsibilities that God gives to The Church is to be a prophetic voice in the culture. This is an issue in which we, as believers in Jesus, must speak to. Because attacking life in the womb is to attack God Himself. It is an attack on the very image of God. This is why this is such a big deal.

There is no gray area here, from a biblical perspective. All human life is valuable and worthy of respect and dignity. The second application point that I want to discuss is that...

## 2) We long to relate to God.

There is a longing in the depth of your heart to relate to God. And there is a longing in God's heart to relate to you. But we have been separated from God because of sin. Sin means to miss the mark. We have fallen short of the holiness of God. And the separation that sin has brought has a profound impact on where our souls will live for eternity.

Romans 6:23 says, *"<sup>23</sup>For the wages of sin is **death**..."* In other words, what we earn as a result of our sin is eternal death, eternity in a real place called Hell. But God provided a remedy. There is only one solution. Continue the verse.

***<sup>23</sup>For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.***

The breath God gave us has given us life. Sin has destroyed that life. And God wants to give you new life, eternal life. Jesus says, *"I am the way, and the truth, and **the life**. No one comes to the Father **except through me**."*

## CONCLUSION

Have you given your life to Jesus? Do you have new life? Have you been born again? Has Jesus moved you from death unto life? If not, you can know that you have life today.

In a moment, I am going to pray, and we will begin our time of response. Perhaps your response today is to make Jesus the Lord of your life. You might have questions about that or wonder what that looks like. We will have elders

here at the front that would love nothing more than to visit with you about what it means to trust Jesus as Lord and Savior. You come this morning.

Now I know that a time of response might be somewhat intimidating. Listen, one of God's greatest gifts to us is His Church. And God has raised up elders, pastors is what an elder is, to lead and care for you. That's what these elders are, pastors that are available for you.

Perhaps you don't know what to say in coming forward. Simply say three words, "I need Jesus." Maybe that means you need to place your faith in Jesus as Lord. Maybe it means that there is a circumstance going on in your life where you need Jesus to show up. Maybe it is some other burden you are carrying. The truth is we all need Jesus. Amen?!

So, I'm going to pray, we will stand and sing, but most importantly, let's respond to the slightest prompting of God on our hearts. Can we do that? Let's pray. [PRAY]



## ENDNOTES:

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<sup>i</sup> Works consulted in preparation of this message: *Blue Letter Bible*, “Matthew Henry Commentary: Genesis 2,” accessed online: [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Gen/Gen\\_002.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Gen/Gen_002.cfm); David Demick, “Creation 27, no 1: The Breath of Life,” article published by Answers in Genesis, December 1, 2004, accessed online: <https://answersingenesis.org/human-body/the-breath-of-life/>; Aravind Jeyakumar Moniraj, “Breathe the Breath of God,” article published by Barnabas Today, October 27, 2020, accessed online: <https://www.barnabastoday.com/2020/10/breathe-the-breath-of-god/>; Bible Ref, “What Does Genesis 2:7 Mean?,” published by Got Questions Ministries, accessed online: <https://www.bibleref.com/Genesis/2/Genesis-2-7.html>; Biblia.work, “The Breath of Life,” accessed online: <https://www.biblia.work/sermons/the-breath-of-life/>; Got Questions, “What is the Breath of Life,” article accessed online: <https://www.gotquestions.org/breath-of-life.html>; Matt Chandler, “Imago Dei,” sermon preached at The Village Church, January 7, 2020, accessed online: <https://www.thevillagechurch.net/resources/sermons/imago-dei>; Skip Heitzig, “Expound: Genesis 1:24-2:25,” taught Wednesday, September 30, 2009, Calvary Church Albuquerque, accessed online: <https://calvarynm.church/connectwithskip/teachings/#/series/51/sermon/728>;

<sup>ii</sup> Andrea Watkins, “Benefits of Deep Breathing,” article published by Urban Balance, November 3, 2014, accessed online: <https://www.urbanbalance.com/benefits-deep-breathing>.

<sup>iii</sup> Pointed out by David Demick, “Creation 27, no 1: The Breath of Life,” article published by Answers in Genesis, December 1, 2004, accessed online: <https://answersingenesis.org/human-body/the-breath-of-life/>.

<sup>iv</sup> Outline Taken from my friend Eric Trimble in his message, “The Breath of God,” preached at The Church at West Mountain in Gilmer, Texas.

<sup>v</sup> Mentioned by Pastor Skip Heitzig. It is my personal experience that this was presented as an orthodox view while I was in college.

<sup>vi</sup> Pastor Eric Trimble.

<sup>vii</sup> Quip taken from Matt Chandler.

<sup>viii</sup> Illustration inspired by Matt Chandler’s sermon.