



FIRST
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The Creation Mission of God

Genesis 1-3

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Part of what it means for us to believe in God and to be tied into his purpose is to proclaim his goodness and his greatness. God's intention for his creation is to mirror his goodness and his greatness.

Scripture

Genesis 1

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, ²the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. ³Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

⁶ And God said, 'Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.' ⁷So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. ⁸God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

⁹ And God said, 'Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.' And it was so. ¹⁰God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. ¹¹Then God said, 'Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.' And it was so. ¹²The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. ¹³And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

14 And God said, 'Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years,¹⁵ and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.' And it was so.¹⁶ God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars.¹⁷ God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth,¹⁸ to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.¹⁹ And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

20 And God said, 'Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.'²¹ So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good.²² God blessed them, saying, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.'²³ And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

24 And God said, 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.' And it was so.²⁵ God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

26 Then God said, 'Let us make humankind* in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth,* and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.'

²⁷ So God created humankind* in his image,
in the image of God he created them;*
male and female he created them.

²⁸ God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.'²⁹ God said, 'See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food.'³⁰ And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.' And it was so.³¹ God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Sermon

In our new sermon series we are going to be learning from some Old Testament characters about what it means to be called by God and what it means to be obedient to that call. In receiving a call from God, we are going to see how these Old Testament characters are blessed by God to be a blessing to others. Our call is always a call to go into the world and to share with others the loving mission of God. So it behooves us this morning to begin at the beginning and more importantly to examine who God is. After all if we are called into God's mission into the world, we should see what that mission looks like.

So the question is this morning, who is God and what is his character in relationship to his creation? How do you learn the character of a person is no small question. My parents have lived in the same house for over forty years now. That house is in many ways their creation. It tells about them in ways intended and unintended. The intended way that my parents' house reveals who they are can be found, in all places, in the back bathroom. There is a small bedroom in their house, next to the utilities room, and it has an even smaller half-bath. It was my room for junior high and high school. When I moved out, for reasons that I am still not sure of, my parents wall-papered that room with all sorts of family photos and memorabilia. It's the oddest place you can imagine for a memorial to the family. There are pictures of us on family vacations, pictures of me and my siblings with our various girlfriends and boyfriends (the walls were all filled up when they did the project so my youngest sister's husband and my little brother's wife are nowhere to be found!), there is a telegram to my grandparents from my great aunt congratulated them on my mother's birth. My dad's army discharge is on that wall as is a poster from my

campaign for high school student body president. It's peculiar but it's a pretty telling display of who we are and what matters to us.

I hate to compare the back bathroom at my parents' house to creation but the analogy fits in that creation is a view to God, his character, and what matters to him. Genesis 1 is a glimpse into the person of God – and what a God we see here!

The most obvious thing that we note about God in this chapter is that he is a Creator. Walter Brueggemann in his commentary on Genesis summarizes this chapter with three words: "Creator creating creation." Our God is a Creator God. Making things is part of his character, part of who he is. There is this sense of joy in this chapter that God loves what he is doing. God enjoys bringing things to life. We enjoy creating but God alone (with apologies to Dr. Frankenstein) is the only one who can create life out of nothing.

Watch a child take a pot and a pan and see the joy they have in making that into something else, and you see a glimpse of the great joy that God had in creation. God is one who delights in the creative process and in creation itself.

And what a creation God puts together! It is a joy to live in what God has brought to be. God is great! God is good as well. Our default table blessing growing up was, "God is great, God is good, let us thank him for our food, Amen." That's actually pretty theologically profound. God is great and God is good; and Genesis 1 reminds us of that.

Part of what it means for us to believe in God and to be tied into his purpose is to proclaim his goodness and his greatness. God's intention for his creation is to mirror his goodness and his greatness. Sometimes, I think that we forget that. Too often we jump ahead to Genesis 3 and the story of the fall and we let that color too much God's original intent.

God made the world and us good. He made us and the creation to be whole. We need to celebrate that in our lives.