

For the Glory of God Psalm 8; Genesis 1

It is a joy to gather in God's great out-of-doors for our Annual Worship in the Park. We always hold our breath and hope it isn't toooo hot or raining. However, we take what we get. I appreciate the opportunity to be a bit more informal and to celebrate the remembrance of our Lord's Supper while surrounded by the beauty of God's creation.

I deliberately used the Children's Version of Genesis 1 this morning. Rather than read the fairly familiar thirty-one verses of the Creation story in Genesis 1 from the Bible, I just thought we'd change it up a bit. Hopefully, hearing relatively familiar Scripture read in different words, will give a new emphasis to it.

The words, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...." are about as familiar as the words of Psalm 23. It always thrills me to hear those words being stated by our astronauts as they give voice to the marvel of our planet from their unique, long-range perspective. In this opening passage of Scripture from Genesis- the very first verses in the Bible- we find an account of God's work, a celebration of praise as well as a joyful confession of faith recognizing God's mighty power and love. Stepping back to look at the whole of the Bible, the verses from the Genesis account of the creation of our world out of the void before time, feels like a beginning Biblical bookend, which is then followed by the history of God's people and culminates in the description of the New Heaven and the New Earth as found in the very last chapters of Revelation- the last book of the Bible- the Biblical bookend at the other end.

So often it is tempting to turn the Creation story into a scientific account, a minute and literal description of God's work. For instance, varying understandings exist around even the word, "day" in Genesis 1. Some interpret a "day" as meaning a twenty-four hour period as we understand it today, and others feel a "day" is more accurately a period of time. Also, there has always seemed to have been numerous accounts of efforts to explore the vastness of space- new bodies out beyond current knowledge. I even saw a post this week that our earth has more than one moon. While these are interesting, we need to be cautious that we not lose sight of the Glory of God's handiwork. Rather than celebrate OUR skills and developing knowledge, may we give praise and honor to the God who existed before the beginning of time. May we glorify the God who created the universe, the God who put its order in place and continues to guide the marvel of its handiwork today.

A review of that handiwork:

Day 1- From a formless void and darkness, God ordered light- then separated light into day and night.

Day 2- God ordered the earth be formed calling the waters above, sky.

Day 3- God ordered the separation of dry land- calling it Earth- and the gathering of waters- called Seas. This allowed for vegetation- plants yielding seeds and plants bearing fruit with seeds within them.

Day 4- God ordered lights- the greater light- the sun- the rule by day and the lesser lights- the stars and moon- to rule by night.

Day 5- God ordered the waters to bring forth living creatures and birds to fly above the earth.

Day 6- God ordered creatures to live on the land- everything from A to Z- ants to zebras. God felt something was yet missing and ordered the creation of humankind to enjoy and take care of all creation.

Day 7- God rested

Following each of those verses in Scripture we find the words, “there was evening and there was morning of day one, of day two, of day three, etc.” a very deliberate ordering by God. In several verses we also find God saw “that it was good” and when God was finished, we find verse 31 stating, “God saw everything he had made, and indeed it was very good.”

The passage acknowledges the chaos of the world- there from the beginning but God brings forth an ordered universe. It is a universe celebrated by the Psalmist in Psalm 46- “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth should change...though its waters roar and foam..”

The Creation account also celebrates the fact that the wonder of our world was not a chance happening, a magical coming together of atoms and gasses to form the ground and seas and skies, but rather the deliberate intention of God, who willed that there be this marvelous and unique creation we call earth- the universe.

The love of God didn't just bring forth a barren sphere, but called forth life- plants, animals, and humanity. However, plants and animals were not intended to be God's final work. Human beings were created in God's image to reflect in their lives the glory of the One who made them. We, as God's creation, are given tasks to do as a reflection of that glory. Some take “dominion” to mean domination over all things- that the earth is owned by humans- us- to do with as we please. However, never do the Scriptures say that we own the earth. Psalm 24: 1 is quite clear, “The earth is the Lord's and the fulness there of; the world and those who dwell therein.” We are but the stewards of all God made, accountable always to God for how we treat creation. The words that begin and end our reading from Psalm 8 this morning state,

“O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!” Those words are definite as to where the glory lies- IN OUR CREATOR GOD.

Take time to look at the world around you- what do you see that glorifies God? Where do you truly see the glory of God? It is a mistake to view the whole of the forest and miss the beauty of the butterfly gaining strength from the sun on a single leaf of a tree. In the same way, I believe we miss time and time again the glory of God by focusing only on the minutia of daily life.

As we glorify our Creator God, we must also be constantly mindful of the fact that not only did God create us, but God also knew we would need a savior who would redeem us from all the human mistakes we make. God loved us so much that a part of God- Jesus Christ- became human like us to wash those sins from our lives through his blood on the cross. How blessed are we?

For the glory of God, and in remembrance of that great love, let us celebrate the Lord’s Supper-

Karen Houtman 8-7-2022