

God's Creation

St James' Lower Hutt - 10am Service

Preached by Revd. Murray Wills

11 February 2018

Scripture Reference: Genesis 1

Notes: Pictures of the things that God made were rolled up and placed in balloons that then were popped by the children, to reveal the item.

Children's Talk Section (Adapted from Creation for Kids (Genesis 1-2) by Joelee Chamberlain.

Children come forward

Well – Here we are inside for our Outdoor Service. We have been very lucky with the weather over the years, but today it is a little bit wet for that.

What are the sorts of things that you were looking forward to doing outside today at our service?

(climbing the tree, sitting on a mat, playing with a ball.....)?

Have you ever wondered where everything came from? Where did the sun and the moon and the stars come from? Where did plants come from? Where did fish and birds come from? Where did animals and people come from? Yes, how did all of these things get here? How can we find out?

Well, the Bible tells us where all of these things came from, how they got here. In fact, the very first words of the whole Bible say, "In the Beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."

Then the Bible goes on to tell more about how God did this.

The Bible tells us that at first everything was dark. And water covered the whole world. But then the Bible says that in 6 days God made everything.

The Bible then goes on to tell that on the first day God said, "Let there be light."

1. ((Day and Night))

And there was light; just like that! And God saw that the light was good, it was just right. God called the light time "Day" and He called the dark time "Night".

What comes next after Day 1?

On day 2, God made the sky with clouds in it. Yes, God separated the water on the world from the water above the world. The clouds are made up of little drops of water. On day 2 water still covered the whole world.

2. ((Clouds))

Then on Day 3, God had dry land come up out of the waters that covered the whole world. God called the dry land "Earth" and He called the waters "Seas" or "Oceans"

3. ((Sea and desert))

And God saw that they were good, they were just right.

Then on the same day, God said for plants to grow on the earth. There were trees and bushes and grasses, all sorts of plants.

And these plants would grow flowers and fruits and vegetables.
And God made the plants so that they would have seeds that would grow into more plants like themselves.

4. ((plants, flowers, vegetables))

And God saw that everything was good, it was just right.

What do you think God Made on Day 4?

On Day 4, God made the sun, the moon, and the stars.

5. ((Sun, Moon, Stars))

And God saw that they were good, they were just right.

Well, the next morning was Day 5. On Day 5, God made all sorts of fish and other things to swim in the water, and God made all sorts of birds and flying things to fly in the sky.

6. ((Birds))

7. ((Fish))

And God saw that they were all good, they were just right.

Then the next morning was Day 6. Now, remember, back on Day 3, God had made the dry land and plants. He did that so that the world would be all ready for the things that He was going to make on Day 6. The world would have a place for these things to live and good food for them to eat. So now, first on Day 6, God made all kinds of animals. He made elephants and horses and lions and lizards and all kinds of bugs. All the kinds of animals that live on the land.

8. ((elephants))

9. ((lions))

10.((Horse))

11.((bugs))

And God saw that the animals were all good, they were all just right.

God also made something else on Day 6, God made something very special -- God made people. Yes, God made a man and a woman. (A little later the Bible says their names were Adam and Eve.) And God blessed the man and woman, and God said that they were to be rulers over all the animals and fish and birds.

12.((people))

And God looked at everything He had made, and He saw that everything was good, everything was just right.

Well, the next morning on Day 7, what do you think God made? Nothing!! God decided not to make anything more. Everything that God wanted to make was already made. The Bible says God rested.

And that is how everything got here! God made them all! Yes, God can do anything.

Can you remember the things that we just talked about that God made?

God says that each thing created was “good” and together they were “very good” do you think God would want us to look after the things that God made?

What are the sorts of ways we can look after God’s creation?

...

What I would like to do is to talk briefly to the adults now while you do some colouring and puzzles. After you have finished we will place them on the Altar.

We believe in God, the Father, the Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth...

God alone, the God of Israel, the one true God is the maker of heaven and earth.

Our care for what is sacred, for what God called good and very good has been patchy at best. Genesis makes it clear that humans in our sin and rebellion are fully responsible for corrupting the world. During the last few decades environmental concerns have swelled. Countless reports show the effects of climate change, the increasing rate at which species are becoming extinct, desertification, pollution of water sources, pollution of the air we breath and so on. As Christians we have a vital part to play. Humanity is both part of creation and distinctive within it.

Here is what Thomas Aquinas who lived from 1225-1274 said:

For God brought things into existence in order to communicate God’s goodness to creatures and to represent God’s goodness through them. And since God’s goodness cannot be adequately represented by any one creature, God produced many diverse creatures. Hence the universe as a whole participates in and represents God’s goodness in a more perfect way than any single creature does. In other words, everything God created matters and everything is dependent, and has a natural inclination towards the good of the whole.

And it is God’s valuation of the World that we should embrace. Augustine said “what God sees as wondrously good, humans should see as wondrously good; they should move beyond their greed and value natural beings intrinsically for themselves and their place in the orderly scheme of creation.”

How are we doing? Through Project Kowhai we have been planting trees, and we have had an active Virtually Green Group in the past. But is that enough? I think as Christians we have a part to play in giving witness to our commission to look after the environment, to look after what is sacred and breathed on by God and therefore sacred to us. To speak up and have a voice at every opportunity at a national, diocesan and Parish of Lower Hutt level.

We need to be more mindful of creation and maybe a place to start is to explore the theology around creation. This is a big topic which I have a lot of resources on if this is something which you would like to explore together.

Another place to start is for us to get out there, and enjoy and wonder in God's creation. On the hot days over summer, my friends and I have been known to go to Eastbourne and jump in the sea!. One of my plans for the new year is to get out in nature more often, not just because I need the exercise, but I need the experience. Something special seems to happen when you spend time reflecting on creation. Don't you agree?

This afternoon we are planning to go to Red Rocks to "commune with nature" and marvel in what God has made. I hope that you too will find time to reflect on the creation story in Genesis, which is so often rushed over in our haste to read the other scripture, but is absolutely foundational to our faith.

To sum up, I would like to read a prayer adapted from The Liturgy of Creation:

In the beginning God created all things,
and God saw that they were good.

At our beginning, God created us
unique and irreplaceable, loved and wanted by God,
known and treasured by God even before He created us.

In all our new beginnings, God creates something new
so we will seek God in the freshness of this morning,
in the laughter of friends,
in the colours of creation,
and in this beautiful place.

Lord God, King of Creation,
open our eyes to see your presence,
our souls to sense your presence,
and our hearts to love your presence,
ever here in your creation,
and ever beyond it in eternity.
Amen.

~ Adapted from Liturgy of Creation

(<http://www.wellsprings.org.uk/liturgies/creation.htm>). Posted on Third Space