

# From Creation to New Creation

Genesis 1:31; John 1:1-4

Sermon for January 30 2022

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Prayer: Heavenly Father, we come before you this evening to praise you and give you thanks. For your love endures forever. Not only do we praise you, everything and everyone in heaven and on earth should praise the Lord. Psalm 19:1 declares: "The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands." Lord, You deserve our praise. We have no other God but you. You are our only dependence, our only Savior, that we may look upon you alone. This evening as we study Your word, we pray that You would apply it to our hearts. Help us trust in You as You enlighten us. We ask these things in Jesus' name, Amen.

## Introduction

Today, we are going to learn about New City Catechism Question 5: What else did God create?

The Answer: God created all things by his powerful Word, and all his creation was very good; everything flourished under his loving rule.

I don't know whether you noticed or not, we have been getting a lot of snow lately. In the month of January alone, we already have 10 inches of snow. That is more than the total snowfall of last year. I guess many of us like snow, right? Maybe some of you hate shoveling snow. Anyway, we know most of the children like snow. Children don't have to go to school on a snow day, and they get the chance to play with snow.

During the snow days, if you have kids at home, I would encourage you to show them a picture of snowflakes. Or help them to observe the pattern of a snowflake using magnifying glass.

As you can see in this picture, snowflakes are extremely beautiful. Even many artists have been amazed by its pattern. The interesting part is that no matter how light and small the snowflake, its crystals are always in the shape of hexagon.

So when you look at this beautiful and orderly snowflake, it reminds you that God is a great designer. He made

everything beautiful. As Genesis 1:31 says, "God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good." Therefore, we can gaze up to the heavens and know within its vastness that this is His creation. Every day, we can look at the whole universe, look at the sunrise, sunset, night moon, and the complex structure of our human body and give praises to God. In fact, we should appreciate the significance of the total order and structure of creation.

Theologian John Calvin wrote: "God has given us, throughout the whole framework of this world, clear evidences of his eternal wisdom, goodness, and power. Though he is in himself invisible, he in a manner becomes visible to us in his works...Now the faithful people, to whom he has given eyes, see sparks of his glory, as it were, glittering in every created thing. The world was no doubt made, that it might be the theater of the divine glory."

## **Point 1. God's creation brings glory to God**

As John Calvin pointed out, "The world was no doubt made, that it might be the theater of the divine glory". Human beings were created to worship God in the very beginning. It is only when we worship Him that we will have true contentment and joy. The Westminster Shorter Catechism says it like this: "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever."

However, after the Fall, we don't know how to appreciate God's creation. We don't give glory to God. Instead, we give glory to ourselves or something else. Because of this, we also lose the joy of worshiping and praising God. Even worse, human beings can easily fall into the temptation of idol worship.

Let's talk about idol worship. Do you know how to recognize an idol? Many people believe idolatry is when you bow down to a statue. Well, an idol is not just a statue. Idol worship can come in many forms. Actually, any distortion from the true character of God is an act of idolatry. Whenever we have a false understanding of the character and nature of God then we are actually worshipping a false god and are in fact engaging in idolatry. Think about that for a moment.

An idol can be anything we place ahead of God in our lives. Anything that takes God's place in our hearts, including possessions, careers, relationships, hobbies, sports, entertainment, goals, or addictions to alcohol, drugs, and gambling. Some of these are sinful acts, but some of these appear to be good, like our careers and relationships. However, if we think these are more important than God himself, they become our idols. If we need them more than we need God, the result is the same. Our hearts will be driven away from loving the one true God.

No doubt, these idols may provide temporary pleasure or escape from pain. But they ultimately lead only to disappointment and death. In fact, those who worship idols always feel tired and empty. Let me give you an example. Have you seen anyone playing tennis with a badminton racket? No, because a badminton racket is obviously not designed for tennis. The same principle can apply here in God's creation. Man was created to glorify and worship

God. If man worships other things, he misuses his life. He loses the meaning and value of existence. Therefore, when you worship idols, you will feel tired and empty.

## **Point 2. All God's Creation was very Good**

The New City Catechism answer for question 5 is: "God created all things by his powerful Word, and all his creation was very good; everything flourished under his loving rule." Why was all of his creation very good?

In Genesis, the very first words of God were, "Let there be light." We cannot emphasize the importance of these words enough. Because before God's creation, "the earth was without form and void, and that darkness spread across the face of the deep." (Genesis 1:2) In other words, if there is no creation, the earth would be without form, a void in total darkness.

If we take a closer look at the structure of the first six days of creation, we will see that God is solving the problem of "chaos" and "emptiness". The first three days show us God giving the world form. The other three days, days four through six, show us God filling the world. He brings fullness to emptiness.

Day 1: light created and divided from darkness.

Day 2: atmosphere created and divided from oceans.

Day 3: land created and divided from water.

Day 4: sun, moon and stars created to fill the sky.

Day 5: creatures created to fill sky and water.

Day 6: creatures created to fill land, man created as pinnacle of creation.

Day 7: God rested from all His work.

Just think for a moment. What would happen if God did not create anything? What would the reverse of creation look like? If God takes the light away, the world will turn back into darkness. If He takes life away, it is death.

As you read through the chapters of the book of Genesis, you see death and darkness spreading in the world.

Remember the story of Cain killing his brother Abel? It was the first murder in the Bible. Then, there was the Flood of Noah's day. A huge worldwide flood was sent by God to destroy all living things except for the eight people who survived on the Ark. So when God's blessing has turned into curse, everything good will become bad.

Now, let us focus on Day 6. Because this is very important.

When everything was finally ready, it was time for God to create mankind. God said in Genesis 1:26, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds of the sky, over the

livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." God created his precious mankind, both male and female, in the very image of God. People were made in God's image of perfection and holiness. So when God saw his creations, He said they were very good. The most unique of all God's creations were Adam and Eve, because they were created in the image of God and after the likeness of God. And what immediately follows in this verse is: "And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the heaven, and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." We exercise lordship and kingship and dominion over the earth because we were made in the image of God.

In ancient times, the only ones described as bearing the image of God were kings. So you see what God is saying here in Genesis is this: "My image belongs to My created human, both male and female." Now let's pause for a moment and reflect on this. Who are we? What is our identity? As believers in Christ, who have trusted in Jesus as Lord and Savior, we are the children of God. We are the image bearers of God. We are kings and queens! This understanding has a direct implication for our lives.

In today's society and culture, many people have lost their sense of self-worth. They do not know who they are. They have no sense of worth because they don't know that they are created in the image of God! Some people think they are just animals (the evolutionists). Some believe their worth can only be found in material possessions and physical comfort (materialism). Other people think they are worthless and there is no purpose in life (apathy). All these people have gotten it wrong!

In Genesis chapter one, before the fall, before the first sin, people were created in the image of God to exercise authority over the creation. The man and woman were called to bring the world in tribute to God. We are kings and queens. We are royalty. We bear the image of God in everywhere we go. Of course, after the fall, exercising that dominion over the earth faced a great deal of opposition. Because of sin, our relationship with God was broken. Not just that, our relationship with one another also suffers as the result of fall. We struggle to love our spouse, our children, and our neighbors. We can see in the fallen world, there are so many broken relationships, broken marriages, and broken families.

Even our relationship with the natural world is no longer harmonious. Global warming is an increasing threat to our lives, and it is no secret that human activities are the main reason Earth is becoming hotter by the day. A lot of human activities are responsible for polluting the air and creating the heat. We have really messed up the world God created! In summary, after Adam and Eve sinned against God, they lost their dignity. They also lost the beautiful place they once lived. The world we are living today is no longer a paradise! It isn't beautiful and good anymore.

This leads us to the final point. The new creation.

### **Point 3. The new creation is through Jesus Christ**

The Good News is that after human beings sinned God immediately unfolded His redemptive plan. He has a plan to restore the world He once created.

We all enjoy new things. There is something exciting about the potential within something new. We like to upgrade our iPhones, we love to have new cars. How about new creation? This is not an American dream. This is the promise that God has given to us: "Behold, all things have become new" Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." This is the Gospel. The Gospel is not a good suggestion about what we should do. It is good news that proclaims what God has done for us. Let us now consider what the Holy Spirit reveals through John's opening verses to his Gospel, in John 1:1-4-- "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men."

The first sentence of the Gospel of John says this in Greek: "In the beginning." It is the same as the first sentence of the book of Genesis in Hebrew: "In the beginning." They are exactly the same. The apostle John emphasized that in the first creation, God simply spoke and things were created. However in the new creation, The Word (Jesus) became flesh and entered into the world and dwelled among us. The Creator, who created all things by His Word, had come to the created world.

John did not stop after describing the creation of the heavens and the earth in John chapter 1. John tells that "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." We know that in Genesis, God created the water, land, sky, animals, and human beings. But John tells us that Jesus is not one of these created lives. Instead, Jesus is the creator of all lives and He is going to recreate life.

This is our good news. This good news is about a person. It is about the incarnate Jesus Christ. In short, the Gospel is what God has done in history, that God saved the world through his son. The Son of the living God came down in the flesh, was sacrificed on the cross, rose from the dead, ascended into heaven. And he will return again as king. Every stage of Christ's life is the foundation of our salvation.

The Gospel is not just a redemption that saves individual souls, it is also universal. When Christ returns, God's grace will restore to the nature and the beauty it once had. As the book of Revelation 21:5 says, "God will renew all things." Everything that was lost and broken and corrupted by the Fall will be corrected, restored, and healed through redemption. We will be with God forever in the new heaven and new earth, where we will enjoy new and eternal life.

## **Response:**

Finally, how do we respond to the good news?

We can either accept it or reject it.

John testifies at the end of this Gospel that his purpose in writing the book was: "But these are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through his name." (John 20:31)

How can we receive this new life? Believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Then we will enter the kingdom of the beloved Son, God's family, and be united to Christ. We obtain newness of life, victory over sin, and future glory.

The pandemic reminds us of the horrors of death, and that our physical lives are fragile. When we attend funeral service, it reminds us that we all have to face physical death one day. Even if without a pandemic, even if you eat and drink the most healthy food, we still will die one day. We have no ability to save ourselves. We cannot stop ourselves from getting old. Nothing in us will be able to renew our lives without the power of the living God. All the material things in the world, including ourselves will get older as time passes by. Only Jesus Christ can renew our lives.

Let us put our faith not in ourselves, not in this world, but in Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us that "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17)

## **Prayer:**

Thank you, Lord, for reminding us of the goodness of creation. May the Lord bless us as we contemplate these truths that impact every area of our lives. We pray that we might trust in Your providence, that we might delight in doing Your will and that Your image would be restored in us even in the way we live. Help us to find peace and rest in Jesus Christ for the rest of the week. We ask these things in Jesus' name, Amen.