

God and Creation

Scripture: Genesis 1:31

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People of God: If there is one topic of conversation that all of us engage in, it is talking about the weather. Whenever I phone my mother, it's something that we always talk about. Lately, of course, the topic has been the hot, sunny days of last weekend and the early part of this week. Those who went camping for the long-weekend were able to enjoy July weather, not your typical May weather. When I watched part of field day at TCS, on Wednesday, the air was oppressive and it felt hotter than any of my days in Texas.

This early hot weather has gotten us into summer mode—my favorite time of year. (It's one reason why I went to Texas—to get a jumpstart on summer.) It is a time of year to enjoy the outdoors, walking, hiking, biking, canoeing, or simply sitting under a tree and reading a good book. Enjoying the outdoors is enjoying the creation.

When we think of creation—from the grand landscapes of Big Bend National Park to the green grass of the backyard, we should think of God. That's because God and creation, go together. You can't think of one, without thinking of the other.

And yet, it is surprising how many people are able to do that. When they look at nature, they forget about the God of nature. When they enjoy the outdoors, they ignore the one who created it all. When they consider the natural order, they are oblivious about the one who placed that order in the world.

Last weekend was the grand re-opening of the Museum of Nature in Ottawa. In all my time here, I had never been there before, so when I read that it was free on Saturday, I seized the opportunity to visit it. I was impressed enough to go back on Monday, taking out a yearlong membership.

As a Museum of Nature, the wonders of nature are on display. They had a special exhibit on frogs. At each display case, they explained where the frogs were found in the wild, what they ate, how they survived, and so on. In all the descriptions and explanations, in this gallery and every gallery, there was no mention of God. That, of course, is to be expected in a public Museum, where the ideology of secularism reigns, and where the theory of evolution tries to eliminate any need for God.

But whenever the Psalmist reflects on nature, he can't help but think of God. It's not just in the Psalm that we read, but whenever the creation is mentioned in the Psalms, the focus is on God. Just think of Psalm 19: "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hand." Or Psalm 104, "He (God) makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate—bringing forth food from the earth." And then in the Psalm that we read, we are to "Give thanks to the Lord, who gives food to every creature."

God and creation. For the Psalmist, you can't think of one, without the other. That should also be true for the believer. When we think of God, we are reminded of his great work: the creation. When we look at nature, we see the handiwork of God.

One of the memory verses of the Friends this year was Genesis 1:1. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." It's how the Bible opens. It's the starting point of everything that follows in this book. It's the foundation of a Christian worldview. God created this world.

Now working out what that all means can get very complicated. But as those who teach in the Friendship program know and seek to do: It is important to keep things simple. That's a good word of advice for preachers to follow as well. Yes, there are times, when we need to dig deep into the text; times when explanations get complicated and complex. But there are also times, when it is important just to keep things simple and basic. Sometimes stating the obvious is a very important thing to do.

"In the beginning God created". We can get into heated discussions about how and when God created, but the starting point is undeniable: God created. He created it all: the heavens and the earth. The sun and the moon. The mountains and the grass. The birds and the frogs. God created it all.

And it was very good. That's the refrain throughout Genesis One. The creation was good. This world is not intrinsically evil. Yes, there is evil in the world that has affected the very structure of creation, but at its core, the creation is good. It was very good.

As a result, this is our home. This is where God intended us to live, to work, and to enjoy. This is the place where God wants us to be in communion with him. In his creation.

And that's one of the ways God shows his love to us. God loves us. That's another simple message taught in Friendship. And it's what we always need to remember. God loves us.

Whenever we think of God's love, we quickly think of Jesus Christ as the prime example of God's love to us. And rightly so. After all, what does John 3:16 say, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

But God's love to us is also shown in the creation that God made for us. God created this world for us. The sun and the moon, the mountains and grass, the birds and the frogs—it's all been made for us. No wonder we have in Psalm 136 that constant refrain, "His love endures forever." God's love is shown in the created order. Not just his power and might, but also his love.

And so when God sent his son Jesus Christ into the world, Jesus came not just to save us from our sins, but also to make sure that this creation would be renewed again. In Jesus, all things will be renewed. Our minds. Our bodies. And the creation in which we live.

And so, this summer, when you are out on the farm, picking stones, or trying to get the hay in, or spraying the fields, think about the God of creation and give thanks to the Lord. When you are on vacation, as I've already done, and see the wonders of creation—and not just the grand landscapes, but also the little wonders—like the spots on the ladybug, give thanks to the Lord. When you're cutting the grass, or working in the garden, not my favorite activities, though for some great enjoyment, give thanks to the Lord.

Give thanks to the Lord because God's work of creation is a labor of love. God and creation. You shouldn't be able to think of one without the other. And so, may you in this season in which we tend to be more outdoors, enjoying the creation, let us be mindful of the Creator and come to worship him.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever.
Amen.