



Creation Realized – the World’s Goodness and Goal

2nd in the “Creation Matters” Series

Genesis 1:1-25 pg. 1

April 15, 2018

Pastor Mickey Klink

Introduction

In this sermon we explore creation’s goodness and goal, and how such truths must be realized and applied to life.

The Text: Genesis 1:1-25 and Romans 8:18-25

“The good news of Genesis 1-2 is not that God made [the world] in a certain number of days, or a certain number of years ago, or by a certain process. Rather, the good news of Genesis is that the universe is God’s work of creation, perfectly fit for the flourishing of life” (Wilson, *God’s Good World*, p. 169-70).

1) Creation was made good, and that means it is good right now!

a) The phrase “was good/very good” means that creation “has been made good” by God.

b) Creation’s goodness gets lost when terms like “flesh” and “world” are taken out of the Bible’s full context.

c) Creation’s goodness demands that Christians be obedient and faithful managers (stewards) of their physical world.

2) Creation was not only made good, but God's "goal" for creation is that it will be made perfect.

a) Technically speaking, the Bible speaks of creation as both a past event (Gen 1-2) and a future goal (Rev 21-22).

b) To understand God's plan for the created world, we must connect the doctrines of creation and redemption.

c) God's purposes for the world are explained and fulfilled by the life, death, resurrection, ascension, and return of Jesus.

(1) Redemption w/out Creation – deny physicality; saved out of this world, rather than saved in it and with it.

(2) Creation w/out Redemption – deny spirituality; nothing beyond this world.

3) Some applications and reflections on the goodness and goal of creation.

a) Christians need to realize that creation matters, is here to stay (forever!), and important for our spiritual lives.

b) Since God is the Creator, then caring for his creation is, quite simply, a subset of being a disciple of Jesus.

c) Christians "care" about how they live in the world because they know not only the source but also the goal.

(1) Focus on the goodness (source) and goal (solution) and try to align all decisions between those two points.

(2) Follow the example of Jesus (service with suffering and not self-interest).

Response

- Creation needs to be realized – by the church!

Sunday Text Questions for Gen 1:1-25 (Creation Matters series)

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- 1) Starter Question: What have you been taught about God's future plan for the physical world/planet earth?
- 2) Read the texts aloud and discuss together any significant observations or issues needing clarification.
- 3) In Gen. 1 God calls the world "good" 6 times and "very good" 1 time. How is that significant?
- 4) The Hebrew word translated as "good" in Gen. 1 could also be translated as "beautiful." How does the translation "beautiful" add insight into the use of the term in Gen. 1:4?
- 5) Read Romans 8:1-11. Is Paul using the term "flesh" to refer to (1) the physical body in general or (2) a power that stands against God that needs to be redeemed (hint: v. 9 as evidence for the latter)?
- 6) Have Christians – have you – understand that Paul's reference to "flesh" in Rom 8 and elsewhere is not to the physical body per se, but to the power of sin at work in us? How is that important?
- 7) If all of physical creation is still "good," and designed as such by God, how might that require an appropriate response to all that God has created – people, animals, nature, resources, etc.?
- 8) If God made the world good, and plans to make it perfect (the goal), then why do Christians speak of leaving or escaping this world? Read Rev. 21:1-3 for a depiction of God's coming, not humanity escaping.
- 9) Since God is the creator, how is caring for creation not a political issue but more basically part being a disciple of Jesus Christ?
- 10) How should a knowledge of the truth about creation (its goodness and its goal) make a difference in how we live in God's creation or how we live as God's creation?

Further study this week: Rom 8:18-25 on the redemption of creation (Mon); Rom 8:1-17 on living according to the Spirit not "Flesh" (Tues); Ps 8 on the majesty of creation (Wed); Ps 19 on God's glory in creation (Thurs); Col 1:15-23 on Christ as center of creation (Fri).