

Genesis – 10 Big Questions : Creation Part 1

Pastor Jim Essian : February 8, 2015

THE PARADOX CHURCH

Genesis 1:1-25. I'll be reading 1:1-2:

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

This is the Word of God.

Genesis was written about 3500 years ago. It was written by Moses. Now, there is some debate as to whether Moses wrote it or not. So in seminary circles and scholarly circles there's some debate over if Moses was the author of Genesis. But Jesus said that Moses was the author of Genesis, so we're gonna go with what Jesus says. Right? We'll always go with what Jesus says--he doesn't have a seminary degree, he doesn't have a doctorate, he is God though, and so that that that just seems like we should do and believe what Jesus says. So Jesus said Moses authored Genesis, so Moses authored Genesis.

And Moses was writing to Israelites who'd just been delivered out of slavery in Egypt. They'd been in slavery for 400 years, and now they're wandering around in the desert for 40 years, and so Moses pens the Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. And so he's not speaking to some of our current cultural debates; he's not speaking to evolution, he's not trying to debate evolution or debate Darwin--that's not what he's talking to, that's not the people that he was writing to and the context he was writing in. He was writing to a context where pagan nations, pagan peoples, they had their own creation accounts, and this is then the one true creation. This is the one where--this is the God of Israel's creation account.

So Moses is writing to offset these other creation accounts the Israelite people had been hearing and listening and learning. Most of the other creation accounts-- Egypt, and

Babylonian, all these different nations--usually had a bunch of gods fighting, and creation becomes the aftermath of their conflict. Then humans become the slaves to the gods because now they have this creation and all this work to do and they don't want to do it, and so that's typically the creation narrative. So Moses is writing, saying, "No, that's not how it went down. Here's how it went down, and here's who made it go down." That's his primary concern.

His primary concern is not so much the how of God creating, right? It's in here a little bit, but that's not the force of Genesis 1. The force of Genesis 1 is who created. It's who is this creator that has created. And so that that's what Moses is mostly concerned with.

Now, in our day, of course, there is much debate over the how. Outside the church and inside the church, there's debate over how God created. You have evolution: was it evolution, did creation come forward because of a Big Bang and because of an evolutionary process. Then inside the church, there's debates as well: maybe God used the evolutionary process, maybe God is Creator but he used the evolutionary process, is that possible. Is it a literal six days? Did God create in a literal six days, 24 hour days, did he do that? Was there another way in which he created? How about Adam and Eve: are they actual real people? Is that what Genesis 1 is claiming? Are they actual real people? These are questions that people in the church and outside the church are asking about, and so we're going to take two weeks to talk about them. Next week, we're going to talk more about the how. Next week, we're going to talk about evolution, we're going to talk about the different theories that Christians hold to in regards to creation. We'll talk about a literal Adam and Eve or not, we'll talk about more of the "how" next week. We'll get into some of the debates next week. This week, what I want us to do is I want to honor what I think Moses is trying to do primarily. And that's just reading the text and letting it point us to the glory and grandeur and beauty of God. So that's what I want to do this week. This week I just want us to worship. This week I want to have some fun and I want us to worship and I want us just look and see who this creator God is that Moses is writing about. Sound good? That where we're going to go.

So the infinite God has an infinite attention span, and an infinite, infinite, infinite attention to detail. Infinite. And so all of creation--its grandeur, its glory, its beauty, its complexities--is meant to stir our affections for God that we might worship him. For instance, consider this: our sun is a mere 93,000,000 miles from Earth. That's actually not

that far, considering all the other things that we could talk about. If we were on a plane going 500 miles an hour to the sun, it would take you 21 years to get to the sun from here. 21 years. By comparison, the nearest galaxy to the Milky Way galaxy, which is our galaxy, is the Andromeda galaxy which is 15 quintillion miles away. That's 15 with 18 zeros behind it. And it would take us, on that same plane that's going 500 miles an hour--it would take us 4.2 trillion years to get to the next galaxy. 4.2 trillion years to get to the next galaxy. In our galaxy there are between 150 and 200 billion stars, and our galaxy is only one of 150 billion galaxies. And Psalm 145 says he knows every one of those stars by name. This is the macro of creation. That's the macro of it.

But consider like the micro of creation, the grandeur of the micro of God's creation. All of the stars in the universe are fewer than the molecules the H₂O molecules in 10 drops of water. Consider the micro complexities and beauty of God's creation. We're going to learn here, in just a few moments, that God, he speaks things into existence, things come forth. They exist by the very word of his power. Just his words create things, and you are his longest word. There are 3.5 billion letters that make up your genetic code in your DNA. You are God's longest word. Just consider the micro of God's creation—the macro of his creation—the micro of his creation—it's meant to boggle the mind that we might glory in who God is and worship God as creator. So Revelation 4:11 rightly says, “Worthy are you, our Lord and God”—why?—“to receive glory and honor and praise, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.” And so I want to do the debates next week. This week, I want to worship.

Genesis chapter 1: we'll start in verse one and go from there. Verse one: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” We need stop there, okay? This is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and this is saying that that God is the God who created everything, who created everything. So heavens and the earth. This is like saying from head to toe, from stem to stern, beginning and end. It means everything in between too. So God, in the beginning, created everything. He created all things. That's what this means.

So you say, “Well, what about donkeys? Did he create donkeys?” Yeah, he created donkeys. He created the heavens and the earth. That's what that means: it means he created donkeys, too. “Did he make cows out of steak?” Yeah, he did that between heavens and earth, and he did all of those things. Did he make sushi out of fish, fish out of sushi—yes, he did. He did do

those things, he created all of those things. Created the heavens and the earth; in the beginning, God created everything. Did he create all the hippie milks? Almond milk and flaxseed milk and hemp milk and coconut milk. Yes, he made all of the hippie milks; he created all of those things. He created hippie farmers that wake up at 6 AM to milk almonds so you can have your hippie milk; he did all of those things. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

It's quite a statement, isn't it? It's quite a statement. The word used for "create" here is the Hebrew word *bara'*. There are other words that are used for God "creating" and "making" and "forming" and "fashioning" and "appointing" and "putting in its proper place," other words that [are] used to [mean] "create." In fact, we can create too, like God does in some way, but not in this way. *Bara'* typically—not always, but typically—means that he created out of nothing. That he created out of nothing. And it is only God is the subject of *bara'*. Only God *bara's* in the Scriptures. So he's creating here all things out of nothing.

Psalm 33:

By the word of the Lord—by the word of the Lord—the heavens were made,
by the breath of his mouth all their host.
For he spoke, and it came to be;
he commanded, and it stood firm.

Romans 4: He gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

In the beginning, God created everything out of nothing.

Then verse two should be surprising after verse one: "The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters." This seems like an odd verse after verse one. Things aren't good yet, right? We're not there yet, things aren't great yet, Earth is not habitable yet for us. The creation narrative begins to zoom in. It starts with the cosmos, the heavens and the earth, now it zooms in on Earth. Earth is formless and void; it's not habitable yet. We can't live there yet; it's not ready for us yet. Then it's going to keep going. The creation account, it's moving, it's going towards something. It's going to crescendo, in fact, when it gets to us. We are the apex

of God's creation. So in verse 26, it gets to this crescendo of the account, and it's us, we're being made in God's image. So all of this is leading up to that, and it's for us that God creates.

Creation was a gift to us. Maybe you didn't know that. We talked about, in the first week, how God, out of the overflow of who he is—his beauty and his love and his joy—out of the overflow of who he is, he creates. And he creates that he might share himself and his joy with us. So the account is beginning to build towards us whom creation was made for. Now, ultimately, creation is for God's glory, right? Everything in creation is to redound to the glory and beauty and praise of God, all of it. Creation is like a boomerang: it comes from God, but then it's meant to go back to God in praise. But in verse 2, what Moses is trying to tell us is that Earth is not yet habitable for us. It's dark and empty; man can't live there yet. There's no Starbucks, there's no Trader Joe's, there's no iPhone. It's not ready for us yet, and so God has to do something to get it ready for us.

And so it's kind of a bleak picture after this glorious statement in verse 1. But then there's this picture of hope, where you have the Spirit of God fluttering, he's hovering, over the face of the deep, over the waters. Something is going to happen, there's this anticipation that God is going to create. What was empty is going to be filled; what was dark is going to have light—we just know it! Then he begins to speak in verse 3, and he says, "Let there be light." And of course, there was light.

You'll notice in the creation account in Genesis 1 that there's an announcement that starts ten times. Ten times the writer Moses, he announces, "and God said...and God said...and God said." He's trying to tell us very clearly God is communicating. God is speaking things into existence. He's communicating. He's intimately involved with the fashioning and creating of his creation. "And God said." What comes after the announcement, then, is going to be a word of commandment. You'll see this through most of the days. "And God said, 'Let there be light,'" and then of course, there's light. So there's this word of commandment that comes after the announcement. Here's what God said, here's what he's commanding, and it happens.

God's very words have creative power. His very words create things that were not in existence to be into existence. And so he's not saying here the word "light". He's saying light into existence. He's not just calling light into existence—his voice is its very existence. That's

what's happening here. It's marvelous, it's fantastic. Colossians 1, it says that all things were made through Jesus, that he holds all things together--things are sustained in creation by Jesus. And Hebrews 1 tells us how he holds all things together: by the word of his power. He upholds the universe. So God's word has great power, great creative power. It accomplishes exactly what it sets out to do. The word of God does not come back void. So why do we cling to God's promises? Why do we trust in God's words? Why? Because everything that he says happens. We can cling to them because everything he says occurs. Because what he says takes place. Even if it doesn't exist, it will come into existence, and so we can cling to and hold to God's powerful word. And it goes on:

³ And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴ And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

Now you're probably already going to start to see some problems. There's no sun or moon yet. That doesn't come until the fourth day. There is no sun or moon, and yet we have light and dark, we have morning and we have evening.

So those are some of things that we will talk about next week, but here's one thing I want you to take notice of here. Notice that God doesn't create everything in one day, right? On the first day, what did he do? Light. That was it. Like, he was done. He was good. "I created light; it didn't exist, now does. That's a pretty good day. I'm done for the day." He doesn't create everything at once. Could God have created everything in one day? If he can create light, could he have created everything in one day? Yeah. But he doesn't. Why doesn't he? He's not tired, is He? No, God's not tired. No, what's he's doing here is he's weaving rhythms and cycles into the fabric of creation. He's trying to show us something: that in creation there are rhythms. There are cycles; there is evening, there is morning. Later we are going to see there are seasons and there are times. There is an order; there's a rhythm to everything.

So we are to then walk on beat, in rhythm with how God has created the universe to be. So God, he's like "This thing that I got done today, it's good. I'm done for the day." You and I, what we tend to do is we rail against the rhythm of God. We get off beat. We fret about what we do not accomplish today. Right? "I didn't accomplish this, or I didn't do this," or we're

worried about what we have to do tomorrow. So nighttime and evening is not a restful time for us. It's a time to watch a bunch of TV, being on our phone, answering emails, working late, fretting and being anxious about what we have to do tomorrow. And God here is saying "No, no, no, that's not the way I designed this thing to be. I designed for you to rest in the evening. I design for you to enjoy what you accomplished today; not worrying about what you still need to accomplish tomorrow." God's like "I created light, and that was good enough. That was good enough for day one. That's a pretty good deal." So he is weaving these things into the fabric of creations, and so God's done on day one.

On the next day, another announcement takes place in verse six. "And God said,"—here's the word of commandment—"Let there be an expanse"—this is the skies—"in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters. And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day."

And so here God is separating the sky out from the waters. So you have the waters on the earth, and then you have the source of rain above the earth. Then you have the sky as an expanse that separates the two. This is really important because God, throughout Genesis 1, is separating things. He's separating things. So he separates here the sky from the waters, but then in verse four he's separating light and darkness, evening and morning. In verse 10, he separates the dry land from the sea. When you get to us, he separates male from female. He's separating things.

Why? This is a very orderly creation account. This is orderly. This is not chaotic. All the other creation accounts were chaos and fighting and conflict, but the God of the Bible, the one true God, the true creation account has been creating in an orderly fashion. Everything has its place; there's appointed roles; there are specific functions; there's a dividing line of where something is. It's very orderly. It's not chaotic at all and when things get off of that, when they get out of order, then things go really bad. When the sea comes onto the land, what happens? That's bad, right? That's not a good thing when sea comes up. You are talking about hurricanes, typhoons (I don't know if typhoons come onto land, they might, I don't know) but [bad things happen] when those things separate. When things that aren't separated

begin to get out of place, or off of their appointed role, things tend to go really bad. So this is the second day. This is Monday. God's separating some things. He's creating the sky.

Look at Verse 9, this is Tuesday:

⁹ And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. ¹⁰ God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

¹¹ And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth." And it was so. ¹² The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ¹³ And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

Now on the third day a lot more happens than happens in the first two days, but notice God is not creating anything on the third day. He's not creating anything on the third day here. He's gathering the waters together, and dry land then appears. He's gathering the waters of together, into different bodies of water. The dry land appears. He doesn't create dry land here. He created dry and in verse one. Here they just appear, as he's ordering everything and putting everything in its proper place. As well, notice that God has been naming things. He names the dry land Earth, and the waters Seas. Back up near the top, He named the light Day, and the dark Night, and in verse eight, He names the skies Heaven.

He's naming things, and when he doesn't name the things that He's creating, He blesses them, which is very similar. These are divine words that God is speaking to His creation and He's interpreting creation for us. He's saying this is its primary function, this is how I designed it to be. When I name something, I'm exercising my authority over what I've created. God is not just Creator God; He is Lord over His creation. He's king over His creation, and He determines its function, and He determines what it was meant and designed to do. So He's naming things.

In verse 11, God orders the plants and the trees and the vegetables to sprout up out of the earth. The earth has this capacity, this ability to bring forth vegetation. He's getting the earth ready for us. All this is building up to verse 26 where we show up. He endows creation with the ability to sprout and to reproduce and to make vegetables and fruits and seeds and all these different things according to their kinds, so that plants yield more plants and fruit bear more fruit. This is fruit. Fruit comes on this day. This is a good day. It's a good day. This is watermelon day. This is blackberries and cantaloupe and apples and fruit salad. This is a good day; this is a great day; this is fruit day. You gotta love fruit. Do you love fruit? This is the day when God made fruit.

Have you ever wondered why there's so much variety in the world? Have you ever wondered that? Does the evolutionist have an answer as to why everything is so delicious? I want to know. He's creating different shapes, and colors, and senses, and sights, and smells, and tastes, and all of these things, and they are all reproducing according to their kinds. The apple tree doesn't just make one apple tree, it makes thousands of other apple trees, and they keep making and multiplying. It's beautiful, and there's variety, and there's all of these beautiful things. It's delicious. God is creating delicious things for us. This is, of course, day three. Now notice that everything is according to its kind, so plants yield plants, and fruits bear fruits. The apple tree doesn't produce a kale plant. Carrots don't yield avocados. Everything is according to its kind.

Now we are going to get into the second half the week. Now, in the first of half the week, what God has been doing is he has been forming the earth. In the second half of the week, He is going to begin filling the earth. He's going to fill the earth with certain things as we get into the second half. Look at verse 14, "And God said"—there's our announcement again—

"Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years,¹⁵ and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so.¹⁶ And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars.¹⁷ And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth,¹⁸ to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate—here's the separation again—the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.¹⁹ And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

Now, remember Moses is writing to the Israelites. They are wandering around in the desert. They have been hearing these different creation stories. They have been influenced by different nations that were worshiping other kinds of gods. They would be worshiping these gods; they would worship the sun as a god and they would worship the moon as a god. Those very words are the names of gods. They would worship the stars, and they had the god of the harvest and the god of fertility, and they had these different gods that they would worship. So when Moses is writing here, he's intentionally downplaying the sun and the moon here. He calls the sun the greater light and the moon the lesser light. He's intentionally downplaying, he's wanting to downplay the sun and the moon and the stars and the rest of creation so that he might exalt God as creator. So doesn't even name them; he doesn't name them at all.

In verse 16, the sun and the moon, the great light and the lesser light, they are meant to rule, or govern, where God has put them. This is important because that's what He is doing, when He's filling the earth in the back half of the week, He's filling it with things that rule over where he has put them, which makes sense when we get to us as we are meant to rule over, steward well, love, inform, and create, and have dominion over creation also.

Also notice that these lights are meant to divide up the days and the years and the seasons. Again, you have order here; you have rhythms; you have seasons, and you have different times of sowing and reaping and working and resting and parties and celebration. God is weaving into the fabric of creation these different rhythms and cycles again. God cares about what you eat and when you sleep and what you do and what your schedule is. He is a very practical God. He cares about all of those things. He cares about those things. He cares about your schedule. He cares about your rest. He cares about your work. He wants us to enjoy the things that he's created and the rhythms in which he has created them. God wants you to enjoy spring; He loves that we enjoy spring and He wants you to appreciate the changing colors of the leaves in the fall. He wants you to freak out when in Texas, it snows for the first time in a couple of years. He wants those things to happen. He's weaved those things, those rhythms into creation. He's created stars, and orbits, and rotations, and sunrises so that we might have that rhythm and those varieties.

So we will get into this more over the course of the next few weeks and even in later weeks, but let me just ask you now: are you resting well? Do you rest well? God cares if you rest well.

He wants you to rest well. You need to rest well. He created stars and orbits and rotations that you might rest well. Do you rest well? Do you celebrate well? These are signs for festivals and harvests and times of celebration and party. Do you party enough? Do you party well? Partying is godly. Celebrations are godly. Are you doing that, or are you railing against, working against the rhythms that God has weaved into creation?

So this is the fourth day. The fourth day is Wednesday. Moses is very concerned that we worship God as creator, not creation, not the sun, not the moon. We worship God as [creator.] This is Worship Wednesday, okay? This is why you grew up going to church again on Wednesday if you are a Baptist. I made that up, it's not true.

Day five, verse 20:

And God said, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens." ²¹ So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. ²² And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." ²³ And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

Now God is going to fill here the sky with the birds and the seas with fish. He continues to fill, and he blesses them so that they have the ability to multiply. So now we have fish. We have sushi. We can go fishing now, and we've got birds, we've got chicken, and we've got turkey season. We've got bacon-wrapped dove and we've got bird watching stuff, if you like to do that. You've got birds and you've got fish, and it's beautiful, right? This is Sushi Thursday. God creates the fish and the birds.

Now onto the sixth day, verse 24:

And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. ²⁵ And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

²⁷ So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.

²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” ²⁹ And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. ³⁰ And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. ³¹ And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

And so on the sixth day, now God has the animals. Again he creates them to multiply, according to their kinds. So monkeys beget monkeys. Horses multiplying with other horses, and llamas have llamas, according to their kind. Last week, my wife and I, we celebrated our 11th wedding anniversary, and that day she had gone to the sonographer—she’s pregnant—to find out the sex of our baby. She was around 20 weeks, and so we could find out the gender of the baby. She had made this card and she had given it to the sonographer, to circle “boy” or “girl.” The sonographer closed the card up and sealed it. We went out to our anniversary dinner, and so we got to open up the card together and see what this baby was going to be, a boy or girl.

But those are the only two options right? It is just boy and girl, not boy, and girl, and horse. I wasn't wondering if I was going to have a girl or a llama. That wasn't one of the options. It turned out to be a girl, and we kind of wanted a boy, so semi-disappointing at first, but then we got over it. But it was better than the llama. Having a third girl is better than having a llama all the time; anytime, it trumps the llama all the time. Those are the only two choices

though. It wasn't boy, girl, llama. So they are multiplying according to their kind. The horse has a horse, the llama has the llama, and the human has the human here. So they show up and they produce according to their kind.

Then God begins to create us, and he creates us in his image, and everything changes here. The creation account has been building to this. You see how much time Moses spent on talking about us, we being created in God's image, and what God calls us to do? We are completely distinct from the rest of creation; we are completely unique from the rest of creation; and we're to rule over creation, in verse 26. So like God does, we are to rule over creation. We are to be vice regents, co-creators, kings over creation. Now kings like God? God is a king, a good King, a steward. He loves His creation, He serves His creation, and He cares for His creation. We don't manipulate creation. We don't do that kind of stuff, but we are to rule and subdue over creation.

In verse 28, we are to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. So in the same way that God is filling what he has created, we are to fill the earth as well. We are to have dominion. And so God creates man in his image. We are to reflect God and point back to God. We are to display some of what God is like, bits of his character and parts of his nature that we have been created in—it's an awesome responsibility. People are supposed to be around us and see us and know a little bit more what our God is like. When the church doesn't function that way, it is a blaspheming of God's name because we are not displaying what he is like. When people come into our midst and they see how we deal with creation, whether we are owned by it, or whether we rule over it poorly, and we are oppressive, or we have inhumane practices, or we don't care for it, it's not reflecting the goodness of God and his view of his creation. This is an unbelievable responsibility as God's image bearers. People should see us and get an idea, a taste, a shadow of what God is like.

So Genesis one, it's not super clear, it's not super concerned with the how of creation—a little bit, we can discern some things, we can interpret some things, we can get some things out of what it says—but it's primarily focused on the who: who created. This glorious and beautiful, powerful God that calls things into existence over and over and over, looks at his work, assesses it, and says it's good. It's good. Did you notice that? There's this formula during these days, where you have the announcement, "and God said," and there's this word of command, "let there be" and then there is. And then there's this naming and blessing as

God interprets creation. He's describing what its function is, and what its design is, and what it's supposed to do. So he names it, or he blesses it, but then every time he assesses it. He assesses it and says "it's good, it's good." Except for Monday, which is actually kind of funny to me. Monday, he doesn't say Monday is good; true story. But he looks at his creation and he says it's good.

There is a beauty and a goodness to creation that God delights in. God delights in it. Atheists have a problem with the reality of beauty and goodness. It's difficult for them to begin to explain, and to me it's logical gymnastics that they have to play, but here's the thing: we struggle with it as well. We struggle with beauty and goodness as well. See, we're much like the pagan nations that worshiped creation as god, and worshipped the sun and the moon and the stars. See Romans 1, it says that atheists and pagan nations are without excuse, that they can look at creation—they don't even need the Bible—they can look at creation, and they should be able to acknowledge that there is a creator God, that he is powerful, that he is good. But then it also says that we, because of sin, have a tendency to worship creation and not the Creator.

We worship—we're practical atheists, many of us. Where we don't acknowledge God, we don't enjoy his creation like a boomerang so that it redounds to the glory of praise of God. In fact we rule or we worship creation. We worship it. Creation begins to own us. Instead of us ruling over it and subduing it, it begins to own us. We want more of it. We want more money and more sex and more stuff. We want more of it, and when you want more of something, when you have to have something, it eventually will rule over you. You've seen that. You have to be successful, you must be successful—what happens? Your work starts to own you. You don't own your business, your business owns you. You have to be in a relationship; you must be a relationship—what happens? Whoever you're in a relationship with owns you. Instead of enjoying creation unto the glory of God, we worship creation and then we can't even really enjoy it. We end up not even enjoying what we have because we just want more of it. Many of us are just practical atheists.

Genesis 1 is telling us that God enjoys his creation. It's good. When you think of God, do you think about a God who enjoys things? Do you think of a happy God who delights in his work and delights in his creation, like he's just getting a kick out of it, he digs what he's done in creation? Is that your view and understanding of God? That's what Genesis 1 is saying. He

loves his creation, He enjoys it, and because we are made in His image, we too are to enjoy creation, to his glory.

So we are not to do what the Greeks did, or what even some religions in our day do, and that's to look at the physical world and say, "That's no good, that's corrupt, that's bad. We should just be spiritual people, spiritual beings, and we get out of the physical and we need to get to the spiritual." A lot of religions in our day say that. A lot of Christians think that. "We just can't wait to get out of here. Let's just get out of here. We can't wait for the rapture. Let's just get out of here. Let's get to the spiritual." We don't want to do that. We don't want to do that. God loves the physical. He loves getting His hands dirty. He loves the material world. We can't do what some denominations do, where they forbid aspects of creation. We cannot forbid certain aspects of creation.

The apostle Paul, he warned Timothy of people who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving, "for everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is made holy by the word of God in prayer." That's his letter to Timothy [1 Tim. 4:4-5], and so we aren't supposed to view creation as bad. But then we're also not to do what many of us do, and that's worship creation to the point where it owns us, it's ultimate, and we don't actually enjoy it. We don't enjoy it to the glory of God because we need it, we have to have it, and yet creation in Genesis 1 has been building to us as a gift from God to us. You don't have to cling for more and want more. God has given it to you. He's given it to us as a gift that we might share in His beauty and His glory. We need to enjoy creation to the glory of God because God sees that it's good. We don't forbid aspects of creation, we don't worship creation so that we don't actually enjoy it, but we enjoy creation to the glory of God.

So some of you just said, "Pastor, I love to work with my hands. I love to make things, to form things," and that makes sense. That's Genesis 1. That's godly. That's you enjoying creation. That's you being like your creator. That makes sense. And some of you love working out in the yard. You just love it, mowing grass, and shaping things and trimming up bushes, and planting and getting dirty, in your hands and you just love that. That's Adam. Adam was a gardener. That's the first vocation, it's the first job, and it makes sense that you would like that. That's enjoying creation. It's enjoying what God has called you to do. Some of you just love going to the garage: you just want to build Pastor a pulpit in the garage, and you want to

make it beautiful, and you want to make it sturdy, and you want to make it function, and you want to order materials, these raw materials that God has created, and build something. That's godly, that's enjoying creation to the glory of God. Some of you, you love poetry, you love writing, you love music, you love singing, you love reading, you love words. God loves words, He loves words. That's godly. That's you enjoying His creation to the glory of God. Those things are good. Some of you love this orderly stuff of God. You love the forming of everything, and the filling of everything. You love how it is not chaotic, it's in its proper place, and that it's orderly. You just love that stuff. You love spreadsheets and stats and data and you love stacking things up. I just love stacking things in places; it just looks neater to me. You love that you organized your closet. That's godly stuff. That is doing things like God does. My closet is organized. You didn't know this. My shirts are organized according to the type of shirt, and then by color as well. I think it's right and godly. I think it's biblical, and so I stand back when I'm done and I just say "This is good. This is good."

Those are the kind of things that we're talking about here. Those are innate within us, in our core essence as a people, we know that there are certain parts of creation, we love to enjoy creation, we love order, and we love these things. Why? Because Genesis 1 says we should. Genesis 1, God is saying it is good. He assesses it, and he says "Yeah, that's good," and he wants us to enjoy it as well. See, everything that we love doing is found in Genesis 1, everything. Beauty and aesthetics, and exploring, and cultivating, and building, and making, and organizing, and eating, and relationships, and sex, and babies, and animals, and the stars, and all that we enjoy, worship, and wonder is found, at its essence, in Genesis 1.

So sin then is us not participating in what God has called us to participate in, namely here in the enjoyment of creation to his glory. Sin then is rebelling against God. See, deep down inside, we want to enjoy creation. We don't want it to own us. We don't want to worship it. We don't want to forbid aspects of it. Deep down, we love those things, but it's so easy for us to get off rhythm and fall to one side, usually to the worshiping of some aspect of creation where we cling to it. We quickly find ourselves in that rat race of competing, and comparing, and needing to make it, and needing for people to love us, and like us, and exalt us as if we could somehow be more exalted than image bearers of God who have been given rule and purpose over creation.

It's so easily we can fall into those things. When you stand out on your porch and you look to the Texas sky, do you worship in response, or are your prayers, more as you look at it and see it, maybe you don't even notice it?

“God, will you help me get that sale tomorrow? I really need that money. I need to buy some more of your stuff.”

“Will you help me with that project tomorrow? I really need your help with that the project tomorrow.”

“Can you help me with this test? I need to ace this test. If I don't ace this test, my life is over. It's over.”

I wonder if God is just saying, “Can you, just for a moment, look at the colors I just painted for you? What does that mean about me? Can you look at it for a moment, and consider what does this explain about who I am? Do you understand it? Do you see it? What does it stir in you? Will you share this with me? I'm enjoying this creation, I'm enjoying what I've painted—will you?”

Is that how you respond? So easily we get off beat, and off rhythm in our experience of creation, even though deep down inside we want to participate. We want to tap our feet to the music. We want to awe in the beauty of the Texas sky. We want to do those things innately, but then so quickly we can get off rhythm. That's what sin is. It's rejecting God's blessing of creation. It's worshipping his stuff and not him. Sin is simply wanting more of what He is made and not wanting the maker.

So what does God do? What does God do when His creation begins to worship other parts of His creation and not the creator? What happens when the boomerang breaks? If creation is to come from God and then go back to God in glory and praise of his name, if Romans 11 is right that from Him are all things, through Him are all things, and to Him are all things, to God be glory forever, amen—if that's right and the boomerang breaks, what does God do?

God re-creates. God re-creates. That's the gospel. The good news of Jesus is that God comes and re-creates us when we been broken. He re-creates. When Jesus comes, He's re-creating.

That's the good news of the gospel. 2 Corinthians 4:6, listen to this language, Genesis 1 language: "For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,'"—that's Genesis 1, right?—"For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' [he] has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

Jesus came to re-create, and this time, his canvas wasn't the cosmos, it wasn't the heavens and the earth; his canvas was a tree, and there was an announcement that came. There was an announcement. It was John the Baptist saying, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world." That's him. Then just as in creation, there was a word of commandment—where things that didn't exist do exist, where God accomplishes what he wants to accomplish through His word in re-creation—the Word does the same thing as well. John chapter 1: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth," and just like in Genesis 1, in creation, God assesses his work, and he says, "It is good."

Jesus assessed his work of salvation, and on the cross as he's painting his work of re-creation, he assesses it, and says "It is finished. It's done. It's perfect. I did it." Hebrews 10 tells us that Jesus, he made one sacrifice for sin—one sacrifice. One sacrifice for people that don't participate in God's work of creation unto his glory. One sacrifice for those that have rejected God as creator, and instead cling to, and hope in, His creation. One sacrifice. And after he made the one sacrifice, it says he sat down at the right hand of God the Father. He rested. Genesis 1, in creation God rests after he sees that everything is good. Jesus in his re-creation, assesses it, says it is finished, and he sits down. The work is over.

Those of us who put our faith in Jesus are re-created in him. Now we can enjoy creation unto God's glory. We are not enslaved to created things. We can repent. We can turn from our worship of created things to the creator and enjoy those created things to his glory. Now all that God purposed for us in creation—that we might share in his beauty, in his glory—is given to us in Christ.