



**Series:** Created | Sermon #2

**Text:** Genesis 1.3-31

**Sermon Title:** In His Image

Ok, if you have your bible get it out. We are in Genesis 1. Page 1. We've got a lot of ground to cover. Last week we began a 6 part series in the first three chapters of Genesis called "Created." And what I said last week was that our goal looking into these three chapters is to uncover our created purpose. Because knowing what you are created for, knowing your purpose in this life, gives you confidence, clarity, peace, patience with everything else in your life.

And what we said last week is that in our day its easy to confuse THAT all important purpose with your passions. Purpose is what we exist for, Passions are the things that excite us. Passions are right and important to have, but they must grow out of our purpose in life. When we don't know our purpose though, our passions start to become our purpose. Which makes us into the kind of people who find their identity in their passions. Which is

why people get OBSESSED with things that, no matter how much of themselves they give to it, it doesn't satisfy them. You move from playing a sport to your whole world existing for that sport. You move from watching a sport to spending more money on the panthers than you do your family. You move from doing your work to living heart and soul at work. You move from loving your kids to helicoptering over their every move.

Our passions were never meant to be our purpose. It's the other way around. And when we know and live for our purpose in life, then our passions can become healthy extensions of that purpose that we find joy in and that bless the world around us.

Last week we started in verse 1 of chapter 1 and made it all the way to verse 2. And we said if you want to know what you are created for, you gotta know who you were created by. And it was all about who the God of the bible is. Listen you need to go back there to catch up. Today we are going to start in verse 3. And we are going all the way to verse 31. So, we are covering a little more ground today.

I'm going to walk through the Creation Story of Genesis 1 and then show you how central it is to understanding what you were created for. Really this is like the title track. And here it is in its simplest form:

- God cares more about who you are created to BE than what you are created to DO

I'm telling you this shift might save some of you a great amount of anxiety. We often talk about wanting to know God's will for our lives. And we think about it like there are options behind doors. Do I take door #1 or door #2? But that is centered around doing. **For the one wanting to know God's will for her life the first question to pose is not "what should I do?" but "who should I be?"**<sup>1</sup> HE CARES about what you do...BUT what you do will always flow out of who you ARE.

So today as we look into the creation account today that's the question I hope we answer. Last week it was about who you were created by. And we looked at God. Now we are going to build on that by looking at this week who God created you to be.

Now there are two potential problems listening to Genesis 1. There's Familiarity & There's Suspicion.

- Familiarity: Maybe you THINK YOU KNOW Genesis 1. And so in your head you've filed it away as a quaint story good to tell the kids but it doesn't impact your life. Yet it is a top 3 passages in the bible for understanding who you are created to be. So you have to, right now, suspend your familiarity with this and look at the words with fresh eyes.
- Suspicion: Maybe you hear "creation story" and your defenses go up and you say "SEE, this is why I don't believe the bible. This whole thing is a silly myth. And anyone who believes it really

happened...I can't take them seriously." If that's you, that's fine! It's ok to be there. Often though people are there because they've heard biased incendiary soundbites and never a clear explanation of the creation account. Christian or not, if you carry suspicion into this account, I'd ask you to simply listen and consider today.

Ok Let's go. We'll divide up the chapter by days. You, human, don't show up until day 6. But your created purpose is so tied to the rest of creation that God puts you in the lineup. So we'll walk the passage and finish in who you are created to be. I'm excited. Let's go.

#### Day 1: Light and Dark

3 Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. 4 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." There was an evening, and there was a morning: one day.

Right here in day one I want you to see the theme that will be repeated throughout the creation story. It's intentional by Moses, our author, and it builds towards you understanding how you fit in this whole thing.

Creation's theme: God said, it was, and it was good.

Catch the power here. There was nothing but darkness & emptiness and then the way that light came to be was...**God said** let there be light. God's one creative tool

---

<sup>1</sup> Wilkin, Jen. *In His Image* (Crossway Wheaton, IL 2018) 13.

was his speech. That's all! There weren't raw materials that God shaped into the earth. There was nothing. No matter, no substance...nothing. And then with his words God creates everything from the expanse of the heavens to the molecule. It's intended to appear both easy and beautiful. Because for God...creation is an overflow of his love. C.S. Lewis in his Chronicles of Narnia tries to express this by having Aslan, the lion who represents God in his stories...sing the world into existence. As he sings the color green forms around his feet and then hillsides move out before him. The tempo picks up and and birds fly out of a tree. Then celebration breaks out as the song goes even wilder.

Listen the point that Moses chose to make so prominent...so prominent that you can't read the creation account and miss it..the point that Israel wandering around in the wilderness needed to hear...the point that anyone wandering through life needs to hear is that God's words are powerful and life-giving. Which means what he says over you has POWER! And sometimes we get in a spiritual funk and USUALLY what is happening is we are spending a lot of time listening to OURSELVES, and what OTHERS say about us and we make God's words an afterthought. 2 Timothy 3.16-17 is going to say ALL SCRIPTURE is breathed out by God...he's tapping on the genesis theme. IT'S ALL LIFE GIVING! Your purpose is set by what GOD says!

**AND IT WAS GOOD.** Almost every day, at the end of his creation workday, God is going to look at creation and say "that's good." It's like the artist stepping back and being satisfied with what he's created. And for you and I listen that explains something that will come more fully

into view in 3 or 4 weeks. Good...it was beautiful & rightly ordered and specifically this word means it was beneficial for mankind. Here's the thing...You and I look at the world...take it all in...and it isn't all good. In fact, a lot of creation is brutal.

Great Wolf Lodge - There's nothing to be scared of here. Trust in mother nature. That is TERRRRRRIBLE advice. I looked at my kids and said...THAT IS TERRRRRRIBLE ADVICE. Don't trust in Mother Nature. She's a beautiful, mean woman. A wolf is not your friend. In fact, according to the bible my job is a shepherd. You know what one of my main jobs is? SHOOT THE WOLVES! Do not pet a wolf. Do not run into the forest. RUN AWAY.

Seriously though... the world we live in...it isn't all good. we see a hurricane, an act of nature, level an entire region and say "THAT'S NOT GOOD!" we see the news this week, and we say SEXUAL ASSAULT IS EVIL of the worst kind. Humanity is not all Good. So how can Genesis 1 possibly be true? Well, either its not true...or it is true and something happened to change the world into what it is now. And if the latter is true, that the world has indeed changed from when it was all GOOD, that would explain why the world doesn't feel RIGHT to me.

The Christian message says cancer, job loss, divorce, assault...these things are not a part of the GOOD God created. Something happened. And God is going to do something about it.

There's one more thing I want you to see in Day one. It's the immediate contrasting of light vs darkness. God says the light is good. He doesn't say that about the darkness. For the rest of scripture this image is used to communicate Very giant, very personal spiritual truth. Throughout scripture light will push back the darkness. Sometimes it will look like the darkness is winning, BUT then Christ comes along and John's gospel says he is the light of life and the darkness will never overcome him. Matthew says of Jesus' arrival that the people walking in darkness have seen a great light. Listen!!!!

In the bible: Darkness = sin leading to death  
Light = life through Christ.

SO IF YOU ARE IN DARKNESS RIGHT NOW...AND I KNOW SOME OF YOU ARE. YOU ARE HIDING YOUR SIN SO THAT NOBODY ELSE KNOWS IT. THERE IS NO DARK ALLEYWAY OUT OF YOUR SIN. The only way out is to bring it into the light of Christ. To confess it and to trust Christ's forgiving work on your behalf. You were created to live in the eternal light of God.

- That's day 1. Light - GOD said, it was, and it was good.

#### Day two: The Skies

6 Then God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters, separating water from water." 7 So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above the expanse. And it was so. 8 God called the expanse "sky." Evening came and then morning: the second day.

You might get hung up on the "expanse between the waters" and it is an odd phrasing for 21<sup>st</sup> century English readers for sure. The water below makes sense, then the sky...makes sense...then more water above the sky? Ok couple of things here. The waters above most likely mean clouds. That which holds the waters above. Later in scripture referred to as the floodgates of heaven. Remember Moses is writing to everyday Israelites showing them how the world they see came to be. So we read an everyday understanding into this picture and realize, it's the rain clouds above the skies the birds fly in.

Another thing since we are dipping our toe into scientific observation. One of the HUGE questions some people have is: How long were each of these days and how much time was between them?

I am not going to answer that question here. Because I want to honor the purpose of this passage. And the purpose is to show you over and over again that **God said, it was, and it was good.** Men and women of great faith and great intellect have disagreed over whether or not God created the world in 6 literal 24 hour days or whether the word "day" is figurative for a longer period of time. To dwell on that would be to major on something the bible doesn't major on. The bible references over and over that God created the world. It doesn't major on how long it took him. So its well and good to explore the details like time. That's what the scientific method does for us...the way Dr. Francis Collins says it, who is one of the world's foremost scientific minds, he says the more I study God's creation the more I worship the God who created it.

But the point of the creation account is to drill home for you **God said, it was, and it was good.**

#### Day 3: Land, Seas, & Veggies

9 Then **God said**, “Let the water under the sky be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear.” **And it was so.** 10 God called the dry land “earth,” and the gathering of the water he called “seas.” And God saw that **it was good.** 11 Then God said, “Let the earth produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds.” And it was so. 12 The earth produced vegetation: seed-bearing plants according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. 13 Evening came and then morning: the third day.

Hey I won't take long here. It's straightforward. The pattern is becoming clear: God said, it was, & it was good. Maybe the one thing to recognize now in this 3<sup>rd</sup> day: Remember how Moses is writing after Israel has left Egypt where they had many gods who were gods over various realms. Sun god, moon god, ocean god, etc. Every time Moses says “God said...& it was” he's dismissing those other gods without even mentioning them. There are no sea gods. Only seas that God controls.

#### Day 4: Sun, Moon, & Stars

14 Then **God said**, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night. They will serve as signs for seasons and for days and years. 15 They will be lights in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth.” **And it was so.** 16 God made the two great lights – the greater light to rule over the day and the lesser light to rule over the night – as well as the stars. 17 God placed them in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth, 18 to rule the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that **it was good.** 19 Evening came and then morning: the fourth day.

Sir Isaac Newton - 17<sup>th</sup> century mathematician and philosopher, had a replica of our solar system in his study. Large golden ball at center and smaller spheres revolving around it representing the sun. All geared together by cogs and belts to rotate in perfect harmony. Newton is in there studying one day when a friend who was an atheist comes in and sees this thing for the first time. WOW! He says. Who made this thing for you!? Newton didn't look up and just replied...nobody. Nobody? He had his friend right where he wanted him. He said that's right! All of these balls and cogs and belts and gears just happened to come together and wonder of wonders, by chance they began revolving in perfect orbit & timing.<sup>2</sup>

The heavens declare the glory of God,

---

<sup>2</sup> Story comes from Kent Hughes' commentary on Genesis titled *Beginning and Blessing*. Hughes doesn't attribute a source for the story. (Crossway Wheaton, IL 2004) 32.

and the expanse proclaims the work of his hands. --  
Psalms 19:1 (CSB)

They are there to tell you about the GLORY of the one who put them there! And he did it just with his words! That's why Johannes Kepler, the founder of modern astronomy, said "the undevout astronomer is mad."

#### Day 5: Sea Creatures & Birds

20 Then **God said**, "Let the water swarm with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." .... And God saw that **it was good**.  
22 God blessed them: "Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the waters of the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth."

On Day 5 God is filling the earth & seas he made on Day 2. And its good. And if you find yourself at this point saying: That's great but why does it matter!? Jesus looks at his disciples and says in Matthew 6 - 26 Consider the birds of the sky: They don't sow or reap or gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren't you worth more than they? -- Matthew 6:26 (CSB)

God put them there with a message. When you see them, you are supposed to see your heavenly father who created them. And so a Christian's very real bout with anxiety can find its cure in bird-watching. Because you can be reminded God created them, he provides for them, and he loves you waaaaaay more than he loves birds. Which brings us to day 6. The big day & where this all culminates.

#### Day 6 part 1: Land Creatures

24 Then **God said**, "Let the earth produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that crawl, and the wildlife of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. 25...And God saw that **it was good**.

#### Day 6 part 2: Human Beings

Ok everything in the creation account has been building to this moment. Moses is going to talk about how mankind came to be. And something brand new happens.

26 Then **God said**, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth." 27 So God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female.

I'm sure you picked up on my subtle clue as to what was pretty important. Every day of creation God speaks something into existence. But it's not until Day 6 that he changes into first person plural. Let US make man In HIS IMAGE.

For those of you not here last week its odd to hear a singular GOD say let "US" do anything. I mean, who is he talking to!? We explained this last week as one of the first nods to God revealing himself throughout the bible as a trinity. That is, god is three persons yet one essence. God the father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. That's who God is. One being, three persons. And we were created in the image of, as a reflection of... that triune reality.

4 times in those two verses God said that he created MALE and FEMALE...to be LIKE him. He doesn't say it anywhere else about anything else. Which means if you could travel a hundred times the speed of light and soar around the milky-way galaxy seeing it in its grandeur...if you could see the 7 natural wonders of the world...none of it would compare to holding a newborn child. It doesn't compare to looking at your neighbor. So everybody turn and stare at your neighbor for 3 minutes. Look what God says about it...

28 God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth..." **And it was so.** 31 God saw all that he had made, and **it was very good indeed...**

God spoke, it was, and it was very good. I want to take these last couple of minutes and with creation in the backdrop and mankind now front and center, The very good centerpiece of his good creation, I want to show you who you are created to be.

We are created to be image bearers  
To be created in the image of God is a pretty wild thing right? Obviously we are not God. We don't have unlimited power or knowledge. We can't create. I know by now some of you college freshman have created some smells in your laundry basket previously unknown to the civilized world but that isn't creating from "nothing." To be in God's image means that we are, among creation, uniquely called to be his

representatives on the earth. We are therefore inherently valuable. We aren't valuable because of what we do, but because of who God says we are!  
How many of you know who Kim Darroch is? Not many. And if you saw him on the street, you would think he's an ordinary guy. But, then when you meet him you find out he is the Ambassador of the Royal Crown of the United Kingdom. All of the sudden we treat him differently. We ask how Meghan & Harry are doing. We respect the ambassador because the ambassador speaks on behalf of the Queen herself. When God says we are his image bearers it means every human carries the seal of God's kingdom.

This is why Christians care so much about every, single, person. It's because every single person, no matter how messed up their past, no matter how poor or seemingly insignificant they are to the world...to Christians: They carry the image of God. The 80 year old woman lying without the use of her legs in a Cuban ghetto...She carries the image of God. The 16 year old girl who just discovered she is pregnant...she carries the image of God. So does her new unborn child. That's why we stand up so clearly against abortion and do so by trying to provide counsel, care, and options for the mother. It's not out of hate for anyone, its out of respect for a mother AND a child made in the image of God. The refugee is an image bearer, the prostitute is an image bearer, the homeless man is an image bearer. beginning of life to end of life, no matter who you are the Christian message says you are valuable not because of what you DO, but because of who you are.

PARENTS: You are image bearers. It's so easy as parents to get lost in what we DO. Especially what we DO for our kids. We want our kids to have it better than we did and we work hard to give them the best.

But far more important to GOD...in your role as a parent... is who you are. Are your kids seeing the image of God in you? The greatest thing you can DO for them is to simply BE who God created you to be. Now this is hard...what does "BEING" look like...in action? This is where we look to Christ.

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. -- Colossians 1:15-21

God in his grace has said ok, you want to see my character in action? You want to see HOW to be an image bearer? Look to Christ. The author of Hebrews says Christ is the exact imprint of his nature. And Paul goes so far to connect that Christ is GOD this son, so to be made in the image of God is to be made in the image of Christ.

29 For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. -- Romans 8:29 (CSB)

To be in the image of God is to be in the image of Christ. So simply put, what is God's will for your life? It is to be like Christ.

Listen sermons 4 & 5 in this series are devoted to how men live out that image and then how women live out

that image. We are going to show how unique passions can develop out of a common created purpose.

But Right here in this moment let's talk about how we are to be like Christ. Christ was perfect after all. And what you and I see every day is that we are not. So "be like Jesus" could be a giant weight on our shoulders driving us into the depths of performance based religion. How am I supposed to be like Christ?

before Christ is the model for your life, he is the savior of your life.

AND THIS ORDER IS EVERYTHING! See Christ isn't the ROLE MODEL at the center of the Christian faith. Broken people who have disappointed others don't experience life-giving transformation by being told to BEHAVE differently. No!!

CHRIST IS THE SAVIOR at the center of our faith because we NEEDED SAVING! And Christ comes in and saves us by dying in our place for our sin. His blood cleanses us from our sin. This is why we are so Big on this good news here at Mercy. Because this good news, this gospel, is our only hope for living. We don't live to EARN that love, we live in response to it!

To be like Christ we must abide in Christ

- You are called to love like Christ...the power for that comes from abiding in the love of Christ for you!
- You are called to be patient. WHERE CAN I GET THAT? Abiding in the love of Christ who was patient towards you when you sin.



- YOU ARE CALLED TO FORGIVE - Forgiveness. Your sin against him was greater than that person's sin against you. And he died in your place so your sins could be forgiven. That love...it doesn't guilt you into forgiveness. It heals you. Fills you up with love. So you can forgive because you've found healing & forgiveness.
- Called to obey authorities in your life...son submitted to the father.

The Gospel is not the front door to the Christian house, it's the whole house. Are you abiding, living in God's love for you? Let's pray.

3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God... 9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self. You are being renewed in knowledge according to the image of your Creator. -- Colossians 3.3,9-10 (CSB)