

Genesis 1:1-3

The Glory of Our Creator

01/15/17

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ² 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.

³ And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

(Pastor prays)

At the end of a day of work or school, you might be asked, "How was your day?" And -- because nothing surprising happened during that day-- you might be tempted to say, "It was just another day" or "nothing big happened today." Or if you were at school, maybe it was even a "boring" day. Genesis 1 rebukes us in this regard, reminding us that each day is an act of *creation* and *creating grace* by God. A beautiful sunrise or a stunning sunset, a rainbow or a cold snap or a thunderstorm, they all call out to us to see that there really cannot be any such thing as "just another day." As the Psalmist tells us in Psalm 19:1-2, *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.*

*² Day to day pours out speech,
and night to night reveals knowledge.*

In other words, creation is telling us something.

Bruce Waltke says that this created world speaks of God's immeasurable power and might, His bewildering imagination and wisdom and His unsearchable grace. Waltke says that "because of God's grace, the apple tree doesn't produce one apple but thousands and the grain of wheat multiplies itself a hundred-fold."

As humans, we make and we build and we arrange, but God -- only God -- creates, and these first verses remind us that we are totally dependent on Him and Genesis 1 is our introduction. It's here for a reason, to show us that God is absolutely sovereign over all His creation. It's why we pray and hope and give and celebrate His goodness. And such unbelievable goodness demands our allegiance, an allegiance that is only real in Jesus Christ.

Creation Shows Us God's Grace and His Grace is Life

This reminds us of several things.

Creation Reminds Us of What is Important

It reminds us what really means the most.

So often we are driven by the urgent and we skip over the important. I have found that most people struggle in some form or fashion in arranging their priorities. It happens in marriages all the time, neglect. So often we take such a passive approach to life and we allow cultural expectations and the busy-ness of life to dictate our schedules so that we end up doing that which is most urgent over that which is most important and I think the first phrase of the Bible speaks to our everyday mismanagement of time.

This little phrase "In the beginning God" shows us who the subject of the entire Bible is. The first subject of the Bible is who the whole Bible is about and ultimately what your life is about. I really think you should take this little phrase and let it become a description of each day. "In the beginning God" – tells us we start our day with an acknowledgement of His grace, a request for protection, a confession of our sin and a receiving of His love and forgiveness in Christ.

"In the beginning God" centers your day and reminds you that God gave you this day to live for His glory, reflecting His grace regardless of your state in life. This little phrase must become the description of how we make our decisions. We start with God. This little phrase, "In the beginning God" must describe every relationship so that our friendships point to Christ.

If you are not married and you are starting to get interested in someone, the first phrase of the Bible sets the tone of the future. For marriage, God had made marriage beautiful when "In the beginning God" becomes the coats of arms for your family.

In 2016, so many people in this room rewrote this verse so that what it said for you last year wasn't "In the beginning *God*" but "In the beginning *me*." Or some of you lived it as "In the beginning *my career*" or "In the beginning *my children*."

Genesis 1:1 sets the course for our lives and if we don't take this seriously, we can't take the rest of the Bible seriously because this little verse reminds us that Creation reminds us of what's important. Something else:

Creation Reminds Us There Are Something's Only God Can Do

The text says in v. 1, *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* God created. Created in Hebrew is the word "bara," a word used several times in the Old Testament; and every time it is used, it is always and only used to describe that which God alone can do.

This tells us something about life and decisions about life. God's word in creation points us to His work in conversion. Remember in John 3 when Nicodemus came to Jesus by night and Jesus tells him, "You must be born of the Spirit." Only God can do that. It reminds us that becoming a Christian is all God's work.

The incarnation, the perfect life of Jesus, the atoning death of Jesus, the resurrection of Jesus is God completing the work of salvation. God has to move in your life for you to believe that Christ, being born again, is a supernatural experience that only God can do.

Building a life or a marriage or a church, we believe that it's not by might and not by power but "by my Spirit," says the Lord. Listen, I know that in this church there are people with problems and broken hearts and hopeless situations. There are people who we love that only God can reach. Only God creates and only God can *re-create*.

V 1 tells us that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. That little phrase "heavens and earth" is a Hebrew way of saying "everything," from stem to stern, top to bottom.

Men in my first church would talk about livestock and all that was good to eat from a hog. I asked, "Would you eat everything?" and the reply was "Preacher, we eat everything but the 'oink'." *Everything.*

In this text, Moses is telling us that God created and owns *everything*. The earth is His and all that is in it. We claim to own things but we don't own things. We are just stewards, here for awhile and then gone.

Let's get our thoughts off of the things that don't last and place our hopes in the One who never dies because it's there in v. 2 that we see the compassion of God. ² *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.* *Hovering* – such an interesting word. It's used only one other time in the Bible. Over in Deuteronomy 32, it's used to describe a mother eagle spreading her wings over her children. This speaks of the Lord's guidance, His protection, His provision, and His closeness, a God who is constantly watching over His creation. I'm so thankful to know that the God of the Bible, although righteous and just, is also loving, compassionate, forgiving and kind. And today, His kindness He reveals to each of you through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Let me point out one more thing you might see in the text.

Creation Reminds Us That Things Are Never As Bad As They Seem

Verse 2 tells us the earth was without form and void. Those words combined speak of barrenness, wilderness, a vast desert of emptiness. In Exodus, it's used to describe a place of wandering. In Leviticus, it's where the scapegoat goes to a place of sin, a place of demons.

In the New Testament, it's where Jesus went to be tempted, where He met Satan. It's where angels ministered to Him. There's another word in v. 2, *darkness* (wickedness, judgement, death); but in darkness there is hope. In Deuteronomy 4, God dwelt in darkness and the cloud and thick gloom. In Deuteronomy 5, God spoke from the darkness; and in Psalm 18, God descends with a canopy of darkness.

In the Bible, darkness will sometimes mean the presence of God. Sometimes in our darkest hour, God reveals himself; and if God is there, it cannot be as bad as it seems.

There is one other morbidly beautiful display of darkness. You find it in the New Testament in the three synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke). On the cross, after telling the thief that today he would be in Paradise, darkness fell over the earth for 3 hours as Jesus would say, "Into thy hands I commit my Spirit." The temple veil split in two. Our sins were atoned for, our debt is paid. What looked like Jesus' darkest hour became humanity's greatest blessing.

Will you this morning receive God's grace found in Christ? Creation shows us a loving, forgiving, grace-filled God who desires to show himself to you in Christ.

(Pastor prays)