



Morning Worship

August 2021

The wonder of creation

Our worship today reflects on the wonder of creation. We use the reading from the first chapter of Genesis as way of reflecting on the wonder of all nature that surrounds us and our place within creation.

OPENING PRAYER:

God has chosen the rolling tide
the flowing river
the rushing stream
the flooding burn
to hold all of heaven and her promise.

In the pouring
and stirring
and spilling
and running
comes the act of heaven and her promise.

So come and be soaked in the spirit
as the story of salvation teems around us
parables whispered in the drenching
and baptism becomes the soothing rush of heaven
and her promise
of Jesus.

© Roddy Hamilton

READING: Genesis 1:1 – 2:4 (The Good News Translation)

1 In the beginning, when God created the universe, ² the earth was formless and desolate. The raging ocean that covered everything was engulfed in total darkness, and the Spirit of God was moving over the water. ³ Then God commanded, “Let there be light”—and light appeared. ⁴ God was pleased with what he saw. Then he separated the light from the darkness, ⁵ and he named the light “Day” and the darkness “Night.” Evening passed and morning came—that was the first day.

⁶⁻⁷ Then God commanded, “Let there be a dome to divide the water and to keep it in two separate places”—and it was done. So God made a dome, and it separated the water under it from the water above it. ⁸ He named the dome “Sky.” Evening passed and morning came—that was the second day.

⁹ Then God commanded, “Let the water below the sky come together in one place, so that the land will appear”—and it was done. ¹⁰ He named the land “Earth,” and the water which had come together he named “Sea.” And God was pleased with what he saw. ¹¹ Then he commanded, “Let the earth produce all kinds of plants, those that bear grain and those that bear fruit”—and it was done. ¹² So the earth produced all kinds of plants, and God was pleased with what he saw. ¹³ Evening passed and morning came—that was the third day.

¹⁴ Then God commanded, “Let lights appear in the sky to separate day from night and to show the time when days, years, and religious festival begin; ¹⁵ they will shine in the sky to give light to the earth”—and it was done. ¹⁶ So God made the two larger lights, the sun to rule over the day and the moon to rule over the night; he also made the stars. ¹⁷ He placed the lights in the sky to shine on the earth, ¹⁸ to rule over the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God was pleased with what he saw. ¹⁹ Evening passed and morning came—that was the fourth day.

²⁰ Then God commanded, “Let the water be filled with many kinds of living beings, and let the air be filled with birds.” ²¹ So God created the great sea monsters, all kinds of creatures that live in the water, and all kinds of birds. And God was pleased with what he saw. ²² He blessed them all and told the creatures that live in the water to reproduce and to fill the sea, and he told the birds to increase in number. ²³ Evening passed and morning came—that was the fifth day.

²⁴ Then God commanded, “Let the earth produce all kinds of animal life: domestic and wild, large and small”—and it was done. ²⁵ So God made them all, and he was pleased with what he saw.

²⁶ Then God said, “And now we will make human beings; they will be like us and resemble us. They will have power over the fish, the birds, and all animals, domestic and wild, large and small.” ²⁷ So God created human beings, making them to be like himself. He created them male and female, ²⁸ blessed them, and said, “Have many children, so that your descendants will live all over the earth and bring it under their control. I am putting you in charge of the fish, the

birds, and all the wild animals. ²⁹ I have provided all kinds of grain and all kinds of fruit for you to eat; ³⁰ but for all the wild animals and for all the birds I have provided grass and leafy plants for food” —and it was done. ³¹ God looked at everything he had made, and he was very pleased. Evening passed and morning came—that was the sixth day.

2 And so the whole universe was completed. ² By the seventh day God finished what he had been doing and stopped working. ³ He blessed the seventh day and set it apart as a special day, because by that day he had completed his creation and stopped working. ⁴ And that is how the universe was created.

REFLECTION

The first chapter of Genesis provides a wonderful account of creation. I'm not going to dwell on the literal meaning of the account, but chapter one of Genesis speaks into the relationship between God, Creation and Humankind – our relationship between God and Creation.

“And God saw it was good.”

In the opening chapter of Genesis, as God completes each part of Creation - the Universe, the Earth, Living Things – there is a pause. God stands back at each point and sees it is good. He is pleased with what he sees.

This reminds me of the many occasions when given time I will step back and take in the sights and sounds of nature and the environment around me. Possibly you are the same. Given time to reflect on the many aspects of creation – the stars in the night sky revealing the huge expanse on the universe or the intricate detail and the wonderful variety of plants and flowers – we can appreciate the infinite wonder and goodness of creation.

When we worship God and the Creation we express our wonder and praise for all that surrounds us. Caring for the earth is part of our worship. When we worship God, we are focusing on the care and love that God shows to us and to creation. For we are part of God’s precious creation.

“So God created mankind in his own image.”

Once the universe, the earth, the land and sea, and living creatures had been created, humankind was created in God’s own image. God gives mankind power and dominion to rule over the earth and all living things. Being created in the image of God means we must have the same regard and care for Creation as God does. Having the mandate from God to rule over the earth and all living things means we must care for the earth and its creatures on God’s behalf. Care for them as God cares. Rule in the context of Genesis is to care for. It is not the rule of a despot.

“Fill the earth and subdue it.”

Mankind is told by God to fill the earth and subdue it. The meaning of subdue in the context of its use in Genesis is to make productive. In saying mankind should subdue the earth, God expects the resources of the earth are used in a way that is productive and to the benefit of all life.

There is an expectation in Genesis that having been created in the image of God and being told to subdue the earth we will be good stewards of the earth. We will make the earth productive and at the same time care for creation.

But current evidence suggests that humankind is not meeting this expectation. We hear constant reports of the impact of human activity driving climate change and loss of species. In one report it is predicted that over one million species will be extinct by the end of the century. There is overuse of natural resources in ways that cannot be sustained. It is quite depressing to read. It is not the stewardship that God expects when mankind is created “in his own image”.

We can take some comfort though. Humans are creative and this creativity, inspired and guided by God, has consistently brought about action, and change for the good. Remember the story of Noah responding to God’s call in rescuing all kinds of animals and birds from destruction. Throughout history we can see developments and discoveries that have created improvement in our world. A recent example is the creation of vaccines and treatments for Covid. We can see the creation of industries and technologies that have made the world more productive and sustainable. Indeed, there are seeds of technologies that will help in dealing with the challenge of climate change.

When we say the Lords Prayer we ask that God’s will be done on the earth as it is in heaven. It is a call to prayerful and worshipful action that reflects God’s intention for us to care for creation, and to be creative and productive in a way that will protect the earth and the environment.

POEM: “Leisure” by WH Davies

WHAT is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare?

No time to stand beneath the boughs,
And stare as long as sheep and cows:

No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass:

No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night:

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance:

No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began?

A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

PRAYERS

We offer you our prayers for the world and the wonders of nature that surround us.
We give thanks for all those who work to care for creation and those whose work seeks to protect and sustain our environment.

LORDS PRAYER:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours.
Now and for ever. Amen

CLOSING PRAYER:

Creator, make us co-workers with you,
that the earth and all who live upon it
may reap a full harvest.

Show us how to reflect your rhythms
in our life and work
and to conserve the world's rich resources.

Help us to give all creatures their due respect,
to tend cattle and crops with care.

Guide science along wise and considerate ways,
that we may fashion agriculture that truly enhances,
and that we may sustain a vibrant environment.

By Ray Simpson (from Prayers of Creation published by Kevin Mayhew)

THE GRACE:

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
And the love of God,
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and evermore.
Amen.

The link below is a wonderful song "Creation Calls" by Brian Doerkson.
<https://youtu.be/InNlp1Q4wsM>

Please click on the link, listen and reflect on the words.