

In the Beginning God Created Everything- And it was Good! **Genesis 1:1-26,31; 2:1**

Who here has heard of accidental art? Accidental Art whether you know of it or not is art that happens by accident. Take this picture of a truck accident for instance. The truck with a load of different coloured paint has crashed and tipped over so that on the canvas of the road behind it a multi-coloured rainbow picture has been created as all the containers of paint have broken open and poured out the back of the truck flowing downhill transforming a dull black tar seal road into a masterpiece. At least temporarily anyway as it has only a limited life span which will last until the rain, cleansers or road users clean or wear it off which I'm sure the truck driver, the accidental artist would be happy about.

Whereas in the Bible we have reference to an artist who does not want to be forgotten or remain unknown. King David wrote a poetic Psalm about creation where he likened creation to art but as a special kind of art that actually spoke in such a way that it told about the artist to everyone.

Psalm 19:1-4

¹The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

²Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge.

³They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them.

⁴Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.

In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun.

David the shepherd boy, who became the king of Israel, declared creation to be a most magnificent piece of art that in no way came about as the result of an accident. Instead the beauty and wonder of creation that is all around us is in fact quite deliberate and actually reveals to us all about the artist- God the Creator who does not want to remain anonymous to us as the artist! Creation speaks to humankind revealing to us the artist. And just...

What does creation tell us about God?

Well, all that was created or made by God was good. In fact it wasn't just good, everything that God created, all that he had worked on, fashioned,

accomplished and done was *very* Good or exceedingly pleasant and agreeable v.31. It's like that feeling we get when we stand back to admire something good that we have done, a work that we have fashioned or a task that we've completed whether it's building a fence, laying a concrete path or knitting a jersey. What God had made was very good because there was no chaos or dark disorder for all creation had been fashioned and ordered by God so that the heavens and the earth and everything in it were made to bless and sustain life.

So, what does creation tell us about God then?It tells us that God is Good! Take a moment now to think about what it is that you enjoy most about creation. Maybe you're a morning person who's watched the sun rise over the hills or perhaps you're an evening person who enjoys taking in a sunset from home or even a mountain top. Or are you a night person who will take the time to look up at the stars. Maybe you are none of these and enjoy the simply pleasure of looking out the window to the garden or the countryside, a view that might include the joy of watching your children/grandchildren play. Then again you may be someone who uses their ears to appreciate creation listening to waves lapping or breaking at the beach or a lake. Perhaps you prefer listening to bird song or even your favourite musician, band or singers. Maybe it is the feeling of the sun on your cheeks or the sound of rain on the roof. Precious rain that waters the plants, grows the food that we eat like the bursting taste of a summer strawberry or now that it's autumn, a feijoa or apple. God our creator is so generous and so good. It is as if God wants us to enjoy all things including food and family, to actually have pleasure in living in this world surrounded by all the beauty and grandeur that is the work of God's fingers, created by the power of God's hands as the Psalmist declares [8:6]. It is easy then to know that God is good and that what God has made is therefore very very good and is to be enjoyed by us as humankind who God has created.

So it is then that you and I are able to become aware of God and that God is good. First of all as we have discovered 'Through Creation'. The amazing thing here for us to grasp is that God wants to be known. God has absolutely no intention of remaining hidden away in a place that he cannot be found. God has and forever will remain in plain sight revealing

himself through creation. The apostle Paul in the NT had grasped hold of and taught this when he wrote in **Romans 1**:

¹⁹ since **what may be known about God is plain** to them, **because God has made it plain** to them. ²⁰ **For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made**, so that people are without excuse.

This verse is music to the ears of those who want to become aware of God because, through creation, God has made his eternal power and divine nature easy for everyone to both see and understand.

Secondly, we become aware of God 'Through the Bible'. We have heard the word of God from Genesis 1 read this morning which is true, living and active. There is no greater way of becoming aware of God than through the Bible because this is the place where God has spoken, not just creation into being but has told us everything he has to say about himself. So if you want to know God better then spend more time reading and meditating on his word and reflecting, even with others, about its truth and meaning for your life and the life of the church. When you spend time in the word you get to know the truth so that when someone comes along with a view divergent from the truth, you know it.

For instance with regards to creation we can ask ourselves 'Is creation part of God?' This is a question that people ask today and have developed unbiblical views on. As a philosophy it has a name. It is called Pantheism and is the idea that 'God is everything and everything is God'. In Pantheism you worship creation rather than the Creator. It is a popular belief held by the Church of Scientology, New Age Spiritualism that is founded on the Eastern Religions of Hinduism, Buddhism and Bahai. It is linked to the Occult as well and even people who do not take part in these religions will believe in this notion which states that there is no absolute distinction between the Creator and creation. Which means for the Pantheist that the pew that you are sitting on is God and not only that, Pantheism means that you are God, that I am God, that the dog is God and the universe is therefore God. And why do people believe this?

Because it is appealing! You see if everything is God and if I am part of God then I am accountable only to myself which means that my faith in God is really just faith in myself and my own potential. If this philosophy that 'God is everything and everything is God' were true then that would make God 'matter' which is a substance that occupies space and has a mass that makes it material then or a physical object. So if such matter is God then matter must be eternal, but it isn't! Because God has said in his word that creation is not part of himself, that He, God, is not matter. (The Bible tells us that God is Spirit.)

We heard and read and therefore know from Genesis 1 that the universe came to be when God created it and we have learnt this morning that it is very good, but, it is not eternal and therefore it is wearing out. As it is with our human bodies that have a certain life span of use before they wear out. Just as universe has a beginning, it also has an end and the Bible on a number of occasions records this notion that the universe is wearing out. I will share two of them with you.

Firstly, the Picture of the Leaf. We are currently in the season of Autumn so we are witnessing the leaves on the trees brown and eventually wither and fall to the ground. The Bible uses this as a picture to help us understand that stars, like our sun, and the sky, will one day in the future wear out. In the Old Testament the prophet Isaiah [34:4] wrote

All the stars in the sky will be dissolved and the heavens rolled up like a scroll; all the starry host will fall like withered leaves from the vine, like shrivelled figs from the fig-tree.

The second image of the idea of the universe wearing out is The Picture of Clothing. As we all know garments of clothing as we continually wear them become thin in places and eventually wear out. The more use an item of clothing gets the sooner it'll develop wear marks or holes, eventually tearing or falling to pieces. That's why we have clothing stores to shop in to replace our clothes when we need to. The Bible uses this image to help understand that the physical universe that God created and is not God will one day wear out because it is not going to last forever. It says in Psalm 102:25-27

²⁵In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth,
and the heavens are the work of your hands.

²⁶They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment.
Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded.

²⁷But you remain the same, and your years will never end.

Things that wear out cannot be eternal. If the universe is wearing out, it cannot be eternal. If it is not eternal, it must have had a beginning and, In the beginning-God, created the heavens and the earth and everything in it and it was very very good, it was definitely no accident, and in itself such matter was not God. Although not matter God does want us to be aware of Him through His physical creation.

Let us now pray to God our Creator and Redeemer, not only of the universe but of our eternal spirits that will not wear out but live forever with Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour...

Eternal God we are aware that you want to be known through the truth of your Word and through Creation- what it is that you have made. We thank you for Creation, that we get to enjoy throughout our lives, which declares your glory and speaks to us of your great artistry. We thank you that each one of us is no accident, but have been made in your image to worship you, not creation, through Jesus Christ your Son and our Saviour. We thank you that although one day this world will wear out and come to an end our spirits will never pass away but will live forever with you in your eternal realm. Amen