

...CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION...

NEIGHBORHOOD GROUPS



Date: 05/05/19

Scripture Text: Genesis 1:1-5; John 1:1-5, 9-18

Sermon Title: Creation As Communion

Catching Up

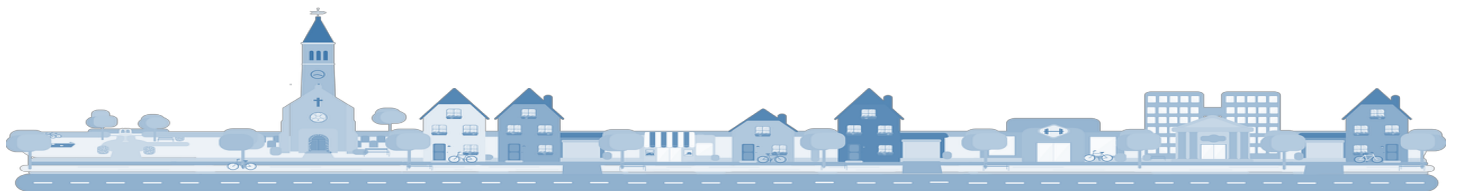
- Have each person share a “hi” and a “low” from the week or take prayer requests and spend some time praying for one another.

Growing Deep

- Pray.
- Take a few minutes to read the Scripture text above.
- Did anything stand out to you or did you sense God speaking to you in Scripture reading today or during the sermon on Sunday? What stuck out to you?

Genesis begins with a summary of God creating the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1), deconstructing in a single sentence the notion that nature produced the gods and reconstructing a new framework in which God is revealed to be the Creator of all the habitations and inhabitants of nature itself. Moses (the author) then rewinds and zoom the lens in to reveal an ordered account of creation, in which God’s distinction *from* and sovereignty *over* nature is displayed not only by his means of creating (by *speaking*) but also by his naming the places and things he creates (an indication of his ownership and authority over creation). In the handout provided, I have suggested that the structure of the first creation account in Genesis moves from the creation of Habitations (days 1-3) to Inhabitants (days 4-6), culminating in the “crown of creation,” a creature made in the very image of God given dominion over the earth and its inhabitants.

By revealing the God who *spoke* creation into existence (cf. Ps. 33:6), Genesis 1 both *severs* any “natural” relationship between God and creation and *establishes* a new kind of relationship. We are thus invited to reflect on what it means for God to *speak* creation into existence. Consider, then, how the Word of God serves as the mediation between God.



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- How do you think God severing himself from the “images” of the natural world and directing us to see the natural world as a creation by his Word determines how we should seek God (cf. Acts 17)?
- Considering the “Eternal Prologue” of the creation account in John 1, and the fact that the sun, moon, and stars were not created until day 4, how do you interpret the “light” that God spoke into creation in Genesis (Also see Rev. 21:23; 22:5, where the New Creation is described as having no need for sun because the glory of God gives it its light; also see Isa. 60:19; Jn. 1; 3:19-21; 2 Cor. 2:4)?
- What do you think the significance is in this severing from the images of the natural world only to conclude with God creating a creature of the natural world *in his image* (hint: “image” and “idol” are from the same word in Hebrew)?

Branching Out

- The Bible begins (Gen. 1-2) and ends (Rev. 21-22) with God and his “very good” creation living together in perfect harmony. Too often our articulation of the Gospel begins in Genesis 3 (the Fall) and ends in Revelation 20 (Judgment). But the bookends of the Bible provide the origins and end that guide the rest of salvation history—God is restoring what was lost *in the beginning*.
 - How does your understanding of the Gospel inform your reading of the bookends of the Bible (Gen. 1-2; Rev. 21-22)?
 - How does your understanding of the bookends of the Bible inform your reading of the Gospel?
- With emerging theories of the age of the universe, how it has changed over time, theories of evolution, and the ever-growing advancements in science, what are the non-negotiable claims of Genesis 1 regarding God as the Creator of the universe?
- How have you or would you navigate the discussion of *origins* with skeptics who hold to something like a *creation-out-of-nothing* model?



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