

## **Creator God; creative people**

Readings: Genesis 1:14 – 23, Exodus 35:30 – 35

On Christmas day I was telling my Grandson, Marcus, the Christmas story. As I was telling him about God's plan for Jesus, he interrupted me: "Gran, God made the world didn't he?"

You could have blown me away with a feather. As far as I knew, no-one talked with Marcus about Christian things. What was clear is that he believed what he had said. The Spirit never leaves himself without a witness which is wonderful. My reason for telling you is that a surprising number of people believe in God and that God is the Creator.

Over this term we are going to look at various aspects of God's character as revealed in Genesis. We will consider what these aspects mean for us and for our daily lives.

Micah recently said, the Biblical creation account tells the "cosmic drama of God creating his temple or kingdom on earth." Micah thought it tragic, when miss we the drama and excitement of God 's creative acts by imposing scientific questions onto the story. Neither am I going to address the issues of creation vs evolution or the time frames of God's creation. Sorry if that disappoints you. I believe we need to focus on God's nature and power and the amazing beauty that he brought into being.

While I've chose small part of Genesis chapter one for the reading, do go home and read the whole chapter. Focus on what God is doing – sit somewhere quietly outdoors if you can, and allow yourself to enter into the story.

V1 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." It doesn't tell us how God created; nor does it specifically say that God began with nothing. But God must have begun with nothing. Only God existed before the beginning of the world. This is an important aspect of the Christian faith, even though it is not in any of our creeds.

Why is it important that God began with nothing? If he used existing stuff we fall into the danger of one of the following heresies:

1. Pantheism or panentheism—this says that God and the world are one and the same or somehow depend on each other.
2. Another view denies the creation totally. God created out of something that was already there – something separate from God. God simply organised something already present.
3. The third view is that God created the world somehow out of himself. Everything in the world is made from God's own being. Roger Olsen calls that "God stuff".<sup>1</sup>
4. The last view is a secular one. Something has always existed, even if it was only energy. God may or may not exist, but if he does, he has nothing to do with creation.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/rogereolson/2015/01/why-i-believe-in-creatio-ex-nihilo-creation-out-of-nothing-even-though-the-bible-doesnt-directly-teach-it/>

It seems to me that 'God initially created from nothing' is the only belief to hold.

Anyway here is God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit – having a great life, enjoying themselves together within the Trinity - even though nothing else exists. God is not bored. God is not lonely. God is Trinity. For some reason though, a discussion occurred, and God decided to express God's creativity in a physical way.

All three members were involved in this creation. How powerful is God - God spoke and marvellous things came into being while the Spirit was there taking part:

In the beginning there is no sun. So God created light and called it day. It's impossible to imagine what light and dark would look like then isn't it?

Next God spoke the sky into being – earth's atmosphere was made distinct from the great mass of the rest of the universe! God somehow set aside our sky ready for the next step.

The earth itself – this is where God began to get really excited. God separated the sea and land. Then God created plant life. Huge trees, tiny mosses, beautiful flowers, colour galore!

Then God on big picture stuff again – God makes heavenly bodies – I'm not talking about models but stars and planets, our sun and moon. What we see from earth is only a tiny part isn't it? Have you ever looked through a telescope? It's amazing; the milky way, our universe, is only one universe among so many.

Then God goes to populate the water. It blows me away that God would go to so much trouble to create such diversity – much of which is never seen. Have you ever googled deep sea creatures? Then God creates flying creatures to fill the air –birds – NZ alone has 91 native species of birds.

God is on a roll. Next come the animals – large and small, cute, ugly. Some live in groups, others are solitary. Now God creates tiny things – insects – caterpillars, beetles, flies, moths, butterflies,... And finally the apex of God's creation - human beings – male and female he created them. In his own image he created them.

This is drama on a macro and micro scale. This is amazing. Praise to our Creator whose imagination is limitless. Who else would have thought of sex, or designed internal organs the way they are? Who else would make each snowflake, each fingerprint, each iris in our eyes unique? God has made the entire universe and everything in it. God made it all, not scientists, or engineers, or aliens but God himself. And it was good, and it was very good.

God's creativity is revealed in the process as well as the end results:

- God used entrepreneurial creativity by deciding what his priorities were and how creation would come about.
- God used language creatively by naming the various aspects of creation.
- God uses developmental creativity by using what is in front of him to create the man and the woman.
- God uses creative imagination in the vast array of creatures created.

What other aspects of God's creativity does God use?

No-one was standing over God's shoulder saying "Get to it". God wanted to create. God enjoyed creating. God still enjoys creating. New life is happening all the time – new stars, plants, animals, ideas, new lives. God enjoys what God has created.

All of creation reflects something of God's character. Most clearly God's nature is revealed through human beings – only humans are described as being made in God's image.

Micah said in his sermon that being made in God's image means we point to something greater than ourselves – the Gospel. The Gospel is God's Good News for all of creation. Part of the Gospel is God is creator and will restore all of creation.

Today's Sentence reminds us that we are part of God's plan for the renewal of all creation:

*For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.* Eph 2:10

I think we have understood that Scripture to mean that we are to be working, working, working. We are co-workers with God sure. But God's work, and God's fun, is revealed in creative. When we are working with God and using the gifts God has given us, our work will actually be fun! Being creative is fun! Jesus came to bring us life and that life abundantly.<sup>2</sup>

When God created us, he gave each one of us several gifts. We've talked a bit about that. Those gifts are to bring God glory. They are also to bring others and ourselves pleasure.

So today I thought we could celebrate some of the creative gifts in our midst. I also thought it would be good to discuss what creativity is.

1. What do you think it is?
2. What creative gifts do you have?

We have some wonderful crafts people in our parish. Some are very well known, like Joan Inwood who makes the most amazing quilts. Others do too – Valerie and who else? Some arrange the flowers each week. Some knit and sew and embroider. Very often we think of crafts when we think of creativity. Crafts are creative.

Creativity is used in a wide range of ways though.

- Carol used her creativity when she planned the colour scheme for the hall and when she got people on board to help her. She also uses it when planning her and implement her Friends n Fun program and fun events.
- Mark Quinney uses his creative skills, conceiving, designing and implementing activities to engage and help people at Quinney's bush have fun.
- Tom and Lorna Gower use their creative skills in putting together their carpet business and in the advertising they do to promote it.
- Jan South uses her creative skills in putting together a worship service. Keith uses his in a variety of problem solving ways like refixing a fallen tile from one of our church buttresses.
- Glynis Bevernage uses her creativity when she designs an xcel spreadsheet.

"Now that's all good", some of you will be thinking, "but I am not creative. I just pinch other people's ideas. I don't have good ideas of my own so I can't call myself creative."

No disrespect, but that is rubbish thinking. Finding, copying, and adapting for our own context does take creativity. If you have a narrow view of what talented and creative people are like, you will have trouble seeing the amazing creativity around you and within you. You do have creative strengths. Ask God what they are and step out in faith using them.

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<sup>2</sup> John 10:10b

Others of you may be thinking “I used to be creative but now I am too old. I don’t create anything.” This too is rubbish thinking. You still create perhaps in different ways. You create and foster constructive relationships, opportunities to share God’s love, times for people to be heard in conversation. You are creative in so many different areas of your lives.

I encourage you to expand your thinking about God’s creativity, about the creativity of others and about your own creativity. Use the reflections in our newsletter:

1. What do you find most amazing in this universe God has created?
2. How can you experience more of this wonderful creation?
3. In what ways do you see the Lord’s creativity in yourself?
4. How can you express this creativity and bring joy to God, yourself and others through it?

Also please take a look at and enjoy some of the creativity of our church members after the service.