

Worship at Home 7/7/2024 Bible Month:1

Call to Worship:

Come with your questions, come with your awe!

**For the God who broods over the chaos
meets us in this place.**

Come with your energy, come with your weariness!

**For the God who breathes new life into the dust
meets us in this place.**

Come with your sadness, come with your joy!

**For the God who dared to become human
meets us in this place.**

Hymn: All Things Bright and Beautiful (StF 100)

All things bright and beautiful,
all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful,
the Lord God made them all.

1 Each little flower that opens,
each little bird that sings,
he made their glowing colours,
he made their tiny wings:

2 The purple heathered mountain,
the river running by,
the sunset, and the morning
that brightens up the sky:

3 The cold wind in the winter,
the pleasant summer sun,

the ripe fruits in the garden,
he made them every one:

4 He gave us eyes to see them,
and lips that we might tell
how great is God Almighty,
who has made all things well:

Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-1895) (alt.)

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Opening Prayer:

Almighty God,

Your Spirit swept over the waters of creation;

You are sweeping over us now, creating something new.

Call us away from the distractions of the world

to experience what You are doing now, in us,

and through us, and in our world.

Open us to a new awakening, a new beginning,

where we look through the lens of the goodness of Your

creation, experiencing all possibilities in You.

Turn us away from the negative lens, and lead us to the light.

In the name of Jesus, who leads us into life, we pray. Amen.

Scripture: Genesis 1:1-31 and 2:1-2

Scripture: Genesis 9:12-16

Hymn: In the Beginning God Played with the Planets (StF 108)

1 In the beginning God played with the planets,
set them a-spinning in time and in space,
stars in the night sky, while sun lit the daytime,
blue was the globe that was formed for our race.

- 2 God saw the seas and the fish that swam in them,
formed the dry land where the trees soon would grow,
animals now could inhabit the countries
warmed by the oceans or covered in snow.
- 3 After the animals, people were coming,
made in God's likeness to live on the earth;
big the blue planet God gave them to live on,
sharing its riches, its wonder and worth.

Andrew Pratt (b. 1948)
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<www.stainer.co.uk>

Reflection:

Welcome to Bible Month!

Now, part of me thinks Bible Month is a very good idea.
Another part of me (perhaps the larger part if I'm honest) finds
it completely mad.

You want me to cover the entire book of Genesis in 4 weeks?
I thought the 13 chapters of Revelation were difficult last year -
Genesis has 50 chapters!
How on earth can we dig into that adequately in a mere 4
weeks?

The answer is, of course, we can't.
As one of the videos I watched started out by saying - we
could probably spend 4 *years* digging into all that Genesis has
to offer. But we have 4 weeks.

In the materials, they say that they have divided Genesis into
four "bite-sized chunks" although I would argue that 11
chapters is a very big bite! I would encourage you to spend
time this week reading through the first 11 chapters of Genesis
yourself, and to listen and discern for where God is speaking
to you in these passages.

That is what I did in preparation for today, and I found that I
couldn't move past chapter one.

So, let's start at the very beginning.

As Julie Andrews once sang, it's a very good place to start.

In Genesis Chapter 1 we read this beautiful, poetic account of
creation. Each day God creates something new - and at the
end of the day God looks over this creation and pronounces it
good.

For the first six days of the week we listen and can picture
what God is creating.

God separates the light from the darkness and calls the light
"day" and the darkness "night."

God creates a vault to separate the waters and calls the vault
"sky".

God commands the water under the sky to be gathered to one
place to let dry ground appear and he calls the dry ground
"land" and the gathered water the "seas."

God shapes the animals to live in these places - the great
creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water
teems and that moves about in it - and says let the birds fly
above the earth across the vault of the sky and created every
winged bird according to its kind.

God created the animals of the land and the plants and vegetation that thrive on the land.

And on the sixth day, God said:

“Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness..”

“So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them,
male and female he created them.”

As we read this account of creation we can picture the vast beauty and diversity of this world that God has made. There are wonders of this world that are too vast for us to perceive, and too small for us to conceive, but God created it all, and is in it all.

But that last part is so important - that we are each and everyone of us created in the image of God. From the materials this week they tell us this:

Genesis 1 describes humanity as the pinnacle of creation - for “God created human beings in his own image.” This phrase is loaded with possible meanings but it tells us two things:

1. God has some human-like qualities. For this reason, it is common to find anthropomorphic language throughout the Bible. For example, God is described as walking, talking, feeling, and acting.
2. Human beings have the capacity to reflect some of God’s qualities when we have a revelation of God’s character, such as discovering God is loving, faithful, and forgiving. Although imperfect, we can reflect God’s characteristics and ways of working *within* and to the created order, and *through* our God-given role as stewards of creation. This God-given co-operative

potential is key to understanding the radical commitment to humanity God sets in motion through creation. Ultimately, it makes sense of the incarnation of Jesus and the invitation he extends to his disciples to work alongside him.

We are each created in the image of God.

There is something of God in each of us, and we should see God reflected in each other.

What might this mean for how we treat other people - if we were truly to see the image of God in them?

“How does this principle extend to the rich diversity of people, with differing ethnicities, genders, and abilities?”

I was listening to a podcast the other day that talked about the renowned cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead who once said: “Always remember that you are absolutely unique. Just like everybody else.”

We might say, always remember you are uniquely created in the image of God.

Just like everybody else.

This is a truth that can change how we live our lives and how we see others.

Prayers of Intercession:

Praise God for making us all in God’s image...

Pray for empathy and compassion for all people, all of whom are also made in the image of God...

Pray for those in power who can influence government policies on caring for creation...

Pray for wisdom as we seek to be good stewards of creation...

Pray for all that is on your heart and mind today...

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn: Community of Christ, Who Make the Cross Your Own
(StF 681)

- 1 *Community of Christ,
who make the Cross your own,
live out your creed and risk your life
for God alone:
the God who wears your face,
to whom all worlds belong,
whose children are of every race
and every song.*

- 2 *Community of Christ,
look past the Church's door
and see the refugee, the hungry,
and the poor.
Take hands with the oppressed,
the jobless in your street,
take towel and water, that you wash
your neighbour's feet.*

- 3 *Community of Christ,
through whom the word must sound --
cry out for justice and for peace
the whole world round:
disarm the powers that war
and all that can destroy,
turn bombs to bread, and tears of anguish
into joy.*

- 4 *When menace melts away,
so shall God's will be done,
the climate of the world be peace
and Christ its Sun;
our currency be love
and kindness our law,
our food and faith be shared as one
for evermore.*

Shirley Erena Murray (b. 1931)

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The Grace: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore, Amen.

Resources:

Call to Worship: <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2012/08/call-to-worship-god-meets-us.html>

Opening Prayer: <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2017/01/prayer-first-sunday-of-epiphany.html>

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