

Maker of Heaven and Earth - Psalm 104

Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

We believe in one God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

The first line of the Nicene Creed opens exactly where the Bible begins. The first line of Genesis declares, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Just seven words in the original Hebrew manuscript, yet these words are so full of meaning, and they set the stage for the entire Biblical story. The Christian doctrine of creation lays the foundation for all the core beliefs we will find in Scripture and in the Creed. We see that creation is an act of a single God, and that God created everything in heaven and earth. In this case the reference to heaven is not focused on our eternal home, rather it is looking up at all that is in the sky and reaching into the universe. So the text tells us that everything except God had a beginning, that time is a creation, and the only One who is eternal is God Himself. Not only this, we see a clear distinction between maker and what is made, between Creator and creation. This distinction is vital for our understanding of God, the Biblical story, and ourselves. Virtually every other worldview has some sort of conflation between whatever they call god and the created order. For example, the Force in Star Wars expresses the worldview of pantheism which is built on the idea that nature and God are one. In this case God is more of an energy field that has a give and take relationship with the physical universe, a life force that both generates life and is generated by the energy in all things. Creator and creation is one in this (and so many other worldviews), yet the opening line of Scripture makes a clear declaration that there is a distinction between God and what He made. As we read on the Scriptures make it clear that the worship of anything created is actually idolatry, the fountain head of all sin. The story also makes it clear that everything exists because of this God, who created all things from nothing. God did not start with stuff and reshape it to make more stuff. He created *ex nihilo* (Latin for from or out of nothing). We can be creative, part of the image of God in us, yet we always start with stuff. God created all things from nothing. Finally, if we read on in Genesis 1 we will begin to see a repeated declaration from God about His creation, as he declares, "It is good," ending with, "It is very good." In other words, God affirms the goodness of everything He made. I grew up in a tradition that saw some things as "bad things", and decided that sin was the enjoyment of bad things. This is not how the Bible frames the glory of creation. Actually, all things, including the fruit of the vine and our sexuality are good things. The problem is never the things themselves, rather, the problem is found when we, sinful creatures, take good things and make them ultimate things, they become god things, and in this the good thing becomes destructive. So yes, the fruit of the vine (or fermented corn) can destroy lives when it gains control, so can fried chicken.

Our text this week is Psalm 104, but the truth is that we could have chosen dozens of Psalms and myriads of other texts declaring how the glory of God is on display in creation. But this Psalm is a beautiful song of praise to the Creator God. The Psalm basically restates the rhythm and order of creation in Genesis 1, yet rather than declaring what these things look like "in the beginning," the Psalm looks around the world celebrating how God's creation is still good and beautiful now. The Psalm begins with praise to the God who is outside, over, and in control of creation. As the song rolls through all the wonders of creation the reader/singer is reminded that everything in creation is made by God, owned by Him, and owes its existence to the Creator. Furthermore, the identity and purpose for everything in creation is defined by the Creator. But there is also a subtle but beautiful truth within, that all things were made for the pleasure of the Creator,

but also for His crown creation. We are to find joy in the experience of what God has made, they are gifts for us. The other sad but true reality about creation is that we, God's greatest and most glorious creation are the only ones who have rejected the basic narrative. We want to be self made people who create our own identities, determine our own purposes, and live for ourselves. Sin broke all of this, yet it didn't ruin it. Yet we take the things of creation and center on what is made rather than the one who made it, fixating on the gift while rejecting the giver. So the Psalm ends where we should, with a celebration of the LORD, whose glory endures forever and to whom the whole of creation trembles. The call is to enjoy and then look up, always reminded that the beauty of the created world is nothing more than a reflection of the holy God who made it all. And our response must be to rejoice in the LORD and bless His name forever.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Exodus 30	Exodus 31	Exodus 32	Exodus 33	Exodus 34	Exodus 35	Exodus 36

Reading from this past week's sermon: Exodus 34:1-9

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Colossians 1:15-20

Family Worship

Song - *Holy Forever*

https://youtu.be/Y626kGcl_Q0?si=Y3vhqugT0K_vHG5

Gospel Project

Unit: A Troubled Kingdom

Story: The Reign of Ahab

Big Picture Question: How many gods are there?

Answer: There is one true God who alone deserves worship.

Scripture: 1 Kings 20-22

New City Catechism

Question 40: What should we pray?

Answer: The whole Word of God directs us in what we should pray.

Verse: Ephesians 3:14-21

Psalm 104

- What are the implications of the Nicene Creed expression that God is, "Maker of heaven and earth, all things seen and unseen?"
- As you read Psalm 104, what lines and phrases stand out and catch your imagination?
- If creation is "good", why do we have such a difficult time being consumed by and worshiping created things?
- What is the proper way to enjoy and celebrate what God has made? How does the beginning and end of this Psalm help us?

Prayer

*Pray that we would see the glory of God on display in creation and be thankful for all of His gifts.

*Pray for our mission with the city at Eureka Days this weekend.