



The Sermon

Michael Staton

Genesis 1:20-25

"The Handiwork of God"

June 6, 2021

TRANSCRIPT

So with that in mind, open with me, if you would, to Genesis chapter 1. I'm preaching verses 14 to 19. Just kidding. I could, but we'll start with verse 20. "And God said, 'Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.' So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.' And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

"And God said, 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds - livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.' And it was so. And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good." Would you pray with me?

[Prayer] Lord, we are thankful this day to be gathered with Your people, to be in this facility that has been purposed for the saints to come together to worship each Lord's Day. It is in this place that we gather to sing and to pray and to read Your word and to study Your word. It is in this place where Your Holy Spirit meets with us and reveals truth to us through the

proclamation of Your word, and draws us closer and closer to You. And our prayer today would be for anyone that would be with us in person or online that may not know You in a personal way, that through the work of the Spirit today He would draw them to a saving relationship through the work of Your Son Jesus Christ. We ask in the name of Your Son who is our Savior. Amen. [End]

Well, I'd like to begin by having you look with me at the words of a great hymn. The songs that we have sung today are perfect with what we're studying. "This is My Father's World" is one of my very favorite hymns. It just reminds us that the Lord has created. What a great couple of songs we've already sung together today.

But take out your hymnal if you've got it. I'm a preacher, which means I'm just a frustrated guy who can't sing that wishes he could. So I've always wanted to say, you know, "Open your hymnal. I'm going to lead you in a song." But I won't lead you in this song, but I do want to introduce it to you if you don't know it. It's Hymn 26. It's just an amazing hymn, and I want to just have you see these words so I can read them along with you. It's written by Isaac Watts. You know Isaac Watts' work; he's the one that wrote "Joy to the World," a song we sing at Christmas. It was actually a song written about the second coming, but we sing it at Christmastime.

"I sing the mighty power of God that made the mountains rise, that spread the flowing seas abroad and built the lofty skies. I sing the wisdom that ordained the sun to rule the day, the moon shines full at His command, and all the stars obey. I sing the goodness of the Lord that filled the earth with food. He formed the creatures with His word and then pronounced them good. Lord, how Thy wonders are displayed where'er I turn my eye, if I survey the very ground I tread or gaze upon the sky. There's not a plant or flower below but makes Thy glories known; and clouds arise and tempests blow by order from Thy throne. While all that borrows life from Thee is ever in Thy care; and everywhere that man can be Thou, God, art present there."

It's a text that reminds us of God's creative power, but more than that, of God's sovereign rule over what He has created. That's what we're studying here in this early part of our walk through the book of Genesis: how God created; and not only how He created, but why He created, what does that mean for each of us. And one of the things that I want to do this morning with you is I want to, first of all, zoom out.

When you go through Genesis 1 you're looking very close at the details of creation. But I want to start by zooming out and taking a big picture look at, "What does creation teach us about God?" That first and foremost needs to be in our mind as we're walking through these pages of Genesis, that we understand what this text teaches us about God, for whatever we can understand about the earth, and whatever we can learn about the animals, whatever we can learn about science, wonderful things. But the primary thing we must make sure we are focused on is what we're learning about God.

And then after we do that, I want to zoom in, in looking in verses 20 to 25, and consider together, "How did the sea and the skies get filled?" And staying zoomed in, look at a third question of, "Where did the land animals come from?" And then I want to zoom back out, and let's end with a big picture of you then of, "What does God's creation mean for us? How should we respond to God's creation?" And then we'll enjoy Lord's Supper together.

So, if you're taking notes, first let's zoom out and let's take a big picture look for a few moments and let's look first at this first question: "What does creation teach us about God? What does creation teach us about God?" Understand with me that the world has no desire to see God or to know God, certainly no desire to obey God. Those without faith in the Lord Jesus have no interest in knowing God, because to know God is to understand our sinfulness; and to understand our sinfulness is to understand that we are in need of submitting our lives to a sovereign God, which the unbelieving world has no interest in doing. And so we've got to have spiritual eyes to see what creation teaches us about God, or else we're going to miss the very purpose for which God created us, namely for us to know Him by the work

of His hands and the life of His Son, that we would glorify Him all the days of our life.

Psalm 14:1 and Psalm 53:1 both say, "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.'" The unbelieving world has no interest in Genesis 1 because the unbelieving world has no interest in submitting their life and bowing their knee to the One who created all things. We've gathered here today to do just that though, haven't we, to submit our lives to the very One who has created all things.

I want you to leave Genesis 1 open, but turn with me, if you would, to Romans 1. In Romans chapter 1 we learn some interesting things that are pertinent to what's going on in Genesis 1. "What does creation teach us about God?" Look in Romans 1 starting in verse 18. It says, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For His invisible attributes, namely, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world." Did you catch that? God has displayed Himself - His power, His nature, His sovereignty, His existence - ever since the creation of the world in the things that have been made.

So understand, according to Romans 1, when you study creation, you are not ultimately studying about animals or science or the sun and the moon and animals. All those things are wonderful things. The ultimate thing you and I should see when we look at creation is God Himself. God has made all these things, and the more we learn about them, the better, because the more we learn about what He's made, the more we can love and appreciate the majestic power of God.

But if you look at creation and do not understand who God is, you have missed the very point of your life. Every sunset, every sunrise, every star, every animal, every body of water is an invitation to you to worship God and to love God according to what has been revealed about Him to us; so much so

that verse 20 ends with this: "So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools," - now watch verse 23 - "and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things."

Where have we heard about birds and animals and creeping things? Genesis 1:20-21, where God created the animals, the birds, and the creeping things. And ever since then, man, apart from the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, has refused to submit their life to the authority of who God is. Because of sin, the world denies God, and the world has no place for Him. Some say that if people get rid of God, they will believe in nothing. I don't think that's the case, I think it's actually the exact opposite. When man gets rid of God, they'll believe in anything.

See also the world you and I live in today. How else do you possibly explain the utter foolishness of what's going on in our society, crazy things that people believe and hold on to and teach, and you just think to yourself, "How could that possibly happen?" Here's how: because we're living in a Romans 1 world, where people have been given over, turned over, because of their sin, to the end result of a society that denies God. You live in complete foolishness.

And the same people who refuse to honor God and worship God instead will begin to even put animals and creeping things above their view of God. They will take what has been revealed to them, what has been made known to them, and reject it, and push it aside, and instead, embrace an ideology of complete foolishness, just like Romans 1 describes. Because when you take the creation and remove the Creator, you've missed the very point of it all. That's what Romans 1 says.

And so, the world's design for you and goal for you is to get you really just to believe these two things: that everything happens by chance, and that there is no objective truth that we can stand on. Why? Because they want to

dethrone God. They want to remove God as the ultimate authority, because where you have ultimate authority, you have accountability. You understand that, right? Where there's authority, there's accountability.

If society can remove God as authority, in their mind they can dismiss any accountability that they have. That's what's going on in the world around you today. That's what's happening. "Let's get rid of anything that speaks of objective truth, let's get rid of anything that speaks of the one true God, because if we believe in a one true God, we are accountable to do what He says." If we can remove Him in the world's thinking they've removed accountability. And now they can do, say, or act in any way they want to without any consequence until the day each individual dies and stands before the Lord their Creator. And Romans 1 says, "They will be without excuse, without excuse."

So I want to make sure this morning that you know what creation teaches us about God. Let me just give you a few things very quickly. Number One: "We know that creation involves the Trinity." We could go to a few different places. Let me just give you one reference: John 1:1-3, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. And all things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." Creation involves the Trinity.

A second thing that we see about God in creation is that "God spoke His creation into existence, God spoke His creation into existence." There were a lot of people, even those who would go to church and those who would call themselves believers who get really nervous when you talk about creation, because the problem for so many as they say, "I just don't know if I can believe that God just supernaturally, miraculously spoke, and all these things happened."

Here's what you've got to understand. If you don't believe in the supernatural work of God, what are you going to do with the gospel it speaks of, the God-man who died and was brought back to life, who walked

on water, who raised the dead back to life? What are you going to do with the hope of Christianity, that the Lord Jesus is actually physically returning to earth again? If you don't embrace the truth of the Bible, that God supernaturally does what only God can do, I assure you, you have no hope at all.

The goal of what we do here is not that we just become more morally sound people, it's that we truly embrace the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, which by its very definition is a supernatural work of God. Jesus, born of a virgin, lived on this earth, never sinned, crucified, buried raised back to life, ascended to heaven, and one day coming down in the clouds to gather His people to Himself. Everything about the truth of God and creation and salvation and our blessed hope of resurrection is the supernatural work of God. And creation not only reveals to us, the Trinity of God reveals to us that He spoke all things into existence.

The psalmist believed this. Psalm 33:6, "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host." This speaks to us that God's creation is done orderly and deliberately. Revelation 4, you see this in verses 9 to 11, specifically in verse 11: "Worthy are You, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for You created all things, and by Your will they existed and were created."

So we learned that God spoke His creation into existence. A third thing we learn about God is that "God is to be Worshiped, not the creation. God is to be worshiped not the creation." Too many people are in this world worshiping the gift instead of the giver of the gift.

The big news that Mark alluded to in my family, just a couple of weeks ago my oldest son Cael got engaged to his now fiancé Bailey, who would love to show you this thing that's growing on her left ring finger, if you are so inclined after church. It was a gift. And the gift matters, and the gift is special. But if my soon-to-be daughter-in-law loves the ring more than the one who gave her the ring, she's missed the point of the gift in the first place. The gift mattered, but the gift was an expression of love. And when

my oldest son proposed his fiancé, it was not so that her heart and her love would terminate on that gift, it was to draw her even closer into a love relationship with him, the one who has given the gift. Our society's done the opposite: we've taken God's gift and we've made idols out of them, and have largely rejected the giver.

Fourth, we learn about God that "God is a God of order and variety and diversity and beauty." Creation shows us this. Psalm 19:1, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the skies proclaim the works of His hands." Walk outside today and see the sun, and go outside tonight and see the moon and the stars, and you see the literal handiwork of God; and in so doing, you see His order and variety, and the diversity and beauty with which He has created all things. And we learn, fifthly, that, "We owe Him our allegiance and devotion. We owe Him our allegiance and devotion," because He is the Creator, and as such, deserves our worship.

So that's the big picture view. I want to make sure those things are clear on your mind as you're walking through Genesis 1, because if you miss the big picture view of who God is, then the details are not going to lead you to the right place, all right. We need to know who God is, and understand everything you learn about creation is an invitation to you to worship the One who created all things, okay. Having done that, let's zoom in a little bit now to the details. Let's zoom in to details.

God has created. Here's what we've already seen together. Day One: God creates the material and the light. Day Two: God creates the seas and the heavens. Day Three: God creates the earth and vegetation. Day Four: God creates the luminaries, He attaches the light to it. Day Five, as we're learning today: God will fill the sea and fill the sky with creatures. Day Six: God will create animals and man.

And so we're looking at the second question now, "How did the sea and sky get filled? How did the sea in the sky get filled?" We're talking now about the fifth day, verses 20 and following. It's on this fifth day of creation that



God will create conscious creatures who now are reproductive creatures. That's a big change that happens as we go now to Day Five.

Look again in verse 20: "And God said, 'Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens. Let the waters swarm with swarms.'" New American Standard says, "Let the waters team with swarms." The wording here speaks of now that which has been created, that can move on its own. This is different than plants. This is different than other parts of creation. We now have conscious creatures that are able to move. The seas will swarm with swarms of living creatures. It's what in English we'd call this a polyptoton. It's a literary rhetorical device where you take a word and you use it in two different senses, two different ways in the same sentence.

So the seas will swarm with swarms of creatures. Something's happening here, and the idea is that these creatures being made can now move. They can now freely go about on their own. For the first time we have living creatures now that move on their own, and it's the first reference to a conscious kind of life that they instinctively know to get out of the way, they instinctively know how to move to protect themselves.

Last night as our family was pulling into the hotel there were these five or six birds on the ground; and thinking of this passage and making that statement, I said to my wife in the front seat, I said, "Look how these birds just instinctively know to get out of the way as we draw up to them," and she started driving up to them, and the birds weren't moving. And I say, "You're about to make a liar and a murderer out of me." But in the very last second right before a car just bludgeoned, them they ran off, they flew off.

What's happening here in Day Five is God is creating these animals, these creatures that can move. They have conscious lives and instinctively know how to move and protect themselves. That's what the psalmist in Psalm 104 referred to when he said, "O Lord, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all; the earth is full of Your creatures. Here is the sea, great and wide, which teams with creatures innumerable, living

things both great and small." And also verse 20, "Let the birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens." Verse 21, "So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind."

I read the last couple of weeks this incredible reality that says even a drop of ditch water can hold 500 million microscopic creatures. A drop of ditch water can hold 500 million microscopic creatures that are so small, that to them a teaspoon full of water would be as the Atlantic Ocean is to us. Staggering. You understand that of all the creatures we know of and can see and interact with in any given way, there is a much larger part of creation that we don't even know about. It's so small that our human eyes can't even on their own see it. God creates that which is so large that takes our breath away and that which is so small, it's even beyond our comprehension.

And just a quick passing thing here in verse 21: "So God created the great sea creatures." Just a quick word about that. That same word is often translated as a "dragon" in Hebrew literature. Why does He specify these great sea creatures? Why does He specify this group of His creation that are so large? Could be because in ancient Canaanite literature, a dragon is the enemy of the main fertility god. In Near Eastern mythology, such creatures were worshiped and associated with that which was rebellious. And it seems as if what we're learning here in Genesis 1 is that these great sea creatures in ancient literature, some people saw them as evil and rebels against God, and others saw them as a false God and a deity to worship.

Genesis 1 says these, even these great sea creatures, were made by the word of God. That these animals, these creatures that are large, and for some people were frightening, and for other cultures and societies were even something they worshiped, these are not deity, they were created; but they're not a threat to God, they are part of His good creation. In other words, God may have rebels, but He has no rivals. Understand that. Whatever you see in creation is no threat to God, for He Himself has made it and made it as a display of His glory.

He then gives this blessing and this command, verse 21, "God saw that it was good." Verse 22, "God blessed them, saying, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.'" This is the first blessing given in the Bible. Did you notice what the blessing was? The blessing is that He enabled them to procreate and to multiply. The blessing going on in Day Five of creation relates to the ability to these creatures to reproduce. That's what they were to do. He blessed them, and in blessing them, said, "Be fruitful and multiply." This is part of God's good gifts. And in Day Five, He so blesses His creatures He creates with the blessing of being able to multiply, and to fill the waters and to fill the skies, which leads us to a third question: "How did land animals come to be?"

We speak of land animals, we're going from Day Five into Day Six. Day Six of creation we see God creating the animals and man. Verses 24 and 25 talk about the creation of the animals. Let's look at verse 24: "God said, 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds - livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.'" So you've got three classifications of how God created: livestock, animals that can be tamed; creeping things, these are insects and small animals with short legs whose bodies are close to the ground; and the beasts of the earth, these are four-legged animals that are not easily tamed. And most amazing, at the end of verse 24 is just this simple sentence: "And it was so." God spoke it, God decreed it, and it was so. We've seen that in verse 9, we saw it in verse 11, verse 15, and now again in verse 24, "And it was so." It was settled. God's creation accomplishes His will. It's an amazing thing to watch unfold.

"And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind." And that's the animal realm. In verse 25, "God saw that it was good." Incidentally if you notice there, the order of those three categories, they're given back-to-back and they're put in two different orders, which speaks to us that this is not something that happened sequentially, this happened instantaneously, all at one time. God spoke, and as He did, the land animals populated the earth. And God saw it was good. It's been a recurring theme here in Genesis 1, hasn't it? We saw that the light was good, the dry land and the sea was good, the plants were good,

heavenly bodies were good, sea creatures and the birds are good, and now verse 25, the land animals are good.

"And God creates each of these according to their kind," all these categories of sea creatures, of birds, and the land animals, made according to their kinds. God now has filled the seas, He has now filled the skies, and He has now filled the land with these animals. And these creatures matter to Him. He has made them to display His glory. He has made them to be a blessing. He has made them to be a display of His creativity, and of His brilliance, and of His beauty. And you see even when Jesus is in the flesh on the earth that He uses these animals that are mentioned here in Genesis 1 to help us to understand something of the love God has for us.

You might just make a note here in Matthew chapter 6, a well-known verse, verse 26. Jesus says, "Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them." Jesus takes a look at what was created on Day Five of the creation as He's teaching His people to understand what creation teaches us. And so these birds that were created in Day Five, Jesus, when on the earth, looks at those birds and says, "Look at them. They're flying in the air, they don't have barns to put food in, and yet look how your heavenly Father feeds them." And then He asks a question at the end of verse 26: "Are you not of more value than they?" Jesus is going to take the birds created in Day Five to help His followers know that God created the birds; He cares for the birds, but makes clear that man is more valuable than the birds. Precisely what in Romans 1 the unbelieving world gets wrong.

Then in chapter 10 of Matthew, verse 29, Jesus goes on to say, "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father." Amazing. These seemingly insignificant animals, the Lord reminds us even they are under the sovereign care and knowledge of God. Verse 30, "But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. So fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows." So Jesus will take what is made on Day Five of creation and use it to help people understand God's care for them, which takes us back to Genesis 1. And I

will just briefly introduce this to make the point of what's going on, and leave the explanation for next week.

Verse 26, as we get to the second part of Day Six, the late animals have been made. And now in verse 26, "God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness.'" In Days One through Five and the first part of Day Six, God has built the house. At the end of Day Six He will now create the one to rule that house. That's us given dominion over creation. Why? Because you have been made in His image, which means no matter how beautiful a sunset, no matter how breathtaking an ocean may be, no matter how awe-inspiring the largest snow-capped mountain may be to you, when you look in the eyes of another human being you are looking into one who bears the image of God.

You and I have our breath taken away, and rightly so, when we look at all that we can see with our eyes of what God has made. But as amazing as oceans and sunrises and rainbows and stars and comets and microscopic creatures may be, when you see a drunk man passed out on the street, you see the one who is made in the image of God in a way more unique than any other part of creation. And that is exemplified by the fact that God sent His Son not to redeem fallen angels, and not to save for all eternity birds or fish or land animals, but to save sinners in need of grace. All of creation is an invitation for you to see God and to understand the unique love He has for mankind, that all who would turn from their sin and trust in Christ will be redeemed.

And so I want to zoom back out, and let's look at one more big picture question: "What should be our response to God's creation?" When you look at the details of Day One, Two, Three, Four, Five, and the first part of verse 6, what is our response to that? I'll just give you three words. "Gratitude": we should be thankful God has given us what we need to live and to survive, and we should be thankful.

Closely related to that I'll give you a second word, the word "delight." Not only should we be thankful, but we should enjoy His creation. If you're able

to this summer get away and go somewhere and enjoy God's creation, if you like mountains in the summer, go to the mountains. If you like oceans and beaches, go to the ocean and beach. If you're newly married and poor, go to Whitewater. Go somewhere where you can enjoy God's creation, because you were meant to see it, and to be thankful for it, and to delight; not to worship it, not to think that the gift is more valuable than the gift giver.

When you when you see what God has made, you are to take what you behold and let it drive you to a deeper place of worship and love for the One who's made all things. And if you miss that, you will fall into a Romans 1 mentality; and where you have no room for God, you will make room for all kinds of foolishness. But where you understand God as Creator and understand that He has made man to enjoy all things that He has made, then you are free to worship in spirit and in truth, and to give glory to the only One worthy.

Gratitude, delight, and a third word, our response to God's creation is "trust." We should follow Him. We should trust in Him. God has a purpose for all of His creation.

I did some reading and studying the last several weeks on some of the unknown purposes. Some of these things are in creation, and you kind of think to yourself, "Why did God make these things?" And the more you learn about how creation works, the more in awe of God's brilliance you become.

I've not solved at all. Do you guys have gophers here in Dallas? Do you have gophers? I've not solved that rule. I don't know why God made the gopher. I spend hours a week, hard work laboring. We live on three acres, and I try to maintain it all the same way; and I get the ground beautiful and the lawn lush and green, and up pops a gopher or a mole. I do not know what their purpose is, but I trust that one day they will be done away with forever. If there's one thing I know, there are no gophers in heaven. I can't chapter and verse it, but I've been a believer a long time; trust me on it.

You know, if God has a purpose for the smallest sea creature, and if God has a purpose for the microscopic creation that He's made that with human eyes we can't even see, you can rest assured He has a purpose for why He's created you. He made you with a reason, and I'll leave to next week for you to pick up on what that means to say that we were made in His image. But understand that there is purpose and there is priority that is given there. And as Henry Morris said, "If the Lord be God, follow Him. If the Lord be God, follow Him."

Gratitude, delight, and trust. Every sunrise, every shining star, every ocean, every mountain you see, every sea creature you witness, every land animal you see, every bird that flies in the sky is an invitation for you to stop and consider who made them, and to remember the words of Jesus, that you are more valuable than them, because you were made in the image of God.

Now before we take the Lord's Supper together, I want to close by asking an important question: "What happened?" God created, and He saw that it was good. You look around the world now and what we see is so much that is not good. What happened? Well, what happened was Genesis 3 – we'll be there in in a few weeks. Adam and Eve sin. They take and eat that they were not supposed to, and the fall takes place. And it's not just human beings who suffer the consequence of that, all of creation does. So in closing, would you turn with me to Romans 8, as we prepare our hearts to take the Lord's Supper this morning.

Look with me in Romans 8. Go to verse 18, if you would. "For I consider that our sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God." Watch this: "For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it." Stop for just a minute.

The animals you see today is not the exact animal around before the fall, and the creation you see today has been impacted by the fall. And when you look around you say, "But what about hurricanes and earthquakes and

deadly tsunamis and all of these things that take place? What's going on with creation?" What's going on is verse 20. It's been subjected to futility. When did that happen? Genesis 3, with the fall of man, and the curse that comes with it.

But there are two words I want you to cling to this morning, it's at the end of verse 20: "The creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God." Creation is going through birth pangs right now. Every tornado you see, every earthquake you feel, every hurricane you read about, the earth is having birth pangs. It's been subjected to futility, but not unto hopelessness in hope.

What's the hope? Verse 23, "that not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies." For in this hope we were saved. And now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what He sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience." When you see a beautiful sunset, let it drive you to praise of the One who created all things. And when you see tornadoes and wildfires and earthquakes and tsunamis, train your mind to think birth pangs. The creation is groaning, it's waiting for God's ultimate purpose in hope of the salvation to be revealed.

Understand that even in the fall of man, we see hope, and our hope is that the God who created us already had a plan to redeem us, and in Christ has saved us. Amen. In Christ He has saved us. And so we wait, and we trust, and we hope; and the sign of our hope, and the sign of our eager expectation is what we do as the body of Christ when we gather together to take the Lord's Supper, when with the bread and the cup we remember the sacrifice of Jesus, His body on the cross, His blood shed for us; not to redeem sea creatures and birds and land animals, but is a sacrifice for men and women made in His image. Amen. Would you pray with me as we prepare our hearts to receive the Lord's Supper together?



I'll give you a moment, if you would, just to confess your sin, to confess your need of Christ and your need of salvation. And for those of us who know Christ as Savior, we thank Him for what He has done for us. Would you even now thank Him for His creation and what He has done, to give us an invitation to know who He is, and to worship Him in spirit and in truth.

[Prayer] Lord, as we prepare to take these elements together, we're mindful that of all the things You have created that are so amazing, that none of them are to be worshiped; they are all to cause our hearts to trust in You. And that You would choose to send Your Son to die for us amazes us. May our response to Your creation be what it should be, that we'd be filled with gratitude and delight, and that we would trust in You. And now as we prepare to receive the bread and the cup, we think of the sacrifice Your Son made for us on the cross, paying the price for our sin, that those who believe would have life everlasting. We are in awe of who You are and what You have done for us. And in Jesus' name, we thank You. Amen.