

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via [hopewellarp.org](http://hopewellarp.org))

Well, they say that the best place to start is at the beginning but they are wrong because there is something or better said, someone who is before the beginning, he is why there is a beginning and so you don't start at the beginning you start with God. That's one thing that hopefully if it has not been talked so explicitly in our time together over these years, hopefully it has been caught that the place to begin.

Always in our thinking is with God himself. And if we are not understanding, if we look at any scripture without thinking, first and foremost of God himself in that Scripture, then we will not be reading or understanding it. Well, So, even in the study of the diaconate building, a biblical theology in order to have biblical practice, because it's going to be theology, that determines our practice.

And theology establishes, the purpose for the diaconet, and it's aims who should be one the sorts of things that they should do, but there are many details that have to be worked out from the theology so that you don't just establish. Well here's what the practice of having deacons looks like.

But you have built from the Bible Here, is the doctrine that teaching from God. That not only gives us the generally what the practice of the deacons looks like, but teaches us why there are deacons in the first place and what each of us hope to be led in and overseen in, and helped in by the diaconet.

And so, as we do in all theological things, we start with God and we find that God is, if we can say this reverently a diagonal. God, He attends to us, not just spiritually, but materially He teaches us to pray for instance, give us this day. Our daily bread.

In fact material things are God's idea in the beginning was the word and the word was with God. And the Word was God because God is triune Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But in the beginning was not the earth and so God created the earth. The earth is His idea.

And so the first thing we need to see when we think about what you and I are going to do with material things and children. You have just had a lesson in managing material things because you may or may not be hungry. It depends on how you know whether or not you snack at home or in the car, whatever it is.

But you do need to eat at some point and in order that we would be well fed for worship. We have a breakfast for the class and you get in line for the breakfast and you do things like considering others ahead of yourself and you look at what is there?

And you notice that much of it is pleasing to the eye. It's always more pleasing to the eye at church. Everyone brings out their best, We want to do the best we can for, for one another and hopefully, a good portion of it is also good for food that it will nutritionally, sustain you and not set you up for a sugar crash in the middle of the public worship, but you have choices to make.

And there is an order in which things have to be done because not everyone can get it once. You know, we would all need to have arms. His length was, were a long enough to make the radius of the circle that we could all fit in the circumference and then small enough.

At the end that all of our hands could fit in a thing, in whatever dish. It was that would be ridiculous. We are constrained by how God has created us in his wisdom and in His goodness. And so we figure things out. We are always managing our earthiness not earthyness earthly nest, as to think of things with an earthly mind, instead of a heavenly mind, but earthyness to set our mind in heaven above so that we may serve God.

Well and the earth where he has placed us and not ignore it because he is the one who has whose idea earth was whose idea we were. And so the first place we begin to look is at God himself and the material world. So If you haven't figured it out by now we're heading picked up a sheet and looked up 0.1 and and following You should have a Bible out and you should be in Genesis 1.

Yes, this one in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was without form and void and darkness was on the face of the deep. The spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said and so forth. We'll get to that.

And a little bit, Notice that heaven and earth were created in the same summary statement. God created them out of nothing. He's the only one of whom the Hebrew verb behind the word, created ear is used in the Bible. It does mean to create from nothing at all. And notice that Earth here is not secondary to heaven.

He doesn't create heaven first. And then earth later, he creates heaven and earth together. At the same time heaven the created heaven is no less of a creature or a creation of God than earth is. And so children, one of the things that I grew up hearing in church, and I don't know if I heard it because the error was in me.

And in my flesh, all of us have misunderstanding that comes from our finiteness, our creatureyness and especially from our sinfulness or whether it was an error that that those who taught me held and I somehow imbibed it from them. But I grew up thinking that heaven was a higher order than Earth and that, and that I almost saw it as like the place where God was from.

But God hasn't from anywhere. Is he God is Himself apart from his creation and existence belongs to him. So that whether we're talking about heaven or whether we're talking about earth, God is immense. Which doesn't mean very, very big, but those of you are studying, Latin know that? It means M not mints measurable because he doesn't have measurements.

So wherever anything else exists, God is present because existence is inherent to him. He doesn't have measure, he's not part of the creation. And so, even when it talks about the heavens and and the biblical cosmology of the first and second, third heaven, which we won't take time because we're here to talk about earth Today, but even when it talks about that talking about something created, something that is infinitely beneath God and the earth is not less dignified or less God's idea than heaven.

This is something that idea is something that is a present in man. It comes from an idolatry that looks at the lights that he has put in the sky to to rule day and night. The sun, moon and stars, which are servants for us, that we might have days and months and seasons and years.

And yet, man, when he falls out of the knowledge of God, he looks up at those things. He says, all those must see the Gods running around in the sky. Isn't that a foolish thing children? But there are people who do things like astrology and say, depending on what month, you were

born in, you belong to this constellation of stars, and those things are going to determine things about your personality or what's going to happen to you today, or this year.

It's still a foolish way of seeing heaven, as as having some kind of divinity to it, where earth doesn't. But heaven doesn't have any more divinity than Earth and we know that this is something that is in that unbelievers repeatedly fall into One of the most intellectually clever unbelievers ever was a man named Plato.

And Plato had had this very strong distinction between the material world in which we live and the world of ideas which corresponds kind of to the to the heavenly world. But is still a created sort of world. And this idea that earthly physical things are not as important as in invisible things.

That's something that comes down to us, having been born in America, which, which means that our ideas come from really ideas that come from what we would call the, the western tradition from Greece, and Rome, and recovered from Greece and Rome during the Renaissance orchids. If you really want to be fancy at a young age and make people ask, are you homeschooled, you can say Ronaldo's, but, don't do that.

Because that's pretentious. But those are the ideas that the way that we that we think came from, Those are not biblical ideas. The earth now is bound to corruption and decay, because the ones whom the Lord set. Over it. Sinned in their first father. Adam and fell with him and the entire earth was cursed for our sakes and Romans H teaches us that it was cursed or subjected to bondage and decay in hope.

And that that hope is for the day that is coming when we will receive the adoption of sons. And I hope some of you children are already saying, but If God puts me in his church and puts his sign on me, He puts me in the people that he's separated from the world that are his children and my parents teach me to pray.

Our Father who art in heaven, and my parents also taught me that if I believe in Jesus and I'm joined to him through faith. I am not just made righteous with Jesus's righteousness, but I am made a child, a son with Jesus' sonship that I am adopted. What do you mean?

We? Wait for our adoption as as Romans 8 says, and it says that adoption. It gives us further in the context there which is the redemption of our bodies that. Yes already the believer says Abba Father because the Holy Spirit is for us a spirit of sunset That's one of the ways you know that you have become a Christian is because you go from just reading about Abba, Father in the Bible and hearing people teach you that if you believe in Jesus, that you are a child of the Living, God, to knowing Him as your Father and having your heart cry out to him as your Abba.

And you say, oh, The Bible tells me that where that came from, in my heart, knowing God, to be my Father, and knowing myself as his child and having that inclination, that desire and reflex to know him as my father. And ask him for things as my father and want to reflect his image as, as his child.

That the Holy Spirit is the one who gives those things. Well, we already have a sonship in that way, but there is a sonship that is going to happen in the new creation. That will be the redemption of our bodies and then the Bible says the creation and includes and you heavens and a new what a new earth will participate in the glorious, freedom of the children of God.

And so, it's not that earth things are lower than heavenly. That heavenly things. It's that right now. We are living in an earth that God is keeping bound. To corruption and decay because he wants us to have our hope, our goal, our aim at a new earth, and well in the last day.

And so Earth is still in and of itself, not a bad thing. And as This is a little bit ahead, it belongs to later in the course. But when we come to talk about our being new creatures, one of the primary things that we do as new creatures in the old earth is display original creation principles which we're hearing about today and new creation principles, which are the recapture and even improvement upon how Adam would have been in the original creation.

Not having Union with Christ. In the same way we do through faith in Jesus. So one of the things that that in broad brush tricks that the Akinet is is ordained by the Lord to do, is to help us be eternal, new heavens, and new earth. People who manage and bring or show the effects of the grace of God in redemption, even in a world that is still bound to corruption and decay.

We'll see. God himself doing that after the fall, but that's kind of a broad rustic thing Just for our purposes. Justin Genesis one. One Note, the fact and dignity of earthiness. The, in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. And in fact, the first thing he starts talking about, in terms of his own attention and his own care is not the heaven, but the earth, the earth was without form and void and darkness was on the face of the deep and the spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

And so there's this picture drawn for us of God's care and particularly God's care by the person of The third person of the Godhead in caring for and attending to the the earth parked of this of this creation. So The reason there is earth at all, The reason we have bodies, the reason we need to eat and we'll hear about more things is because God came up with it And it's not a lower lesser thing that we're just trying to get out of the way in order to worship.

It is something that has dignity of its own and worship flows into working in the earth. And working in the earth is supposed to flow into and prepare us for and equip and enable our worshiping. That's something that is reflected later. I think I said last week that I might just tell you to listen to the sermons when we got to the Acts portion, probably won't do that.

We have our time, remembering things. Well, and it'll be good to refresh, but that this worship flowing into work and work facilitating, worship a principle or idea as one that we saw in Act 6 right? When we when we saw the need that arose for the deaconate, Why? Because the worship the apostles praying and preaching and teaching and administering, the supper had resulted in people who now wanted to do with earthly things differently than they wanted to do before.

But in carrying out how to distribute the care for those who are needy it, threatened to take away from the worship because the apostles were spending more and more time overseeing and the dispute that arose and so forth. And so in order that they might devote themselves to the leadership of the worship, the diakonet was ordained to lead the church in giving and in taking care in taking care of others.

So you have this interrelation of worship and work that that starts right from the beginning. And when we get to the fourth part of this lesson or lessons in the context in which were doing it, when we get to the fourth part. We'll especially see that how working in earthly things or earthy, things flows from and into worship and spiritual things.

So we see God himself and he has as it were by himself up until verse 26. But we see him organizing and arranging and attending to and working in the earthly world. And this is

important because this is the sense in which he ceases from his creational work when he gets to the seventh day.

Did God stop doing stuff on day? Seven is God, the clockmaker God, that the deists believe in. And I hope he's, I hope none of you are DSU who made everything so precisely that he could take his hands off when it was done and just let the watch run or let the clock.

Run God, didn't stop working Jesus. When he was challenged says my father is working until now and I am working But God is working in the earthly world before he makes us and he setting an example for us as we find out when he ties his working in six days and resting in the seventh to making a Sabbath for us.

The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the sabbath. So, what did it look like? When God was working in the earth? Well, one is that God makes provision. He provides place for creatures or other created things to live in and to serve their purpose in and then he creates these created things that live there and serve there in order to fill and order and arrange the places that he made.

And you can see that by lining up the sixth creation days day, one with day, four and day, two with day, five and day, three with day six. So day, one God said, Let there be light and there was light, and God saw the light that it was good.

And God divided the light from the darkness God called the light day and the darkness, he called night to the evening in the morning were the first day. So what did God create on the first day? He created light as distinct from darkness. Okay. And then day four.

Then verse 14, then God said let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night and let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days, and for years, and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth.

And it was. So Then God made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars. Also God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to roll over the day and over the night.

And to divide the light from the darkness and God saw that, it was good. So the evening and the morning were the fourth day. So what did God create on the fourth day? He created the sun and moon and stars and he gave them the job of maintaining this separation of light from darkness and regulating when the light would show.

And so there's this, there's this pattern of God creating the, The thing in which his creatures would operate. And then creating creatures that would operate there. So you have light and darkness on day, one, sun, and moon and stars. On day four, you have the firmament which separates heavens on day two and so you have the, the waters above and the waters beneath and the Yeah.

God made the front, you have the waters above and and the water's beneath. And in between them, you have this sky that is protected by this firmament and we're skipping over some things or just moving very quickly. But what creatures live in the waters, The fish and what preachers live in the sky, That is now protected by the firmament from these waters that are above The birds.

And so, in day two, he makes the firmament. And in day five, he makes the sea creatures and the heavens creatures or the fine creatures. And then day three, he makes dry land is

separates, the water from the dry land, so that there will be dry land. And what does he make on day six?

Actually plants. And,

Wait, let's plant isn't dissex, is it? I Yes I think it's beasts creeping things in. People Plants are also day three. Right? So the dry land and the plants are day three but they are four. What Therefore, the beasts and the creeping things and us, It's kind of humbling.

We're yeah. The thing we're closest to a chronologically and the rest of creation or the creeping things, but we are taught to know ourselves at least in our finitude and especially in our sinfulness as, as worms and were made from dirt. Well, half of us are made from dirt.

Men are made from dirt and women are made from men. So women in a way have a much greater dignity. We're you were the dirt from which you were made was already formed and filled with the breath of God and there is nothing in the biblical cosmology. The biblical view of all that there is that would ever lead you to say a woman is a lesser thing than a man both being made.

Especially, and that's the main thing. Not the stuff we were made out of but the one, according to whom we were made in the image of God. And so you have this provision and the symmetry of the provision, which is something that Some people have actually used as an excuse to say, oh God wasn't really teaching us about how he created and six ordinary days.

This is just kind of a poetic way of describing things, which you can tell by the symmetry of it, and God showing that he is orderly and that he gives places to things and that he assigns purposes to the things that he puts in those places. And you say, well, yes, it shows about those things about how God did it because that's how God did it not because that's just how God talked about it and we went over this.

When we were hearing the preaching through Genesis, the literary, genre the style of writing it is is historical narrative. That means that God is giving a history of a sequence of actions and events. And all of the Hebrew language markers are that of historical narrative and not of Bible.

Poetry, So the fact that there is this symmetry is not to say. Oh I can just poetry away creation when man wants a theory of origins that includes billions of years and evolution. No, he's not poetrying away creation. He's describing what he did in such a way as to set a pattern for us.

When we come along, when he makes us in verse 26 he makes us in his image and likeness he wants us to be like Himself And so he is the diagonal. God who produces diagonal image bearers. If we can use the word diagonal that way. He's the God whose idea earthly things are and to displays his wisdom and his goodness in, how he orders them and how he cares for them and how he uses them.

And when he makes us in his image, he wants us to treat earthly things that he made as important and to image Him in wisdom in how we use them. And to image Him in goodness, to the creature, to the rest of the creatures, and especially to one another and how we use created things.

So the diagonal board is, is not or the deacon it as one person kept saying, why are you keep talking about Deaconets That person was reading? It's like a homeschooler, you know, and they come around miss mispronouncing, a word and you never want to discourage them because that means they learned that word by reading and they just needed somebody to say it pronounce it correctly, so that they could hear it.

The diakonet is not just some property. Property managing budget assembling committee who's an afterthought. The deactinate are leaders of the church in the managing of earthly things in a way that displays the character of God and the renewed character of God in us in Christ, helping us to do that.

I think we'll just to come up through the end of the the first point here, the first, which will constitute the first half an hour. The first third of this lesson Notice that as you go through the creation account, he's making separations and distinctions separates light from darkness. He gives each of them, a name.

The distinction of the two. He said, separates water from land on day day three. He makes those distinctions You notice. He also gives rulers. Now, the word for rule in in the creation of the, the Sun, Moon and stars is a little bit different than the word for dominion and subdue.

That we're going to hear with, with respect to men later, but, but God creates His world in a way that is designed to be governed and shaped. Governing. And shaping is not something that comes into the creation. Through sin, we don't sin an atom and fallen Adam. And then God say, oh no, now their sin.

Now there's going to be headship in marriage. Now, you're going to have to tame an unruly creation. Now we're going to sin against headship in marriage and the creation is going to be unruly for us. But this built in a built-in idea of managers in his creation, God actually uses that sort of language when he creates the sun moon and stars As servants or administrators of the light that will be on the earth.

There's already light on the earth before that the Sun, Moon and stars are created to have the privilege as it were of being used by God to regulate. That's why if someone says, well, all I don't believe that God would deceive us and make it look like the stars are billions of years away from us.

So I think that the Bible teaches us that that the earth has billions of years old. Because God created the stars and the light just got here. Well, but God says that he created the light first and that it was already here and that the sun, moon and stars were made second as and given the privilege of regulating secondarily.

But The great regulators, of course, end up being us. God, God, putting us in the earth and we will deal with that at Greater length. Next week, when we get to verses 26 through 31, Notice. Also, this orderliness of management that that God makes each of the the herbs, and fruit trees to yield fruit.

According to its kind verse 11 yield seed, according to its kind Verse 12, his seed is in itself. According to its kind verse 12. And this this language of kinds continues. You get to day five and the sea creatures a bounding in the water, according to their kind verse 21 and every wing in bird.

According to its kind again in verse of 21 and then the beasts of the earth each. According living living creatures, according to its kind verse 24, the beasts of the earth each according to its kind verse 24 Beast of the earth, according to its kind verse 25 cattle. According to its kind verse 25, everything that creeps in the earth, according to its kind.

And so this creation of things in their kinds, as part of the orderliness of God as he makes them, He doesn't make them in some kind of soup that branches often separates into kinds over billions of years. And there's something in the orderliness of God in how he wisely does

his work in the earth that we are supposed to imitate in being orderly and diligent and wise and putting things in their place to which they are well suited and where they can thrive being productive.

And fruitful A large part of the diagonal work is helping us do that. So that what some people call deaconal work, which is you take people who have been willfully unfruitful Now, that's not the only way someone becomes poor comes into need, but they take people who are willfully unfruitful and they supply not the greater need that they would grow into renewed image bearing.

But they enable them in their unwillingness to image, God in that way. And the apostle, of course, will say, he who will not work. Let him not eat, right? That's not the purpose of the deck. And it is not simply to make sure people get fed The purpose of the Diacinate is to make sure that the new creation society is imaging God as well as possible in what we do with earthly things, which does mean that those who have been brought into need will have not just their spiritual needs attended to so that they are taught and helped to love God and image Him.

But also their earthly needs attended to do, which means they are both fed and helped to work so that they can not only feed themselves, but have something to give to others in their time of need. That's the language that's used But that principle comes from our imaging God in wisdom and diligence and orderliness.

And then the last point, which we don't have time for. But you can you can see it there that God wants his creation to abound. Interestingly the sea creatures and the air creatures are told to fill the sea in the air, but the beasts and the creeping things are not told to fill the earth, the people are.

And so there's a priority of people Priority upon people on the earth but this is this is really the foundation of the deactinate. It's one of the reasons why you don't just need deacons, who are instructed in being deacons. You need to be instructed in what the deacons are here, to lead you in and help you with so that we can image God together even in this creation.

And as will, when we get to the fall and how God responds to that, even be images of redemption in how we operate in a fallen creation and may the Lord. So, Grant, not just that we would understand and believe these things, but that he would give us men who are ordained according to his design, for the church who will lead us in imaging Him.

Well, in these things, Let's pray.

The Lord. We thank you that you have provided for each of us. What? We need, we pray that you would help us to do well in imaging. You, you are wise and you are good, and you have created this earth and us as physical beings in order to display your wisdom and your goodness.

And we pray that we would that we would do that Lord help us. Now, as we come into the worship, because we've been thinking about who you are and that our purpose in part is to image you grant to us now to have that part of our purpose, which is to know you and to be known by you and to have fellowship with you, in the means that you have appointed for our worship.

Thank you for giving, not only Adam and his wife their first day, as one of worship. Not work. But forgiving us. Each week that same gift in the wake of the second. Adam our Lord Jesus



And so we pray that Christ would be glorified as you gather us in him to yourself by the help of your spirit, for which help.

We ask in Jesus' name, Amen.