

Order

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[0:00] We're still in Genesis chapter 1. So I want you, if you have your Bibles with you, to open your Bibles up to Genesis chapter 1. And we're going to read the entire chapter as well as the first three verses of chapter 2 again this morning so that you can remember all that's happening in the broader context of the creation account.

So let's begin in verse 1. I ask you guys to stand with me as we read together. Genesis chapter 1, verse 1. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

The earth was without form and void and darkness was over the face of the deep and the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, let there be light and there was light.

And God saw that the light was good and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning the first day.

And God said, let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters and let it separate the waters from the waters and God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse and it was so.

[1:07] And God called the expanse heaven. And there was evening and morning the second day. And God said, let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place and let the dry land appear.

And it was so. God called the dry land earth and the waters that were gathered together He called seas. And God saw that it was good. And God said, let the earth sprout vegetation plants yielding seed and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed each according to its kind on the earth.

And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation plants yielding seed according to their own kinds and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning the third day.

And God said, let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth and it was so.

And God made the two great lights the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night and the stars. And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth to rule over the day and over the night and to separate the light from the darkness.

[2:18] And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning the fourth day. 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 and 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.

Then God said, Let us make man in our image after our likeness and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

[3:22] So God created man in His own image and in the image of God He created him. Male and female He created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

And God said, Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.

And it was so. And God saw everything that He had made and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all the host of them.

And on the seventh day, God finished His work that He had done and He rested on the seventh day from all His work that He had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy because on it God rested from all His work that He had done in creation.

Let's pray. Father, thank You for this account of the creation of the universe and the world and mankind. Pray that we would believe it.

[4:37] that we would rest in it and that we would see wonderful truths about You through it. I ask this in Christ's name. Amen. You guys take a seat.

One of the things that we have noticed as we've looked at Genesis chapter 1, and this is now, I believe, this is our fourth week in Genesis chapter 1. We have another week after this to finish out chapter 1 and then another week to cover those first three verses in chapter 2.

So really a total of six weeks covering this creation account, days 1 through 7. And one of the things that we have noticed is that there's an order to things.

God does things with a purpose and He does things in a particular way for a reason. We saw, for instance, last week when we talked about the light that God created on day 1, we saw that the light of day 1 in some way corresponds to the light bearers or the sun, the moon, and the stars on day 4 and that there is a kind of structure to the way that God has done things.

So that days 1, 2, and 3 are parallel to days 4, 5, and 6. So day 1 you have light and day 4 you have sun, moon, and stars. Day 2 you have the waters below separated from the waters above, the creation of the sky and the seas.

[5:56] And on day 5, which corresponds, you have birds created to fly in the sky and swimming creatures, fish to swim in the seas. And then, of course, on day 3 you have the land that appears along with vegetation upon the land.

And on day 6 you have the creation of the animals that live on the land as well as mankind. So there's a symmetry and there's a correspondence. There's an order in creation.

It's there. It's clear for us to see. But we've not only seen that in relation to how the days line up with one another, we've also seen it in how the days, as they're mentioned from verse 3 onward to the end of this chapter, how they answered the problems or the issues brought up in verse 2.

Probably problems is not the best term to use because God doesn't have any problems. God's accomplishing all of His will. But when we read verse 2, something seems missing, something seems off.

Verse 2, the earth was without form and void and darkness was over the face of the deep. There's something missing. This phrase, formless and void, we have seen means that the earth was unlivable.

[7:05] It was uninhabitable. You couldn't survive upon the world that God had created yet. And so what we find in verses 3 down to the end of the chapter is God shaping and forming the world so that it's suitable not only for man but also for animals to live upon.

He's shaping and forming the earth. So everything that happens in Genesis chapter 1 is orderly. It serves a purpose. And before we move on to focus on day 6 and the creation of man in God's image, I want us to pause this week to look at the other days of creation and see how God has done things in a more particular manner, in a very orderly fashion.

So we're going to look at three ways in which God does things in an orderly way. First of all, there's a reason why things happen in this specific order. There's a reason why things happen in this sequence. So there's a kind of chronological ordering that makes sense in the creation account.

So we're going to look at the chronology, the order in which God does things and see what that teaches us about the Lord. And then we're also going to look at God creates things and places them within distinct categories.

Categories. Categories that we're told He's going to maintain and keep them in throughout human history so that there's not only a chronological order, but there's a clear organization into categories within the creation account of God's creatures.

[8:32] And then finally, all of these things that God creates, they all ultimately serve a purpose. There's a reason that God creates the things that He does.

So I want us to look at these days, these six days of creation, and see those three things at work. But I want us to do more than see the order in creation. I want us to ask two questions every time.

I want us to first of all ask the question, what does this have to do with the gospel? How is this related to the gospel? What does it have to do with the good news about Jesus Christ?

What does it have to do with that? And secondly, I want us to ask the question, how is it more specifically good news for me in my everyday life and walk in this world? So as we look at these three things, we're going to ask and try to answer those questions.

So first of all, I want us to look at sort of the chronological sequence in which things happen. I want you to see that these things are not just sort of haphazard, they're not just thrown together, that it makes perfect sense.

[9:31] Of course, there is that broad chronological order in which first there's darkness and formlessness, which God begins to address by creating light on day one and then beginning to shape everything on days two through six.

But that's just the tip of the iceberg. Because you can see that it makes perfect sense. It's not just a neat way to organize things for reading.

It makes perfect sense that God on day two would create the sky and the seas. That makes sense that He would create those things right after He has created the light.

Because if you don't have an atmosphere or a sky or whatever we conceive of this to be, and if you don't have waters on the earth, you cannot have the creatures that God creates later on on day five.

It won't work. It just won't happen. If you don't have some sort of atmosphere, some sort of sky happening, you can't create plants on day three. And God does things orderly.

[10:31] You don't see Him creating light and then immediately after that creating the plants because the plants wouldn't be able to survive as God has designed them. You don't see God creating the seas and then immediately after that creating the land creatures.

That makes absolutely no sense. And we sort of read through these things and breeze past them and we don't pay attention to these details, but these are really important things. So God creates the sky, He creates the seas, and then in chronological order, He creates the land and the plants upon the land.

That makes perfect sense because He's going to go on to create not only the birds and the creatures that live in the oceans and the waters, but He's also going to then create animals. Animals that are dependent upon what?

Land to walk on. Plants that they need for sustenance. Everything is done in a very clear sequence. And this sequence is pointing out something to us.

He creates mankind last of all for a reason. He creates mankind because man is to rule over the fish, the birds, the animals on the land.

[11:36] Man is to eat the vegetation. He's to live upon the land. And so it is logical that man would be created after all of these things. There's a kind of chronological sequence in here that sometimes we miss because we get caught up in debates about well, were these real days or were they long periods of time or was this some sort of literary thing going on?

I don't think any of that's the case. I think this is just the way that God has done it. And I think that He's done it this way for really good reasons. Chief among those are the fact that this is the order in which things ought to happen for the world to function in the way that we see the world around us functioning even today after the fall.

And that matters because it tells us that God is a kind of God who does things in a specific way and He has a time in mind for when things are going to happen.

Things don't just happen whenever they happen, that things happen when God decrees for them to happen. God is sovereign. He is as sovereign over our world today and over human history as He is over the creation of the world in Genesis chapter 1.

He demonstrates the same power and the same ordering of things even in a sin-filled fallen world today that we see Him demonstrating control over in Genesis chapter 1.

[13:00] God is consistent with that. God does things in an orderly fashion. And because He does things in an orderly fashion, things are headed somewhere. God has a plan.

So that oftentimes we read through the Old Testament or we skip over the Old Testament altogether and we think to ourselves, well, those things, they happened a long time ago. They don't matter. They're not that important.

They don't apply to my life now. I don't have anything to do with them. And what we're missing when we skip over the Old Testament or when we just sort of read it casually without giving it any real thought is we miss that God is doing something and He's doing it in the order, in the sequence in which He's doing it for a reason.

You can see that really clearly in the New Testament because we are told in Galatians chapter 4 that when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law so that we might receive adoption as sons.

There's a fullness of time. There's a reason why God does things the way that He does. There's a reason why He chooses Abraham in Genesis chapter 12 and then He guards and protects Abraham's descendants for century after century.

[14:20] There's a reason why at a specific time He chooses David to be the king over Israel. And the reasons for all of those things is because God has in mind a time.

A time that's full, a time that's ripe, a time that's ready for the sending of His Son into the world. And were it not for God's sequence of things, you and I would have no hope of redemption.

Because Jesus comes into this world after the law had been given and after we had broken the law. And Paul says He was born as one under the law so that Jesus came at the right time to be someone who could fulfill the law and obey the law in our place.

Had Jesus been born before the law was given to Moses, Jesus could not have fully obeyed God's law because it wouldn't have existed yet in our place. And yet you and I now do not have to depend upon our own ability to check off all the things that we've done in God's law because Jesus has perfectly fulfilled all of those things for us in our place.

All we need to do is trust in Him and His perfect righteousness is counted as ours. That cannot happen if He is not born under the law to redeem those who are under the law.

[15:45] And you and I, if we have trusted in Jesus, are no longer under the law. We have been adopted and received by God Himself as sons. All of that happens because at the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son to be born of a woman under the law.

And we see in Genesis chapter 1, we see a God who does things in an orderly, orderly fashion. And He does them in a strict chronological sequence for a reason.

And I know there are times when we get frustrated in our own lives because because God's timetable is not like our timetable. God doesn't do things in the sequence in which we would like Him to do things, and He doesn't do them at the specific time in which we would like Him to do things.

In fact, one of the things that we noted last week that was interesting is that the way that day 2 corresponds to day 5 is logical and makes sense. Water and sky before fish and birds.

That makes perfect sense. The way that day 3 corresponds to day 6 just makes perfect sense. You've got to have land and plants if you're going to have animals living on the land. That all makes sense.

[17:02] And yet we saw that day 1 seems a bit odd, strange. Because you might think that it would fit better with everything else that God does there if first God created the light bearers, as they're called, the sun, the moon, the stars, and then corresponding to that, perhaps later on, then God would cause those things to shine forth light.

That's what we might expect, but that's not what God does because God is revealing things to us about Himself that we saw last week. He's teaching us about who He is. And that truth bleeds over into our own lives.

Many times when we wish God would do something at this time, in this place, in this manner, and in this sequence, and He doesn't do it like that, and we grow frustrated, in our frustration, we miss the very things that God is revealing about Himself through those events.

We need to trust that God is a God of order, even in the timing of things and the sequence of things that He brings into our lives.

If this is a God who's so sovereign and in such control over all of human history that He can line up Abraham, all of Abraham's descendants, to David, David's descendants, all the way to the birth of Christ.

[18:23] If He can so superintend all of human history to bring Jesus into the world at just the right time, He is also sovereign enough to superintend the little events of our lives so that they happen when He intends for them to happen.

So that Romans 8, 28, that God works all things to the good of His people, so that that is played out in the midst of what appears to us, at times, to be a chaotic life filled with unexpected events, none of which surprised God and happened right as He planned them and intended them for our lives.

Sequential. Makes sense. He has an order to things. But it's an order not only demonstrated in the timing of things and in the sequence of things. God places things within categories.

So the universe is not just a random collection of stuff that God made. God has placed things in very clear, distinct categories where they belong. And you can see that especially on days 3, 5, and 6.

Look closely at what the text says. On day 3, verse 11, Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, its category, where it belongs, each according to its kind on the earth.

[19:44] And then it says, It was so. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their kinds, trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. God saw that it was good. There are categories here.

Kinds. We see the same thing happening in verse 20. Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creature 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. See? Categories. Day 6, verse 24. Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds. Livestock and creeping things, beasts of the earth according to their kinds.

Notice how God is dividing things up. Not only does He say according to their kinds, but He even divides up land animals into some broad categories. You've got livestock, which typically we think of as like maybe cows, things like that.

But it's probably a much broader category than that. We can't be certain exactly what would be included in livestock here, but it's probably any animal that could be commonly domesticated.

[20:53] So it would probably include all sorts of animals that would have been domesticated in the ancient world. He says these belong in a category, and then you've got all these wild animals out here. Beasts, they belong in their own category.

Everything is ordered. Everything is orderly and structured here. He did the same thing with plants. You saw that earlier. He had plants with seeds and he had plants that had fruit and their seeds are in their fruit.

There are some broad categories here by which God begins to arrange things for us so that we can see things and see their place in the world. Now most of the time a lot of Christians will read this and they will see this as God's sort of answer back to the theory of evolution.

And I'm not sure that Moses wrote this with evolution in mind because he had never heard of it. But the reality here I think in terms of application does show us that the theory of evolution will not fit with the biblical account of creation.

But of course for that matter neither will any of the ancient philosophies and ancient pagan religions of the past fit with the biblical pattern here. Because in all of those things whether you're dealing with some ancient Canaanite religion or you're dealing with modern Darwinian theory all of them assume a chaotic world in which things happen randomly with no real purposes and in those ancient religions even the gods are arbitrary and not doing things with great purposes.

[22 : 14] It's just sort of happening. And if you think that Darwinian theory is far removed from that watch the Discovery Channel. Everything's personified. Nature is a person on there.

Nature does stuff. Even evolution is spoken of like a person. Well evolution has granted to this animal the ability to do this. Evolution didn't grant anything. It's just an idea. It's just a theory.

It's not a person that doesn't do things. There's not a whole lot of difference between ancient Canaanite and Babylonian religions in which there are chaotic gods doing randomness meaningless things in the world and modern Darwinian theory.

It's all meaninglessness. It's all chaotic things just happening. It's things that don't really have any real place and purpose in the world. And God here says no, it's not how I've made it. Everything has a category.

Everything has a place. And not only do things have categories and places but God maintains them in their places and in their categories. Bearing fruit according to their kinds.

[23 : 15] Multiplying according to their kinds. Which is a way for God to say that it's not simply that he created things in distinct categories. It's a way of saying that he's maintaining them in those categories.

Now I don't know specifically what the word kinds refers to. I don't think it refers to it's not an exact equivalent to our word species. I don't think that at all.

In fact, if you really begin to think about it the way that we categorize things into species and groups are just they're somewhat arbitrary classifications based upon visual identifiers or things that we can map out in DNA.

There's nothing overly scientific about it. We just make up names whenever we find something we hadn't seen before and we make up a name because it looks kind of like this other thing over here and we put it in that category. So there's nothing magical, there's nothing great about the scientific categories of species and all those things and I'm not sure that the word kinds corresponds to what we think of as species and I'm not sure that it lines up with all the categories that we have but since those are arbitrary it doesn't really matter anyway.

The point here is to say that things remain in their kind and God keeps them in that. God through his providence keeps them there. So that if you dig a seed out of an apple and you plant it in the ground and you water it and you tend it you're never going to get a lemon tree.

[24 : 34] It's not going to happen. You're not going to grow oranges from it. I remember as a kid every time we'd eat watermelon my parents would tell us that if you swallow the seeds watermelons are going to grow out of your ears which frightens children to death and you begin to really search through and then you get worried when you ate the seed and you go to your mom I ate the seed what's going to happen now?

Are watermelons just going to grow out of me and just burst forth from my body? But at least there's the acknowledgement that pumpkins aren't going to grow out of me and kill me if I eat a watermelon seed right?

We all know this is how the world works this is how it's designed. Cats don't give birth to dogs it just doesn't happen that way alright? There's an order to things and although we may not be able to say well here's a kind and here's a kind and here's a kind and we don't know all the things in God's mind as he categorized them what we can say is God has clear categories for things that he makes.

And he makes them in that way for a reason and he keeps those things secure and stable throughout history. It's very clear. That's true in all that God does.

God is consistent. He's never going to make an orange tree or lemon tree sprout from an apple seed. He's not going to do it. He's consistent. He maintains things.

[25:52] He does things in the same way. God does not change. He is the same. Which matters a great deal for us because when we read through the scriptures we see at times some things change.

Some things are different. So that we like for instance we no longer today have to obey all of the Old Testament Levitical laws. So many times I've had non-Christians sort of throw that into my face.

I take a certain stance on a particular moral issue and their response is always well you don't follow the laws that say you can't have two different kinds of fabric woven together do you?

You don't follow all the food laws you probably eat crawfish and shrimp and that's against the law of Moses to which I respond well yeah but Jesus said I didn't have to anymore. It's pretty simple.

It's not complicated. Alright. So there are aspects of our interacting with God that do change over time. God has one set of principles that are in place or one set of laws and rules that are in place for old covenant followers and then he has another set of laws and rules in place that cover new covenant believers.

[27:04] We're no longer under all of that law anymore. That's true. That's true. Under the old covenant the people of God were a political nation.

They were a theocratic nation. God ruled over them directly. Under the new covenant we're not a political nation. We're a people scattered all over the earth in the midst of the nations. Some things change.

That's true. But God himself never changes. And most importantly God's way of saving fallen sinners never changes. You see even under the old covenant when they had the law in place nobody was ever saved by obedience to the law.

Nobody ever earned a right standing before God by obedience to the law. I want you to hold your place in Genesis and I want you to turn to the book of Romans because I want you to see this.

In Romans chapter 4 it conveniently follows Romans chapter 3 and in Romans chapter 3 Paul has been arguing that we are not justified, that is we're not made right with God or saved on the basis of good works or obedience to the law but we're saved by faith in Jesus and faith in Jesus alone.

[28:15] And then he goes on in chapter 4 to prove that by saying essentially this is the way it's always been. Chapter 4 verse 1 What shall we say was gained by Abraham? Our forefather according to the flesh.

So we want to really know how God saves people. Let's look at what he did with Abraham. I mean he's the preeminent person of the Old Testament. He's the father of all the Jews. What happened to Abraham?

Verse 2 If Abraham was justified by works then he has something to boast about but not before God. But what does the scripture say? Abraham believed God, quoting from the book of Genesis, and it was counted to him as righteousness.

Now to the one who works his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due but to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly his faith is counted as righteousness. In other words he's saying look Abraham the Old Testament Genesis itself says Abraham was declared righteous, justified, saved by God because he trusted in God, because he believed in the promises of God not because he obeyed a set of rules.

And he says the same thing is true today. You're not made right with God by obeying rules, you're made right with God by trusting. By trusting. He not only appeals though to Abraham, he appeals to David, another one of the preeminent characters of the Old Testament.

[29:38] Verse 6, just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness according to the works, and then he quotes Psalm 32 in the next two verses which are written by David.

And so the Apostle Paul's point here is to say that God has not changed the way in which he saves people. He saved Abraham by faith alone. He saved David by faith alone.

How do you think he's going to deliver you and rescue you from your sins? He's not going to give you a list of rules to follow as if following all of those rules will make you right with him.

He tells you to trust in his son, to trust in the promises. And when you trust in Jesus, you're saved. It's not complicated.

It's not difficult. Trusting may feel impossible to us at times because it requires turning away from our old life and giving up all the things we used to trust in.

[30:37] It means giving our whole selves and lives over to Christ. But in the end, it's far simpler than checking off a list of things that we could never, ever, fully and perfectly check off.

Trust in Jesus, he says. God does things and he maintains things in an orderly fashion. He's not going to change the way things work.

He's not going to change the way that the world works. He's not going to change the way that salvation works. He's consistent. Which is good news for us not only in terms of salvation, it's good news for us because we can trust everything that God says in his word about himself, about his own character.

We can trust that. We can trust that it's not going to suddenly change on us. God's character will never change. God is who he is. He is a holy, righteous God who cannot bear with sin.

He is a loving, good God who sends his son to bear the penalty for sin. He is all of that. He's all powerful. He possesses all knowledge.

[31:48] He can do all things. He is good and just and holy and loving and none of that will ever change about him. None of that will change. You never have to worry that you're going to wake up tomorrow and God's going to suddenly have changed the way everything works.

Well, I know that you trusted in Christ yesterday, but guess what? I've decided from now on people are going to be saved by work, so you better get busy working. That faith didn't count for anything. He's never going to do that.

He's never going to say, I know that I commanded you to bear with one another and love one another and be willing to forgive one another for sins. I know that I told you that back in the New Testament when Paul was writing, but now today I'm telling you something different.

Today I'm telling you to write them off and walk away from them and be angry at them and never forgive them. That makes no sense. God is consistent in his character. He's consistent in what he requires of his new covenant people.

He's consistent. He maintains those things. And that's good news for us. And then lastly, one of the things that we see in Genesis chapter 1 in the way that God has created things is that everything that he makes on all of these days serves a very specific purpose.

[33:08] Everything. It all serves a purpose. So that on day one the light is created. Why? Why does he create the light? To deal with the issue of darkness in verse 2?

But also so he can begin to create a cycle of darkness and light. Verse 5, God called the light day, the darkness he called night. And what do you know? There was evening and there was morning, the first day.

The beginning of this daily cycle, the beginning of it, serves a purpose. It serves a purpose. It serves even broader purpose than that because in order for the plants to thrive on day three there needs to be light.

Of course he'll create the sun on the next day but even before he creates the sun there's some sort of light source. We don't know all about it. We don't know did this light function essentially in place of the sun so that part of the world was in light or the other part of the world was in darkness the way we experience now or did God somehow supernaturally cause the earth to be light for half of a day and then dark for the other half.

We don't know all of that but what we know is God created light on day one to serve a purpose to dispel the darkness for one to nourish the plants on day three for another all sorts of reasons.

[34:20] It has a purpose. There's a purpose for separating the waters from the waters on day two so that he provides a place for the fish and for the birds to live on day five.

There's a purpose for all of these things. Probably the places where you see these purposes though most clearly would be in reference to the creation of the sun, moon and stars and then the creation of man.

You can look if you look down in verse 14 God says on day three let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens and he tells us the purpose. To separate the day from the night.

So now we're going to have these are going to do that. No longer is God going to supernaturally cause some light that we can't understand to do it now. Sun and the moon and the stars are going to separate things. Light and darkness.

Day from night. Then there's another purpose. And let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.

[35:19] So they're providing light, they're causing the cycle of days, but now more than that. Now they're causing the cycles of signs and seasons so that we can be fairly certain that here in Texas, at least this part of Texas, that we're never going to have a day in July when it's 30 degrees.

Which is not going to happen. I mean, we rarely have those days in December when it's 30 degrees. It's not going to happen in July. We can count on the seasons and although the seasons vary from one region of the world to another, within those regions they are consistent.

Why? Because God has created the sun and the moon and the stars to regulate seasons and to guide us. The stars serve as signs in the sky. People have been navigating by the stars and determining the time of the year by the positions of the stars for centuries upon centuries.

They serve a very clear purpose. Everything that God does serves a purpose. Finally, He creates man on day six, and we're going to talk about this in detail next week, but He creates man in His own image.

And why does He do that? Verse 28, God said to them, be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over all the other things that He has created.

[36:36] He creates man, at least in part, to exercise dominion over the earth, to be sort of God's vice regent upon the earth, displaying God's glory and displaying God's authority to the rest of creation.

We have a very clear purpose. In all that God creates here in Genesis chapter 1, all of it has a very clear purpose. And that's true for all of human history.

God is working so that not only at the right time He would send His Son into the world, but He's working and moving all things to accomplish the purpose of redeeming a people for Himself.

I want you to turn over to Ephesians. Just hold your place there in Genesis and turn over to Ephesians chapter 1. Many of you are probably familiar with verse 11, which gives this broad view.

Verse 11, in Christ we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined, according to the purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will.

[37:47] God has a purpose, He works all things, everything after the counsel of His will. But go back up to verse 9, it gets a little bit more specific. He has made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His purpose, which He set forth in Christ, as a plan, here's that phrase again, for the fullness of time.

Here it is, here's the ultimate purpose, to unite all things in Christ, things in heaven, things on earth. Everything that He's created, everything that He has made, moves toward this purpose, to unite all things in Christ.

Everything is moving towards the ultimate display of the glory of Jesus. And the Apostle Paul tells us in Romans chapter 8, that those of us who have trusted in Christ and been adopted into God's family through faith in Jesus, we get to participate in that revealing of Christ's glory.

So much so, the Apostle Paul says, the entire creation waits for what? For the revealing of the glory, and he doesn't say of Jesus, although that's true, the revealing of the glory of the sons of God.

All those who have trusted in Christ and been adopted into His family. We get to become, through faith in Jesus, we get to become participants in the ultimate purpose of the universe, which is a display of the glory of Christ as all things come together to point to Him and His majesty.

[39:29] All things. That's good news. And if God is working all of history and all that He has made toward this one goal, do you not think He can accomplish the purposes that He has set for your life?

You know, I was reading an article not long ago about things that you should not say to people who are going through trials. Things you shouldn't say. If you want to comfort them, or if you want to be of any help, don't say these things to people under trials.

And one of the things that this article said was, don't quote Romans 8.28 to people who are going through a trial. You know Romans 8.28? God works all things for the good of those that love Him, who are called according to His purpose.

Romans 8.28. Don't quote that. I mean, and the article said, they know that. They don't want to hear that in that moment. All they want is for you to put your arm around them and be there and love them.

And what I get, I get what they're saying. They're saying, don't just spout platitudes, love on people. But I don't know how to love people without giving them a reason for hope from the Word of God.

[40 : 36] I don't know how to do it. All I know how to do is stand there awkwardly. Sit there awkwardly. But if we know and if we believe that God is a God so sovereign and He has such purposes from the beginning of creation onward that He can work all things, even through our sin, He can work all things to the aim of magnifying His Son along with His people.

Can He not fulfill the promise of Romans 8.28 when you're sitting in a cancer ward and work all things for your good? And do you not need to hear that promise that He's doing that?

Or when you lose the person who's most precious to you and most close to you, do you not want to know that there is a purpose in that? Do you not want to be reminded in the midst of your grief lovingly that God is sovereign and that even this He's working for for your good if you trust in Him?

Do you not need to hear those kinds of things? Do you not need to know those kinds of truth? If nobody has come into your life to say those kinds of things, then listen very carefully. He works all things for the good of those that love Him and are called according to His purpose.

You hear it? He does that. The same sovereign God who orchestrated all of history to bring His Son into the world at just the right time, who's now continuing to orchestrate all of history so that all things are summed up in Him and point to His glory.

[42 : 07] The same God with unlimited, omnipotent power is working your feud with your neighbor or your cancer or your mean boss or the schedule at work that you hate or the arguments with your children or your spouse.

This God is working those things for your good. And that's good news. But it's only true if you trusted in Him.

If you belong to the right category, a son, a daughter, not an enemy. And if you see and you understand that this God who made all things has purposes that go beyond us and has plans that we can't possibly begin to see, but chief among those are the redemption of His people for His sake.

And you can be among His people if you trust in Him. Let's pray. Father, I thank You that You're not arbitrary.

That what we see when we read Your Word is not a God who just does things one way this day and another way this day. But that we read Your Word, we see a God who's not only created an orderly universe, but who maintains an orderly universe and has a purpose for that orderly universe.

[43 : 45] universe. And I pray that our study of these opening chapters of Genesis would not turn into some sort of academic dispute over whether or not it's true or not, but that we would trust Your Word and take comfort in Your Word and believe Your Word.

And that we would see and love and cling to all the pointers to the Gospel. Here in these pages.

And Father, I pray that if there's anybody here this morning who has not by faith been adopted into Your family, has not repented of sin and trusted in Jesus, counted the cost, given all to Him, that they would do that now, this morning, that Your Spirit would so work in their hearts, making dead hearts come alive, turning hearts of stone into hearts of flesh, and that inexplicably now, even now, as I'm praying, they would find themselves for the first time really believing.

Through that miracle we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.