



Sermon – January 16, 2022
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Verses Covered This Week

Genesis 1:1 – 13

Colossians 1:16

Exodus 20:11

Genesis 2:17

Isaiah 11:6

Luke 1:35

Let me invite you to open your Bibles with me. We're going to be in Genesis chapter 1 this morning. Did y'all enjoy having Ben Prater back with us today leading worship? So glad to have you again with us, Ben. Ben was back with us in August and he is from First Baptist Georgetown. Spent a little time here at A&M and at Central when he was coming through as a student. We're going to turn our hearts to God's word. Genesis 1. This creation story. This familiar story. And as I turn there, if you're guest with us in the room, maybe for the first time, either in the room or online, welcome home. We've come to God's word every week asking for Him to change our life by the power of the Spirit. And maybe you're in the room for the first time because you're one of the college students that's here as the semester's starting back up. We're so glad you're here. We want you to know that after the worship service you can head straight out these doors to our College Gathering in the Family Life Center for some incredible time of fellowship and growing in God's word together. And I also want to say a special welcome to our DiscipleNow group. Did y'all have a good time this week? Yeah, I thought you did. I'm going to be keeping an eye on this section to make sure y'all are staying awake during the sermon. No pressure. I know it's been some late nights this week.

Genesis 1. It's a story of how God created the universe. And it's fitting that we come to this text on this Sunday. Because right now in churches all over the country, they are recognizing, just like we are, sanctity of life Sunday. Churches take time each year, marking the anniversary of the Roe vs. Wade decision back in 1973 to remember and to lament what is happening in our country when it comes to the subject of abortion. So right now, we're on anniversary #49. That means next year it will be #50. And in that time period, there's been nearly 60 million unborn lives that have never seen the light of day because of abortion. To put that in perspective, since the start of the COVID pandemic, there's been about 840,000 people that have died due to COVID. And if you were to trace it back to 1973, if every year the same number of people that

over the last 2 years have died from COVID, that's the number of people each year that have lost their life to abortion. And our church is committed to stand for life. And the reason we're committed to stand for life is because of this passage we will see this morning in Genesis 1. Because what we're going to find is that God is the creator of the universe and the one who creates something has authority over it. From the greatest galaxies to the smallest unborn child, there is nothing in the universe that is not made by Christ and for Christ. And we stand for life because of that reality. Now think about what's going on here. Last week if you were with us, we spent our time in Hebrews 11 looking at a whole overview of the story of Genesis. We saw that it's all about the kingdom of God. How it begins with the created kingdom. It's destroyed by the corrupted kingdom when sin enters into the world. But then there's this note of hope about a coming kingdom that will come when a Messiah returns to make all things new. And this morning what we're going to do, beginning in Genesis 1:1 is we're going to zoom in to the part of the story that focuses on that created kingdom. And I want you to follow along with me now as we read the first couple of verses of Genesis 1.

¹In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ²The 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.

Let's pray together.

Father, in this time, we are coming to you saying, we need You. We need Your Spirit to guide us into Your truth so that our lives will be shaped to be more like Jesus. And I pray that as we look at this familiar story, that You will use it in a fresh way to make us more into the image of who You've designed us to be. And we pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

Well, back on Christmas morning when you and your family were gathered together, set to unwrap presents, NASA was launching a gift into outer space that's been decades in the making. \$10 billion, 10 thousand people working on this project that finally came to fruition with a project known as the James Webb Space Telescope. And even right now, that telescope is making its way out into its final destination, about a million miles from the earth. It's going to be one of the most spectacular creations that the world has ever made. To allow us to see more out there into the universe than has ever been possible before. In the past few decades, we've had the Hubble Telescope that sent us amazing images. But this one is different. It is better and here's why. It's because of the magnitude of what it is. If you were to look at it right now, it looks like the universe's largest kite. Because it's got this massive sunshield that's the size of a tennis court that protects it from the sun. Optimizes the temperature so that the telescope can perform its work. That telescope is made of 18 mirrors that are gold-plated that serve as a light bucket to receive the visible and the infrared light from the universe in a light bucket that shapes 21 feet in diameter. Three times the size of the Hubble Telescope. And here's what's going to happen as a result of it. It's going to allow us to see into space around us as 100 times the power of what we've ever been able to do before. And in order to get that gigantic telescope up there, it was an amazing feat of engineering. Because they had to find a way to fold it all together compactly to launch it in the cap of the rocket. And so as it went into space over the last couple weeks, the process has become that they've had to unfold this telescope into its final resting spot so that it can do its work. 344 different maneuvers that need to take place. And if even one of them fails, the entire project is worthless and it becomes the biggest piece of space junk the world has ever seen. Now you thought that that project you had to do putting together your kids'

toys or that new piece of furniture on Christmas day was hard. Imagine the precision that this took. Imagine the demands. But why are they doing this? This new telescope will go out a million miles from earth in order to do two things: to search for light and to search for life. So what it's going to allow us to do is peer back into some of the most ancient light the universe has ever produced. It's going to allow us to search for the building blocks of life in galaxies and in structures all over the universe. And one of the things that gripped me as I've seen this take place over the last few weeks is that there's a NASA administrator named Pam Melroy who explained why they're doing it. And here's what she said:

When we see things with a new lens, we gain new knowledge and new perspectives that can change fundamentally how we see the universe and how we see ourselves.

So a new lens changes how we see the universe and how we see ourselves. And what's going to happen this morning is Genesis 1 is going to show us that we don't need to send a brand new telescope into the heavens in order to get this new perspective; to get this new lens. If we want to understand how the universe works, if we want to understand how we ourselves fit into that universe more clearly, the answers are not out there, the answers are in here. This is where the truth of God's word is made known. And what we're going to find in this text is an unfolding of a creation story that shapes everything about us. Here in Genesis 1 it is setting the trajectory for the entire storyline of Scripture. Like any good story, the beginning has the foundations for the plot, the setting, the main character. And that's what we find in Genesis 1. The Genesis 1 is more focused on the who of creation than the how. And what is the center focus of that who? Who is the creator? We see there in Genesis 1 it is God Himself. And as this story unfolds for us, in verses 1 through 13, here's what we're going to notice this morning. As we look at the story of Genesis 1, it reveals 2 realities about the created kingdom that should shape our lives today. And you'll notice the first one back in verses 1 and 2, the passage we've already read. We'll see first that God forms the created kingdom. God forms the created kingdom. So Genesis 1 is an origin story. It's telling us where we've come from so that we can make better sense of where we are and where we're going. And at the core of that origin story, is the fact that God Himself forms the created kingdom. These verses here in verses 1 and 2 there can be such a temptation to skip right over them, to move into the days of creation that start in verses 3 and onward. But what we're going to find is that right here we see some realities that are essential to understand about how it is that God forms the created kingdom. And you'll notice there in verse 1 that He forms the created kingdom with a purpose. That's why it says there;

[In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.](#)

In one small sentence, it packs a massive implication for what God has done. It speaks about the author of creation, the timing of creation, the scope of creation. It's showing us that God has always existed, even though the creation has not. And why did He create? Well, I want you to see this verse on the screen, if we have it, from Colossians 1:16. Because Paul gives us the picture of why this Genesis 1 story is there for us in the Bible. Here's what he says is the purpose of creation.

[¹⁶For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things were created through Him and for Him.](#)

In other words, Jesus is not just the maker of creation; He is the mission of creation. Jesus is the purpose of Genesis 1. He is the author of creation, the agent of creation. The aim of creation. All of it is pointing ahead to Him. And when Moses writes these words in Genesis 1, he is entirely upending the creation stories of the cultures around them. Because Israel was sandwiched in the midst of other cultures who would look at creation as if it always existed. And that what we find in the created order is the result of warring gods battling against themselves to produce what we find today. There were creation stories that shaped their perspectives even all the way back in that time period. And as we know today, that's no different even now. That your story of creation shapes the story of your life. And one of the dominant stories of creation in the secular culture around us involves things like the big bang theory. This idea that all of a sudden billions of years ago there was a big bang that shot energy and matter into space so that it could shape itself into what it is today. And then often that's combined with Darwinian evolution. This idea that through random selection and survival of the fittest, that there is some sort of evolution that takes place that ultimately produced the biological life that we have found ourselves on earth. You can imagine one of the college students sitting in here today will walk into science class this week. And that professor will begin to unpack these exact views about the foundations of the world. And Genesis 1 is speaking to that creation story. And it's giving us a fundamentally different picture than the culture around us. Now as some of you know, before I came to be your pastor, I served back about a decade ago as a seminary professor. And as I taught my systematic theology classes, we got to study in depth this story of creation. And what we would spend hours on in the classroom, we can only spend minutes on here. Which means I'm in real danger of disappointing all of you. Because some of you are going to say, "I wanted more than you gave me. Come on, let's talk more about this." And others of you are going to say, "Why are you focusing so much on this creation issue when we can be moving through the text?" But I want to do today is be balanced and biblical. To look at what Genesis 1 is showing us and to understand how it is that God designed the world. But as we step into this discussion, we need to enter it with both humility and charity. Because when we come to Genesis 1, it is not a science textbook that answers every question that we have about creation. And we need to have humility because there is a mystery to it. We will never know this side of eternity all the questions that we want to have answered. And at the same time, we need to have a sense of charity because the reality is if we can't know all those things then we need to be open handed as charitable brothers and sisters in Christ that as long as our views are consistent with the Scripture, we can agree to disagree on some of these questions that we may never have answered. And there are all sorts of questions that we have when we come to this text, don't we? How old is the earth? How long did it take to make? Did dinosaurs walk the earth at the same time as humans? Or how about this one. Some of our college students gave it to me this week. Did Adam and Eve have belly buttons? Think about it for a second. No umbilical cord. Did they have belly buttons? That'll get your mind turning the rest of the sermon even if I lose you on this. The danger is when we come to a text like this, we can get so caught up searching for answers about what the Bible isn't clear about that we can lose sight of what the Bible is clear about. But there's a few of these things that I want you to think about that when I taught in my seminary classes, I shared with my students these are non-negotiables for believers when it comes to understanding the creation story we see there in Genesis 1:1. Look back at it.

¹In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

There are 3 non-negotiables that all of us should affirm in a Christian understanding of the creation story. The first one is this. We believe in the virgin birth of creation. That there was a time when nothing existed but God. And God spoke it into existence. And the virgin birth of creation in Genesis 1 sets the stage for the virgin birth of creation in Matthew 1. There was a time before any of creation existed. The second thing we must affirm is the virtuous birth of creation. Because when you read your way through Genesis 1, over and over and over again you're going to hear this phrase. And God saw that it was good. There is a goodness to the creation. It is virtuous. It is reflecting of its Creator itself. There is a virtue to it. But then the third non-negotiable that we must affirm is what we'll call the verified birth of creation. And here's what I'm talking about. I'm talking about the literal and historical existence of Adam and Eve. That they're not some mythical figures. They're not some literary device. They are the first humans walked the earth. And how do we know that's true? Well, Jesus Himself, in Matthew 19:4, speaks about Adam as a literal historical figure. And if it's good enough for Jesus, it's good enough for me. The virgin birth of creation, the virtuous birth of creation, the verified birth of creation. Even if we can't agree on everything else, we must agree on that. Which is why as those college students prepare to step into that science class this semester, you need to be armed with an understanding of the fundamental problems of Darwinian evolution when matched up against the Scripture. Because if you lay it over those three non-negotiables, it fails at each point. See, that idea of a virgin birth of creation, if you believe in Darwinian evolution, you don't believe there's a God. So how could that God speak the world into existence? And if you don't believe in the God of creation, then there is no reason to say that the creation is good. Darwinian evolution will tell you that it's just a result of random of chance and natural selection. And then the fundamental problem when it comes to that verified birth of creation is that if you affirm this idea of evolution then how do we get Adam and Eve? How is it decided that they are the ones who were the start of humanity? There are these foundational problems with an incongruence with the Scripture that pulls us away from Genesis 1:1.

Now notice back in that verse. It tells us there, in the beginning God created. So how long did it take God to create the universe? Well there's no exact details that are in there and there have been various views throughout the history of the church. But I think the best plain reading of the text is that it took God six literal days. So, for example, in Exodus chapter 20 in verse 11, when Moses is giving us the 10 Commandments, he says this about the call to Sabbath in verse 11:

¹¹For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath and made it holy.

In other words, the reason we should work six days and rest the seventh day is because God worked six days and He rested a seventh day. But in addition to that question of how long did it take for God to create the world, when you look back at Genesis 1, it says: in the beginning, God created. The question that also often arises is, how old is the age of the earth? And this is one of those spaces where Christians for centuries have agreed to disagree. There's often two views that emerge; both an old earth creation perspective suggesting that the world is billions of years old and then a young earth perspective. That it is thousands of years old. And how do we make sense of that? How do we navigate that type of question? Well, there are two fundamental challenges to thinking about the age of the earth. There's a science challenge and a Scripture challenge. So this science challenge is that by the best modern science we have from a geological standpoint and through other means, it appears as if the world and the earth and the universe is billions of years old. At the same time, when we look at Scripture, we find in

Scripture that what we have there is that there is a very clear picture of what the creation looks like. That whatever our view of the age of the earth is, needs to align with that question. So who's right? Is the earth old as science suggests? Is it younger as it may appear from Scripture? Well, here's my assessment. When it comes to this question about the view of the old earth, the earth being old, the main strength of that is that it harmonizes well with the modern science that we have today. It makes sense in the geological records, the fossil records, the records we have from astronomical research. All of those things play well with this. And what happens is oftentimes old earth creation is paired with what's known as theistic evolution. Have you ever heard that term before? Theistic evolution. It's an effort to try to take the tenets of evolution but overlay a God or an intelligent designer over that. So instead of it just being simply the result of random chance, instead it is the result of a God who puts a system into place that through the way that this evolutionary system plays out, creates things in the world as we see them today. And while this view of an old earth seems to mesh well with modern science, I think it has a few challenges that it struggles to overcome. And here they are. So for one, if you combine old earth creation with any form of evolution, you are going to struggle with that last non-negotiable about the verified birth of Adam and Eve. Because think about it. If life as it is now, humanity as it is now, is the result of an evolutionary process, how is it that it was decided that Adam and Eve were officially the first humans? I mean, if a company is manufacturing a new product, before they'll bring it to market it'll go through a prototyping process where they'll design new ones and make incremental improvements and get it ready to go to market. And finally that company says, "We've made it market ready." Is that what God did with homo sapiens? He watched these incremental evolutions and then finally He said, "That's the one. He's ready. Now what I'm going to do is take this one and give him a soul." That seems to be so divorced from the way that the Bible speaks about the creation of Adam. But even if you set evolution aside, even if that's not a part of your view for the old earth, there is still another problem that the old earth perspective faces and here it is. It's the fact that what this view means is that for millennia, there was animal death before the fall of Adam and Eve. So slide over with me one chapter, I want you to see why this matters, in Genesis 2:17. Because when God is speaking to Adam, He's warning them not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, to not have sin enter into the world. And then He gives a reason why. He says this in verse 17.

¹⁷but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.

So the implication of this text seems to be that death is a result of sin. Death is a result of the fall. Now some old earthers will come back to a guy like me and say, "Well, that's talking about human death. That's talking about spiritual death. That has nothing to do with the animal kingdom or death like that and the bloodshed that would take place through animal predation before the fall that is affirmed in an old earth perspective." And even if that's the case, there is still one other challenge with this old earth issue. You'll see up there on the screen a passage from Isaiah 11 in verse 6 if you want to write it down. Isaiah 11 is a prophesy about the coming Messiah and the new creation that is to come. And the way that the new creation will be a restoration of what God has done in this original creation and making all things new, all things right, all things restored. And at the heart of that prophesy, that expectation about the new creation, Isaiah 11:6 has this to say:

⁶The world shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them.

In other words, one of the marks of the new creation, when Jesus makes all things new, will be a harmony in the animal kingdom; a unity that's there, a lack of predation where one is eating of the other. The lion lays down with the lamb. The lamb lays down with the wolf. There is this sense of peace, this restoration in the animal kingdom. And that type of promise would make no sense if animal predation and animal death were a normal part of the goodness of creation before the fall. Why would God restore unity then if it wasn't essential to the goodness of creation the first time? So these are some of the things that the old earth creation view has to wrestle with. And like I said before, if that is your position, I think it can be a valid Christian position. That we can agree to disagree on those things. But those are some of the challenges it faces. But my view, a young earth view, has some of its own challenges as well. I mean, the obvious challenge with a young earth perspective is, how do you make sense of modern science? Where through the geological and fossil records there is this appearance of age of billions of years. And I think the best answer to that from a young earth perspective is to say, "First of all, Scripture is our authority, not science." And over the years, science has shifted in its vantage point. That's not to dismiss the science, but to say that we need to have a frame through which we start this discussion. And I think the best way to make sense of a young earth view of creation comes right here out of Genesis 1:1.

¹In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

And what we find there is as the story unfolds, it appears to us that the best way to make sense of how could you have a young earth that appears old right now is to recognize that God makes a mature creation. God makes a mature creation. So just think about it. What we're going to find right after this section in Genesis 1 is that when we come into Genesis 2, God creates Adam. And does God create Adam as a fetus or a fully formed man? Which one? A fully formed man. And when God makes the Garden of Eden, does He create it as a seed plot that will one day grow up into a lush garden? Or does He make it as a fully formed garden? He makes it as a fully formed garden. So if God creates a mature creation with Adam, and God creates a mature creation with Eden, then why would we be surprised if He creates a mature creation with the indication of age for the entire universe? These things don't have to be out of harmony with one another. These are the realities Genesis 1:1 begins to unpack. And we will, this side of heaven, not know everything. But here's what we do know. Is that God creates with a purpose. There is a plan. There's a mission. And that mission is unfolding in Jesus Christ as saw in Colossians 1:16. But I want you to notice now back in our text as we go on. Beginning in verse 2 we see that God doesn't just create the kingdom with a purpose, He creates the kingdom with His presence. That's why it says there,

²The 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.

So think about the contrast there. When God speaks, what is formless is now formed. What is darkness is now light. What is chaos is now order. And how does that happen? Look back at verse 2. It uses this interesting phrase that the Spirit of God was hovering. The presence of God was there at creation. And this idea of the Spirit of God hovering in an act of God is something that doesn't just remain here in Genesis 1. In fact, this instance here in Genesis 1 is setting the stage for several important moments in the Scripture. So if you'll look on the screen, you'll see here from Luke chapter 1 in verse 35 when the angel appears to Mary and says that a new

creation will be begun because you are going to bear a Son who will be the Messiah. Look at the way that Luke 1:35 describes this. It says:

³⁵The angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy – the Son of God.

So just as the Spirit hovers over the waters in the original creation, it tells us here He will overshadow and come upon Mary at the start of the new creation. And you fast forward and Jesus’ story to Matthew chapter 3 and when he is going through the waters of baptism at the Jordan River, what happens? The Spirit of God in the form of a dove hovers over the waters before it descends upon Him. Or you think about the resurrection of Jesus. The way that Romans 1:4 speaks about it. It speaks about how the Spirit comes upon Jesus and brings Him back from the dead. There’s this connection between the presence of God and the creation of God that’s not just true in Genesis 1 but that sets the stage for the entire story of redemption. But that’s not all we see in Genesis 1:2. It’s not just this trajectory of the presence of God in creation. Look back there at the way that even here in the second verse of the Bible, we see our first glimpse of the reality that God is a trinity and all three persons of that trinity are involved in creation. Genesis 1:1

¹In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

That’s God the Father. It shows His role in creation. Now Genesis 1:2, the Spirit of God is hovering over the waters. That gives us a glimpse of the Spirit’s role in creation. And as we know from the passage we read at the beginning of this message, Colossians 1:16

¹⁶For by Jesus all things were created,

Father, Son, Spirit working in harmony to bring these realities about. This Christ-shaped creation is setting the stage for a Christ-shaped redemption. And the reason that’s possible is because Genesis 1 is showing us that in the beginning God formed the created kingdom.

Now there’s one other thing I want you to notice beginning in verse 3 that as we go down through another passage of the chapter, we will see it’s not just that God forms the created kingdom, but also that God frames the created kingdom. So follow along with me there beginning in verse 3 where it says this:

³And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. ⁴And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

So notice what happens here. After God forms the created kingdom in Genesis 1 and 2, he begins to frame the created kingdom in verses 3 and onward. His majesty is on display in these first three days of creation as He frames the universe that He is now establishing. So think about it. He forms and then He frames. He gives the creation substance and then He gives it shape. And you’ll notice there in verses 3 through 5 that God frames the created kingdom on the first day with light. You see that command there? Let there be light. The one who will later be described in Scripture as the light of the world offers light for the world. Day and night. He

separates light from darkness. Now I know many of us experience the winter storm that happened here about a year ago when we lost power. How many of y'all lost power at some point during that February storm here? And you probably used all sorts of ways to try to bring about light in your home and bring about warmth. Maybe it was through a lamp or a candle or a fireplace or a flashlight or your phone. My guess is that none of you walked into a room and said, "Let there be light" and it worked. Why? Because we don't have that authority. We don't have that power. In order for that to happen, you have to be the one who has authority over the light. And this is showing us exactly that type of power is in God. From the beginning, let there be light. But you'll notice something in this text. It says it separates day and night. There is light and darkness but notice what's not mentioned yet. There's no mention yet of sun and moon. Doesn't that seem strange? Like how could it be that we have day and night, light and darkness, but the primary means for that light to be present in our earth are not yet mentioned. Why would the text explain itself like that? Well, remember, Moses is explaining the story of creation to a group of people in Israel who are sojourning through the wilderness, surrounded by pagan cults that believe that they should worship the sun and the moon and all the celestial hosts. And right here from the beginning of the first description of the days of creation, Moses is rejecting that reality. He's saying the sun or the moon should not be worshiped because even before they existed, the real God of the universe brought light and darkness into place. And don't we see light and darkness show up all over the Scripture? We see it over and over again, this war, this conflict, this battles between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. But what we find here in Genesis 1 is that even in the goodness of creation, God the Father has authority over the darkness. That should fill us with great hope as we begin this year in 2022. That no matter what darkness you experience, maybe it's the darkness of great suffering, the darkness of deep sin, the darkness of anxiety or depression or stress or loss. Genesis 1 is reminding us of the reality that God has authority over the darkness of the creation. Which means He has authority over darkness in your life. That He can sustain you even now. See, God frames the universe with light in day one. But notice how it goes on in day 2. Because we're going to see next that God frames the created kingdom on day 2 with limits. That's why it says there,

⁶And God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." ⁷And 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. ⁸And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

So on the second day, God divides the heaven and those things under the heavens by separating the waters. And right here from this second day of creation, we see this water theme take a center stage all throughout Scripture. And we can lose the force of this in a world where we can get water anytime we need it out of a faucet. But in that time period, they would have been gripped by the importance of water. And they would have seen the danger both in an abundance of water and an absence of water. So there would be danger from an abundance of water if you were out in the raging sea or if you were caught in great rains and floods. There was a danger in an abundance of water. But then in the absence of water, you could be affected by drought and famine. Your whole livelihood could be at stake. Water was an essential reality for the culture to which Moses is writing. And what he is showing us even now is that the God of the universe is the giver of all good things, even this gift of water. And water shows up over and over again through the Scriptures. When God creates the waters here on day two, He is looking ahead to the

coming day when Jesus will offer you and me living waters through His death and resurrection. He is looking ahead to the day that, as Ephesians 5 tells us, Jesus will wash His bride, the church, with the washing of the water of the word. And it's looking ahead to a day that will come in a new creation where God will make all things new, restore a garden city, and at the heart of it is a river flowing out of the tree of life. That's the kind of water that Genesis is pointing to here in day 2.

But I want you to notice the last thing with me before we wrap up. Beginning in verse 9 we see how God frames the created kingdom on day three with land. So that's why it says there:

⁹And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. ¹⁰God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. ¹¹And 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. ¹²The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seeds 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. ¹³And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

So in day 1, God frames the created kingdom with light. Day 2, He frames the created kingdom with limits. Now day 3, He frames the created kingdom with land. There is this creation of the land, this creation of vegetation that's there. And here's what I want you to think about. The God of the universe has the ability to separate land from water, to create everything that's surrounds us from the greatest mountains to the lowest valleys. The richest settings we will ever see are only there because God spoke them into existence here on day 3 of creation. He provides the setting for the storyline of Scripture, for the redemption that will be available to the world. And right there in that land beginning in day 3 is this provision of vegetation. These plants, these seeds, these seeds that grow up. And just think about the way that vegetation shows up over and over again in the Bible. Shows up just a few chapters later in the Garden of Eden. That garden comes from vegetation. Or you think about when Noah escapes the flood on that ark. It is made out of wood that comes from this vegetation. Or when Moses leads the people across dry ground at the Exodus. Their deliverance comes from vegetation because the rod that he holds up is made from wood that comes from this vegetation. Or when you look ahead at the prophetic expectation of the Old Testament. They're looking forward to a Messiah who would be a shoot, a bridge, a stump, or the Messiah Himself comes. And how does He describe Himself? I am the vine. And then He goes to the cross. And on that cross He dies for you and me. To make a way for us to be made right with God despite our sins. And how does it happen? He is nailed to a tree. From wood hewn from the same vegetation that is described here in day 3. You see the way that God forms the world, the way that He frames the world. But I want you to notice a phrase that keeps showing up over and over again in this passage when it says, and God said. The way that God creates is through His word. That happens here in Genesis 1. We see God creating a covenant with Abraham in Genesis 12. We see it's repeatedly the Scripture's showing us the power of God's word to bring about transformation. So when Jesus is walking along the shorelines, He speaks a word and tells the disciples, "Come and follow Me." When He sees demons infiltrated in the lives of people, He speaks to them and casts out demons. That's the kind of authority that He possesses. The kind of authority through His word that when He is on the boat, when the winds and the waves rise up, He can calm the seas around Him. Let me tell you something. If Jesus can calm the seas around Him, then He can calm the unsettled seas

of your heart by His word. I don't know what burdens you're carrying this morning. I don't know what trials you're facing. But I know that if God's word is enough to create and sustain the universe, it's enough to sustain you and me.

As they've gotten ready to launch this James Webb Space Telescope, the project almost never happened. And it's not just because right at launch time there was a mistake that was made that caused the telescope to be jostled and they had to go back and check all the parts to make sure they were still working good. That was just a small bump in the road compared to some of the challenges it faced. This thing's been decades in the making. And through cost overruns, surprise surprise, or delays that took place in the construction, or funding issues it almost never happened. In fact, in 2017, congress tried to cut off funding and it was barely sustained in the funding. And right after that, at its lowest point, a new director was put in charge of the project. His name was Gregory Robinson. And I want you to hear these words from him as we close this morning when he talks about the function of this telescope, the purpose of astrophysics at large. Here's what he said.

Astrophysics is about looking out there, out there, and asking where did we come from and how do we fit into the universe.

That's exactly the questions we're wrestling with today in Genesis 1. Where did we come from and how do we fit into the universe? And what we find here is Moses as clearly as possible showing us that God forms the created kingdom, He frames the created kingdom, so that we might see the summing up of all things in Jesus Christ.

Let's pray together.

Father, You're goodness knows no ends. Your creation, we cannot even fathom the depths of Your provision, Your power, Your authority, all it took to provide for this world, to create this world, and to sustain this world. And Lord, I'm pleading for our people that as we wrestle with these realities, that we will not be fixated on the things we can't know but instead be fixated on the things we can know. That You are the creator. That You are good. That You have provided for us in Your Son. And I pray that as we go forward now to our life groups and to this week ahead, that we will recognize the same authority that spoke the world into creation is alive in our hearts by the power of the Spirit and that we will live in a way that's pleasing to You. We ask all these things in Christ's name. Amen.