

**SERMON – 29/8/21**  
**“It was Very Good”**

Genesis 1:24 to 2:4a

“God looked at everything He had made and He was very pleased.”  
(Gen.1:31)

Last week we began our series on the Stewardship of Creation by thinking about the fact that this is God's world, not ours to do with what we like. We thought about the story of Job who, when He was brought face to face with the wonder of God's handiwork in the heavens and the earth, could do nothing but gasp in awe and humble himself before the Lord. This morning I would like to take us on a step in our thinking about God's Creation and our own part in it but considering with you the account of the work of creation that we read earlier from the opening of the Book of Genesis.

We did not read the whole chapter, which is a poetic description of how God brought all things out of nothing. It is not a scientific treatise, although it should be noted that the order in which things came to be accords with what scientists think happened over the aeons. I personally don't think the universe came into being in a literal seven days, although I do believe God could have done so if He wished (and perhaps He did). The Bible itself tells us that with the Lord a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years are like a single day. I tend to think that we are dealing with poetry here – there are rhythms and repetitions and word pictures painted to help us grasp not so much *how* the world was made but *why*. We read that evening passed and morning came, the first day, the second day, the third day, and we read again and again that God was pleased with what He saw right up to the sixth day when He was *very* pleased, so pleased that He had finished what He had set out to do that He rested and set the seventh day apart as a special day.

The words are beautiful, the picture they paint is stunning, the created order brings us to our knees in wonder – what God has done is very good, so very, very good. So what do we think we are doing? Turn on your television, pick up a newspaper, look out your front door and take a walk along the street and what do you see? You see the tragedy that is Afghanistan – broken promises, broken people, a broken society, and it is by no means the only one. Yemen, Myanmar, North Korea, Venezuela, the list is endless. There is brokenness much closer to home than Kabul – our own society is littered with the debris

of institutional injustice and abuse, there are broken families struggling to keep it together, crushed souls crying out for healing. What do we think we are doing?

You see pictures of the once pristine seas heaving with litter and detritus, oil-coated birds helplessly flapping their sticky wings, life-giving insects sprayed into impotence, neutralised in their crucial role as pollinators and having an irreversibly destructive impact on water courses and the food chain, animals hunted to extinction or starved out of their habitat by human development. And there is litter all around *us* right here in Kinross too, strewn along roadside verges, in parks and on pathways and animals are exploited for human pleasure or cheap food. What do we think we are doing? Because the fault lies not just with someone else or with 'them' but with *us*, with each one of us to one degree or another.

We read in Scripture this morning that in the beginning God was pleased with what He saw – the work of His hands in creation – He was very pleased, in fact. But, having created human beings to be like Him, male and female, made to be creative, entrusted with power and commissioned to wield control over what He had made to be very good, what must God think of us now? What have we done? What we see around us in this world's brokenness and pain are the fruits of human disobedience, the fall of Adam and Eve into sin which we have slavishly followed. What a disaster – God's perfect creation damaged seemingly beyond repair.

Now you don't me to make you feel bad - we do a pretty good job of that ourselves, each one of us – so what is the Gospel message for us this morning? Well, first of all, let's lift our eyes above our own very limited horizons and take time regularly just to marvel at the fact that God has done all things well, that He has set this perfectly balanced blue and green world in the vast and dark expanse of space, an oasis of life in the midst of all the fiery stars and frozen lumps of rock spinning in their orbits. It is so wonderful. God was pleased, very pleased, with all that He had made, and so should we be, and we should be offering heartfelt praise to the Creator who has also shown Himself to be our gracious and loving Father.

Let's also take seriously the divine appointment that we human beings were given at the start of all things to exercise power over creation and to bring the earth under control, but to do so as those created in God's likeness, as good

stewards, not as those who are set on squeezing as much as we can out of it for our own selfish ends.

And as we recognise that we have failed and fallen short spectacularly as a race and as individuals, let's take hold of the loving rescue plan our gracious God set in motion by sending His Son Jesus into this world to save us and to re-establish the perfect Kingdom which we have undermined from the beginning. Let us lay ourselves humbly before God in repentance today, let us receive the pardon and the renewing that He holds out to us in Christ and by the Holy Spirit, and let us commit ourselves to enthroning Him as Lord in the small everyday things just as much as in the big picture context of climate change and global conflict and societal upheaval.

At the beginning of this new session of the church's life, in the midst of all that is and is not going on at the moment, we have an opportunity to set off in a new direction, each of us as individuals and all of us as a congregation and as groups within that congregation. For you, joining a group like the Guild may be the catalyst you need to help you think about new ways in which you can exercise your faith in daily life. Or perhaps it would do you good to be part of a house-group, or to meet with others regularly to talk and to pray.

But as we draw to a close this morning, let me take you back to the closing verses of this morning's reading where we reach the culmination of the creation story - "So the whole universe was completed and by the seventh day God finished what He had been doing and stopped working. God blessed the seventh day and set it apart as a special day." In our human wisdom (and even in recent decades within the Christian Church) we have even ditched God's mandate to be like Him in taking a day of rest. In the interests of economic prosperity the 24/7 shopping and entertainment culture has taken root and yet we are surprised that we have reaped the whirlwind of stress and sickness and mental and emotional breakdown in our nation.

Next Sunday I hope to look with you at the Sabbath principle in the Bible which affects not just human beings but the whole created order, but for now let me encourage you to take some time out today just to pause and to ponder what we have been thinking about this morning. Look up and look around and look within – God looked at everything He had made and it was very good; He was very pleased. And so it is. Let us marvel and rejoice and give God the honour. Let us humbly acknowledge the part we each play in the spoiling of God's creation and in the diminishing of human society, and

earnestly seek God's forgiveness. And let us commit ourselves to being part of the work of restoration that Christ came to accomplish.

May God again look at everything He has made and be very pleased.