

**From Creation to New-Creation
Sermon Seminar 2012 Worship**

Session 1

Creation: From Chaos to Order

Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah

Ps. 24 – The Lord Our God Created Earth, Timeless

Scripture Reading:

Genesis 1:1–5

John 1:1–5

Genesis 2:7–9; 15–25

Reflection, from Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*

“A child kicks his legs rhythmically through excess, not absence, of life. Because children have abounding vitality, because they are in spirit fierce and free, therefore they want things repeated and unchanged. They always say, “Do it again;” and the grown-up person does it again until he is nearly dead. For grown-up people are not strong enough to exult in monotony. But perhaps God is strong enough to exult in monotony. It is possible that God says every morning, “Do it again” to the sun; and every evening, “Do it again” to the moon. It may not be automatic necessity that makes all daisies alike; it may be that God makes every daisy separately, but has never got tired of making them. It may be that He has the eternal appetite of infancy; for we have sinned and grown old, and our Father is younger than we.”

Doxology

Prayer from Psalm 8:

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth.

You have set your glory above the heavens.

When your glorious name is proclaimed on the lips of weak and innocent children, the arrogant enemy is ceased.

When I consider your heavens, your works,

The moon and stars above

What are humans that you remember and visit them?

We were made lower than God himself, yet crowned with the same glory which you placed above the heavens.

You gave us dominion, making us ruler over all your works;

The flocks and herds of the field, birds of the air, and fish of the sea. And everything that is in the sea.

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth.

Session 2
The Fall: From Order to Chaos

All People That on Earth Do Dwell
Ps 1 – How Blessed, Timeless

Scripture Reading:
Genesis 3:6–10
John 1:10–11
Genesis 3:11–13

Reflection – from Bonhoeffer’s *Creation and Fall*, 120.

“Because the fall of humankind is both inconceivable and finally inexcusable in God’s creation, the word *disobedience* fails to describe the situation adequately. It is rebellion, the creature’s stepping outside of the creature’s only possible attitude, the creature’s becoming creator, the destruction of creatureliness, a defection, a falling away from being safely held as a creature. As such a defection it is a *continual* fall, a *dropping* into a bottomless abyss, a state of being let go, a process of moving further and further away, falling deeper and deeper. And in all this it is not merely a *moral lapse* but the destruction of creation by the creature. The extent of the fall is such that it affects the whole created world. From now on that world has been robbed of its creatureliness and drops blindly into infinite space, like a meteor that has torn itself away from the core to which it once belonged.”

Nearer Still Nearer

Prayer from Psalm 51 (Jude Benediction):
Have mercy on us, O God, according to your unfailing love;
According to your great compassion blot out our transgressions.
Wash away our iniquity and cleanse us from our sin.

Against you we have sinned; against you we have done evil.
Surely you desire truth and wisdom in the inmost place.

Cleanse us and we will be clean; wash us and we will be whiter than snow.
Create in us a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within us.
Do not cast us away from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from us.
Restore to us the joy of your salvation and grant us a willing spirit to sustain us.

Have mercy on us, O God, according to your unfailing love.

To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy – to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power, and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore. Amen.

Session 3

Exile: From Chaos to Darkness

*Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah
Return, O Lord (Ps. 6, Timeless)*

Scripture Reading:

Isaiah 40:1–11

John 1:6–9, 19–27

Isaiah 40:21–31

Reading – Augustine, *Confessions*

“Late have I loved you, O Beauty ever ancient, ever new, late have I loved you! You were within me, but I was outside, and it was there that I searched for you. In my unloveliness I plunged into the lovely things which you created. You were with me, but I was not with you. These beauties kept me from you; yet if they had not been in you they would have not been at all. You called, you shouted, and you broke through my deafness. You flashed, you shone, and you dispelled my blindness. You breathed you fragrance on me; I drew in breath and now I pant for you. I have tasted you, now I hunger and thirst for more. You touched me, and I burned for your peace.”

Ps 13 – How Long, O Lord, Will You Forget?, Timeless

Prayer from Psalm 13 (1 Peter 5:10-11 – Benediction):

How long, O Lord? Will you forget us forever?

How long will you hide your face from us?

How long must we wrestle with our thoughts and have sorrow in our hearts every day?

How long will our enemies triumph over us?

Look on us and answer, O Lord our God.

Give light to our eyes, or surely we will sleep.

Our enemies will boast in their victory and rejoice when we fall.

But in your unfailing love we trust;

Our hearts rejoice in your salvation.

We will sing to you, O Lord for you have been good to us.

And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Session 4
Redemption: From Darkness to Light

*O For a Thousand Tongues
In Christ Alone*

Scripture Reading:

Isaiah 53:1–12

John 1:14

Philippians 2:6–11

Reflections – Nicholas Wolterstorff and Dietrich Bonhoeffer

"Speaking of Israel and of God the writer (of Isaiah) says: 'In all their affliction, he was afflicted.' In our affliction, God is afflicted. Over our sufferings, God suffers. Over our mourning, God mourns. Over our weeping, God weeps. I suggest that what the believer sees in beholding the suffering of the world...is no less than the suffering of God. What the believer sees when beholding the rabbi from Nazareth on the cross is not only human blood from sword and thorn and nail, but the tears of God over the wounds of the world."

"God loves human beings. God loves the world. Not an ideal human, but human beings as they are; not an ideal world, but the real world. What we find repulsive in their opposition to God, what we shrink back from with pain and hostility, namely, real human beings, the real world, this is for God the ground of unfathomable love." Bonhoeffer

To God Be the Glory

Prayer from Psalm 98 (Hebrews 13 Benediction):

You have made your salvation known

And revealed your righteousness to the nations.

You have remembered your love and faithfulness to your people.

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

Let the sea resound and everything in it, the world and all who live in it.

Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy.

Let them sing before the Lord, for he comes to judge the earth.

He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples with equity.

We sing to you, O Lord, a new song,

For you have done marvelous things.

May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Session 5
The Church: Until He Come

Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing
Faith of Our Fathers

Scripture Reading:

Isaiah 2:2–4

Hebrews 10:19–25

Reflection – Heschel & Ellul

"Worship is a way of seeing the world in the light of God. Our goal should be to live life in radical amazement; get up in the morning and look at the world in a way that takes nothing for granted. Everything is phenomenal; everything is incredible; never treat life casually; to be spiritual is to be amazed." -- Abraham Heschel

"Christians were never meant to be normal. We've always been holy troublemakers, we've always been creators of uncertainty, agents of dimension that's incompatible with the status quo; we do not accept the world as it is, but we insist on the world becoming the way that God wants it to be. And the Kingdom of God is different from the patterns of this world." -- Jacques Ellul

Lord, Speak to Me

Prayer from Psalm 133 (Ephesians Benediction):

How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity.

It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard,

Running down on Aaron's beard, down upon the collar of his robes.

It is as if the northern dew were falling on Mount Zion.

For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

Session 6
New-Creation: From Light to Life

Praise the Lord, Ye Heavens Adore Him
On Zion's Glorious Summit

Scripture Reading:
Rev. 21:1–7
Rev. 22:1–7, 12–20

Reflection – N.T. Wright

“History matters because human beings matter; human beings matter because creation matters; creation matters because the creator matters. And the creator, according to some of the most ancient Jewish beliefs, grieved so much over creation gone wrong, over humankind in rebellion, over thorns and thistles and dust and death, that he planned from the beginning the way by which he would rescue his world, his creation, his history, from its tragic corruption and decay; the way, therefore, by which he would rescue his image-bearing creatures, the muddled and rebellious human beings, from their doubly tragic fate; the way, therefore, by which he would be most truly himself, would become most truly himself. The story of Jesus of Nazareth offers itself, as Jesus himself had offered his public work and words, his body and blood, as the answer to this multiple problem: the arrival of God’s kingdom precisely in the world of space, time, and matter, the world of injustice and tyranny, of empire and crucifixions. This world is where the kingdom must come, on earth as it is in heaven. What view of creation, what view of justice, would be served by the offer merely of a new spirituality and a one-way ticket out of trouble, an escape from the real world?

No wonder the Herods, the Caesars and the Sadducees of this world, ancient and modern, were and are eager to rule out all possibility of actual resurrection. They are, after all, staking a counter-claim on the real world. It is the real world that the tyrants and bullies (including the intellectual tyrants and bullies) try to rule by force, only to discover that in order to do so they have to quash all rumours of resurrection, rumours that would imply that their greatest weapons, death and deconstruction, are not after all omnipotent. But it is the real world, in Jewish thinking, that the real God made, and still grieves over. It is the real world that, in the earliest stories of Jesus’ death and resurrection, was decisively and forever reclaimed by that event, an event which demanded to be understood, not as a bizarre miracle, but as the beginning of a new creation.

My Hope is Built on Nothing Less

Prayer from Psalm 27 (1 Thess. 5:23-24, Benediction):
You are our light and our salvation – whom shall we fear?
You are the stronghold of our life – of whom shall we be afraid?
When the enemy attacks, they shall stumble and fall.
Our hearts will not fear, for in you we are confident.

One thing we ask, one thing we seek:

That we may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of our life,
To gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his holy temple.
For in the day of trouble he will keep us safe in his dwelling;
He will hide us in his tabernacle and set us high upon a rock.
Then we will be exalted above the enemies who surround us.

Hear our voice, O Lord; be merciful to us.

Do not reject us.

Teach us your way, O Lord; lead us in a straight path.

In this we are confident:

That we will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.
In our waiting, make us strong.

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.