

Father, we come before you pondering this creation, this plan that you have, this love that you've poured out on us. We praise you for your gift. Now Father, we ask you to speak, speak to us through your word. May it be that we would take in deeply the nourishment that comes from your living word, the encouragement, the direction, the correction Spirit, soften our hearts to hear from you. We thank you for the gift of your word.

In your name, Jesus, I pray. Amen.

What a beautiful thing to just to ponder and praise the Lord together this morning. You know, I think it's true for many of us, or maybe most of us, that we are inherently calmed by or in awe by creation. There's something about the peace and the power that we see and the beauty and the creativeness as we look out at creation. I think for Christians and non Christians alike, we go to state parks and national parks just to take in the beauty. Think of this.

Two weeks ago, David and Frankie and I were in Denver, Colorado. Beautiful place to be looking at God's creation. We were there for General assembly, which is the annual national gathering of our, for our denomination. It was a wonderful gathering. I'd be happy to tell you more about it if you want to ask me questions.

But one of the things that we got to enjoy while we're there was just the grandeur of God's creation. Looking at the mountains. There was a time when David and I took a lunch break and skipped out to the nearby state park. And just to take in God's beautiful creation and to look around. I know for myself, I think I love looking at water in God's creation.

And I am drawn to, and almost just in a trance as I look at what the beauty and the power of water. Sometimes I drive on a bridge and my eyes are drawn to the water that we're driving over top of. And my sweet wife has to remind me to look at the road, not the water, but his creation. It's beautiful. We know in Genesis 1:1, this verse is familiar to you.

It says in the beginning, God created the heavens, the earth. Genesis 1 goes on to give this account of the heavens and earth being created. At first they were formless and void. And then in day one, God also creates light. And in day two, he creates the sky which separates the waters below from the waters above.

And then in day three, he creates ground which comes up out of the oceans. And then he creates vegetation on top of the ground. On day four, he fills the sky with lights, with billions of lights, like we Were just talking about huge, burning, fiery lights fill the sky. On day five, he creates water creatures just in the oceans. They're filled with creatures.

And he fills the air with birds. Then in day six, he creates animals, land animals all over the place, the land. And then his crowning creation is people, male and female, created in God's image. All of this created everything out of nothing. He speaks this creation into existence.

I want to ponder the magnificence of that creation with you.

According to a NASA website, astronomers estimate that the universe could contain up to 1, septillion stars. I didn't know septillion was a number. It's a one with 24 zeros coming after it. So the universe could contain up to 1 septillion stars. Our Milky Way galaxy alone has more than 100 galaxies billion stars.

Scientists have estimated that the observable Universe contains about 200 billion galaxies, each containing billions of stars. Take that in with me. How big is our universe? How big is the God who created our universe, who scripture talks about, imagines him, this God, holding all that he's created in his hand? How big is our God?

How big are you?

It's interesting when I think of it in this perspective, I think my sons and I enjoy watching basketball. I've talked about this before. We enjoy, like, the NBA playoffs this past month were such a blast to watch. And inevitably, in any NBA game you watch, there's a time when one of the players drives to the hoop and through all these bodies and pushes through them, jumps over them, dunks the ball and lands and goes like this, right? As if to say, I am tough.

Look at what I can do. And we watch the game, we think, wow, that is tough. I am impressed with what he can do. And then if you ever find yourself going to a middle school basketball game and you see a seventh grader who's not yet gone through his growth spurt, and he makes a layup and he lands and he goes as if to say, look at how tough I am. Look at what I can do.

And we all want to laugh as you just laugh. But we hold it in because we don't want to embarrass him. But we realize how silly it is that this seventh grader is saying, look at how tough I am. I mean, because we think, well, it makes sense for an NBA player to do that, but for a seventh grader, that's ridiculous.

But then I wonder, well, what does God think when he sees the NBA player? Look at how tough I am.

And then I take it a Step further. And I think, God, do I ever do that?

In the midst of some kind of success? Maybe I lead a good Bible study, preach a good sermon, lead a good meeting, send a good email, counsel someone in a good way. And do I go, yeah.

I mean, not physically, but it happens in my heart sometimes. Look at me.

How is it for you in your work and life, you have those moments where you say, yeah, look at me. Look at how great I am. Look at what I've done.

How much of social media is about saying, look at me, look at how great I am. How silly, how ridiculous it is when I see the perspective of who God is and who I am. Why am I ever wasting any breath trying to get people to look at me?

The magnificence of the universe reveals the smallness of me. We're so small. Yet Genesis 1:27 talks about how God created male and female in his image. He created them in the image of God. He created them.

That is to say, when we are created in God's image, we are created with the possibility of having relationship with God. So creation isn't simply magnificent in its grandeur, but it has exquisite precision. It's on purpose. Human beings were created to be able to have a personal relationship with the holy creator God.

I invite you to marvel with me for a moment at the precision of God's creation. I mean, we can think about a seed that I can fit in the palm of my hand, a teeny seed that then when placed in the ground and it receives the nutrients of the soil and water and sun. That seed grows into a tree weighing tons and tons and providing beauty and has this life cycle that reproduces other trees. And we think of all plants really serving this functional purpose of recycling nutrients into our environment, providing nutrients for animals and for all human beings, all plant types with a precise process and purpose that they are carrying out even bugs. I was blessed to go on a field trip with waves with the fourth and fifth graders wading through the Burnett Creek this week.

And we had nets and being told and taught how even the bugs that we find in this creek have a specific purpose and process, a precise purpose and process in God's creation.

Speaking of precise design, we can consider the human body, the human body inside us we have 78 organs. One of those 78 organs, the heart, is pumping life giving blood to through 60,000 miles of blood vessels. I had to check a number of websites to find out is that really true? Do we have 60,000 miles of blood vessels inside us? We have 100 billion microscopic nerve endings all over our body that are sending messages to our brain.

And all of this is held in place by 200 bones and 600 muscles. Can you even imagine, can you believe this exquisite and precise design that is our human bodies? Why would God do this? Why would he create a world with this magnitude and this precision? He had everything out of his bountiful love.

He chose to share his everything with a people, to a people. He gave a universe. He created an entire universe that would display and declare his glory. Not to boast because he doesn't need anything, or he's not looking to prove anything to anyone or anything. But the universe displays and declares his glory so that the people he created in his

image might experience and enjoy his glory and further display and declare his joy.

His glory, so that they might experience and enjoy his glory so that more would. And you get the point. Psalm 19 proclaims, says, the heavens declare the glory of God. God created this incomparably magnificent and precise world for us. So then you think, well, I must really be something.

And yes, you are something. You are someone so small on whom the very large Creator has set his affection. Never forget the small size of you and his great affection for you. The affection of the Creator, our magnificent God, our Creator. God holds us in his hand, his precious people in his capable hands.

That's the story of creation. So what does creation reveal to us about the heart of God? It reveals that he loves and provides with magnificence and precision. There is a magnificent abundance that he shares with his very small people on whom he precisely pours his extravagant love. So what does a creation teach us about the heart of God that He loves and provides with magnificence and precision?

In many ways, as we think about this Old Testament picture of our creator, God, in many ways, I think it's just setting the stage for his new creation which is revealed in the New Testament. Listen to what Paul says about this new creation revealed in the New Testament. 2 Corinthians 5, 17 says, Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has gone and the new has come. Ephesians 2, 4, 5 says, because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive in Christ.

Later in that same chapter, Ephesians, it says, for we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. So we were born old creation, spiritually dead, and we were made into new creation, spiritually alive. People talk about, you know, this move from brokenness to restoration and that being beautiful when we see that in people. But the miracle that God is doing in new creation is a deeper miracle than that, is the miracle of moving from death to life. In the Old Testament, Genesis tells the story of God creating everything from nothing.

And in the New Testament, we see revealed, we learned this story of God creating life from death.

I want us to wrap our minds around the magnificence and the precision of this new creation for a moment. This new creation, which is you who have put your faith in Christ, which honestly, it's hard to believe at first, but when we really think about it, this new creation, it dwarfs the magnificence and the precision of the first creation. Here's why I think that when I read a passage like Ephesians 1, verse 3, that says, Praise be to our God and Father who blessed us in the heavenly realms, blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing. So we've been talking about, okay, there's us and there's this worldly realm. It's huge, billions of stars.

And that worldly realm, it has a beginning and, and it will have an end. And then there's new creation. The spiritual realm has no beginning and no end for us as new creations in the spiritual realm, we have a beginning, but we in our relationship with God will have no end. So what is it to have all spiritual blessings in the spiritual realm which dwarfs the worldly realm that we know? Think about it as you see someone on earth who, they have a lot.

They've amounted lots of money or lots of success. And we look at them and we think, oh my goodness, look at the physical blessings that they've amounted in this worldly realm. Wouldn't it be amazing to have over all those physical blessings in this worldly realm? Yes, but what would it be to have all spiritual blessings in the spiritual realm that is new creation? So marvel with me for a moment now about the precision of new creation.

Ephesians 2 and 4 and 1st Corinthians 12, they, they tell us this reality of God equipping and preparing each of us to do good works, gifting us in specific ways and calling us to use our gifts to build up the body and display and declare his glory to the world. So that means each and every follower of Jesus or each and every new creation created in a precisely specific way to join together in this incredible orchestra that is displaying and declaring the glory of God. If you were in this building last week, you saw this. There were 235 children all over this building. There were more than 70 adults and, and teens all over this building, each doing those things that God had called them to do, each playing those roles where Renee is giving leadership to it all and Leslie is taking care of music and Emily with drama and Melissa with

childcare and Scott with tech and Peg with food and Jolene and Bethany with science.

And then all of these teenagers that I think of in my mind, I think think of Ava and Joel and Maddie and Kaitlyn and Ryan and Joel and Ashley and River and Henry and Riley and Josiah and all of these people coming together doing the things that the Lord has put on their mind to do. And it comes together to display and declare the glory of God. That's new creation. We had these kids up here this morning, they were declaring praise God, I've been, praise the Lord, I've been born again. And I'm sitting there listening to them sing, singing and weeping as I think some of them, some of these kids, some of these 235 kids, they have been born again this last week and they're praising God because they are now a new creation.

Not only that, that's just this week. What was going on in this building. What about outside this building with hundreds of people in our church family who have this network of Christ centered relationships who are caring for one another and supporting one another, all of this working together, that's God's new creation. Displaying and declaring the glory of God. The precision of all of these different parts of the body following the Spirit's call into specific acts of love and compassion is absolutely amazing.

It's God's new creation and what we currently see and experience as this new creation and this is amazing. We thought that was incredible. But what we're currently experiencing is new creation. That is just the seedling stage of new creation of the new creation that will be growing, that is growing, that we will all grow into new creation. Life will take off in a whole new way when the Lord returns and brings all of his new creations into his new creation habitat that he is preparing for us.

That new creation habitat is spoken about in scripture as the new heavens and the new earth. They'll be like the first creation, yet they'll be at peace. Everything will be at peace, perfect peace forever. The Lord himself will reign and reside in full presence and glory in this new creation. And there will be no more death and no more sadness.

Our new creation souls will at last receive our new creation bodies and they too will last forever. They'll not Wilt and they'll not fade.

One scholar imagines that if our temporal bodies have five senses, what if our new creation bodies have 100 senses? I mean, imagine what new creation soul and our new creation body in God's new heaven and earth, what that kind of new creation will be.

So what does creation reveal about the heart of God? He loves and provides with magnificence and precision. There's a magnificent abundance that he shares with his small people on whom he precisely pours his extravagant affection.

My hope and my prayer is that this reflection as we're thinking about God's creation, as we're pondering the heart of God revealed in creation, that this would help right size our our view of God, that pondering creation and how God reveals himself in creation, that that would help right size my view of myself, that it would right size my view of hope and that it would right size my understanding of God's affection for me.

I want to encourage you to consider this sustaining spiritual practice. That's a relatively simple thing that is going for a five minute walk in God's creation each day this week. As you go for this simple 5 minute walk each day, I encourage you to take in some of God's magnificence and his precision. And if you're a follower of Jesus, let it remind you that there's an even greater magnificence and precision of his new creation that is growing within you and his people, which will continue to grow in you and his people as God works in us.

As we close in a minute, the praise and worship team is going to come up and they're, they're going to sing and I want us, I invite you just to have this brief conversation with the Lord where you sit before the Lord and you ask him these very questions that I just asked. Do you have a right sized view, God? Do you have a right sized view of yourself where you, ah, look at me, look at what I've done. You have a right sized view of hope.

Do you have a right understanding of God's affection for you? I want to encourage you just to take your time, enter into this conversation with the Lord. Eventually we'll start singing. You can stand and when you're ready, you can keep

sitting and talking to the Lord. Ask him these questions and listen to what he says.

Father, we come before you and we ask you spirit, to speak. Speak to us.