

Creation Care Sunday  
April 22, 2018  
Message: Loving God Through Creation

This Creation Care Sunday, and every day, we ought to turn our attention to our loving God and His bountiful, beautiful creation. Creation testifies to the majesty and power of our Lord, and it also highlights His deep love for us. In return, we can love God through stewarding what He has made so generations to come can witness the majesty of God. *“The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it,”* declares the Psalmist (Psalm 24:1 NIV). What would it look like to live out and steward this truth as inhabitants of God’s great earth? Would we change how we interact with the world around us?

**Creation is Good**

*“Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!”* (Genesis 1:31 NLT).

Imagine seeing the Grand Canyon for the first time. As you look over the edge you don’t see a giant hole in the ground, but a panorama of magnificent colors made up of various rock strata reflecting a beautiful, blue sky. It is moments like this where we experience for ourselves that what God made is good. His world is the greatest art ever created and it announces His glory for all to see.

This truth is referenced throughout scripture. Here are a few examples:

Psalm 104:24, 28, 31  
Jeremiah 10:12  
John 1:3  
Romans 1:20  
1 Timothy 4:4  
Revelation 4:11

Indeed, the work of His hands is good.

In a way, this passage reminds me of shopping for or making the perfect gift for someone for Christmas or a birthday. We often put a great deal of time and effort into giving our loved ones something good as a sign of our affections and to demonstrate just how much they mean to us. When we do this, how do we hope they will react to the gift? Do we hope they will be filled with gratitude and that they will take care of this gift and cherish it for what it is worth? Of course we do! Now, imagine seeing that gift later on and it is abandoned in a corner somewhere or even broken and falling apart. Do we feel loved in return?

How we treat creation demonstrates our gratitude, or lack thereof, for the wonderful gift God has given us. We cannot imagine the creative power, energy, and wisdom that went into the creation of the world around us. God saw that His gift was good. Do we see it the same way?

### **Creation Testifies to God's Love and Power**

*"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse."* (Romans 1:20 NIV).

This letter from Paul is not the only place we read about creation testifying. Here are some other scripture references:

Psalm 139:13-14

Isaiah 40:28

Jeremiah 32:17

Amos 9:6

As evangelicals, we have a special concern for sharing the goodness of God and telling others about Christ. If creation truly demonstrates God's "invisible qualities...so that people are without excuse", shouldn't we also be concerned with not only sharing our faith through words, but protecting creation for generations to come?

In my own experience, I often feel closest to God while in nature- His creation. For the past few years, I have enjoyed spending time at Shenandoah National Park which is just a short 1.5 hour drive my house. Skyline Drive is the only main road throughout the park and it is a breathtaking 109 miles of panoramic views. Both sides of the parkway have mountain views with the Blue Ridge Mountains on one side and the Appalachian Mountains on the other. In fact, visitors are on a mountain themselves at about 2,000 miles above sea level. While driving down the road, you can look down to the mountain valley towns and also look up to even more majestic views. For me, this is a great example of God's creative power and strength.

Through all of the highs and lows in life, time spent outdoors helps to refresh and restore me. Why? Because it serves as a reminder that the God I serve loves me enough to place me in His created world and enjoy its beauty. It reminds me that I serve a God who is all-powerful and has created things beyond my wildest dreams. It reminds me that God upholds and sustains all interconnected parts of creation- from the mountains and the trees, to water and air, to animals and insects, and even my own existence.

We read in Romans that creation testifies to God's power, and we can experience that for ourselves. Because of this, we ought to work our hardest to steward His world so others may experience Him in the same way.

### **Stewardship is an Act of Reverence**

So, what do we do with all of this? We know that creation is good, and that it testifies to who God is and draws people to Him. What is our role as followers of Christ- as the hands and feet of Christ on earth? It is to steward creation as an act of reverence.

Here are some examples of God commanding His people to protect the land as a form of obedience:

Genesis 1:26  
Proverbs 28:18  
Numbers 35:33  
Revelation 11:18

There are other places in scripture, such as Deuteronomy, where God is concerned with how His people interact with the land around them.

You don't have to look hard to find verses about following God's commands and obeying him as followers of Christ. Our original job from Genesis 2:15 is not separate from our call to obey. God saw His creation was good, and put people in the garden to "work it and keep it." Even now, we ought to keep the entire Garden of creation.

Think back to the idea of giving a gift from earlier. We are the recipients of the gift of life in God's created world. What better way to honor our gift giver than to protect and defend that gift- to hold on to it, to keep it clean and healthy, and to make sure it can be a light for others?

Now I invite you to go to outside. Go for a walk and experience this wonder of creation. Experience its goodness and the grandeur of God's very good creation.