

Creation: The Beginning of Life as We Know It

Genesis 1-3

What we want to do tonight is start a journey with you guys through the story of Scripture. And I'm excited about this because we think for a lot of us, we grew up hearing random Bible stories, but we never really understood how they all connect together.

Like we know:

- Noah built the ark.
- David killed Goliath.
- Jonah got swallowed by a fish.
- Daniel was in the lion's den.

But sometimes it all just feels disconnected. Like a bunch of random stories floating around out there somewhere.

And what we hope happens over these next several weeks and months is that you begin to see the Bible not as random stories, but as one unified story. One story about a God who relentlessly pursues people. One story about a God who keeps bringing order out of chaos, peace out of brokenness, and life out of death.

And honestly, I think some of you are going to start seeing passages you've heard your entire life in a completely different way.

Now here's the challenge with a series like this: we're covering HUGE sections of Scripture every week. Massive chunks of history. So what we're going to do is zoom out and get the big picture, but then we're going to zoom in on certain moments and ask:

- What does this reveal about God?
- What does this reveal about people?
- And what does this reveal about us right now?

So tonight we begin in the beginning. Literally page one of your Bible.

Genesis 1.

And I think it's important that we understand where our story actually begins.

Because if you misunderstand the beginning of the story, you'll misunderstand the rest of the story too.

So Genesis starts like this:

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

Now that sentence doesn't sound shocking to us because we've heard it our whole lives. But when Moses wrote Genesis, this was absolutely revolutionary.

Because every other creation story at that time basically started with chaos and violence and angry gods fighting each other. The world was supposedly created because the gods were battling and destroying one another.

But Genesis starts completely differently.

“In the beginning God created...”

No war.

No conflict.

No chaos gods fighting.

God simply creates.

And that matters because how your story begins shapes how you live your story.

If the universe begins in chaos, then life becomes about fear, survival, control, and trying to protect yourself.

But if the universe begins with a good God creating intentionally and purposefully, then your life has meaning from the very beginning.

Your life is not random.
You are not random.
You are not an accident.

And then Genesis says this:

“Now the earth was formless and empty...”

The Hebrew phrase there is “tohu va vohu.”

Basically: wild and waste.
Chaos.
Disorder.

And what does God do?

He speaks into the chaos.

And every time God speaks, chaos decreases and order increases.

Think about that.

The more God speaks:

- light appears,
- land appears,
- life appears,
- beauty appears,
- purpose appears.

God brings order out of chaos.

And honestly, I think that’s true in our lives too.

The more we allow God to speak into our lives, the more order He brings into the chaos we carry.

And some of us honestly feel like chaos right now.

Some of you are carrying:

- anxiety,
- pressure,
- confusion,
- insecurity,
- anger,
- loneliness,
- fear about the future,
- pressure to fit in,
- pressure to perform,
- pressure to be enough.

And what's interesting is that we live in a world FULL of voices trying to tell us who we are.

Social media.

Friends.

Culture.

Sports.

Relationships.

TikTok.

YouTube.

Influencers.

Everybody's trying to define reality for you.

Everybody's trying to tell you:

- what matters,
- what success looks like,
- what beauty is,
- what happiness is,
- what identity is.

And Genesis asks this massive question right at the beginning:

Whose voice are you going to trust?

Because every temptation in life eventually comes back to that question.

Whose story are you going to trust?

Then God creates light, land, oceans, plants, animals, stars, and over and over again we hear the same phrase:

“And God saw that it was good.”

That repetition matters.

Because God wants us to understand something:
creation is good.

The world is not an accident.

Matter is not evil.

Your body is not an accident.

Your existence is not meaningless.

And then we get to the climax of creation.

Humanity.

Genesis says:

“Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness.”

Now don't miss how radical this is.

In the ancient world, only kings were called image bearers of gods.

But Genesis says EVERY human being bears the image of God.

Male and female.

Rich and poor.

Young and old.

Every race.

Every person.

Every single person you lock eyes with this week carries the fingerprints of God.

And guys , this matters so much because the world will constantly try to attach your value to something else.

Your grades.

Your sport.

Your popularity.

Your appearance.

Your boyfriend or girlfriend.

Your social status.

Your achievements.

But Genesis says your value was established long before any of that.

You bear the image of God.

That means your value is not earned.

It's given.

And honestly, some of you desperately need to hear that tonight.

Because some of you are exhausted trying to prove your worth all the time.

Trying to prove:

- you matter,
- you're attractive enough,
- you're athletic enough,
- you're smart enough,
- you're funny enough,
- you're important enough.

But before humanity ever accomplished anything, God blessed them.

Did you catch that?

Before they achieved.

Before they performed.

Before they worked.

Before they succeeded.

God blessed them.

And I think sometimes we accidentally start the story at Genesis 3 instead of Genesis 1.

Now Genesis 3 matters.

Sin matters.

Brokenness matters.

But before rebellion entered the story, blessing was already there.

Your story does not begin with how bad you are.

It begins with how good God is.

That changes everything.

But then Genesis 3 introduces another voice into the story.

The serpent shows up and basically says:

“Did God really say that?”

And humanity has been wrestling with competing voices ever since.

God says:

“Trust Me.”

The serpent says:

“There’s another way.”

And honestly, temptation still works the exact same way today.

Temptation usually doesn’t show up looking obviously evil.

It usually sounds more like:

- “God’s holding out on you.”
- “You know better.”
- “Your way will make you happier.”
- “Everybody else is doing it.”
- “You deserve this.”
- “You can define truth for yourself.”

It's another story competing with God's story.

And Adam and Eve choose the other voice.

And immediately shame enters the story.

They hide.

And honestly, we still do the exact same thing.

Maybe not physically.

But emotionally?

Spiritually?

Absolutely.

We hide behind:

- fake confidence
- sarcasm
- humor
- achievement
- relationships
- sports
- popularity
- social media versions of ourselves
- pretending we're okay when we're not

Because shame always pushes people into hiding.

And I think one of the saddest things about students today is how many people feel completely alone while constantly surrounded by people.

Because everybody's wearing masks. Everybody's terrified that if people really knew them, they wouldn't be accepted.

But here's what I don't want you to miss:

Adam and Eve sin...and God pursues them. He comes looking for them.

That matters!

Because some of you think God's posture toward you is disgust.

Like He's just constantly disappointed in you. Like He's barely tolerating you. But Genesis says before there was ever rebellion, there was blessing. God's first posture toward humanity was love.

And yes, sin fractures the story.
Sin brings brokenness.
Sin brings pain.

But the story of Scripture is not mainly about humanity ruining everything. It's about God refusing to abandon humanity in the middle of the mess.

That's the Gospel.

And eventually this story leads us to Jesus. Jesus becomes the true image of God. The true human. The One who succeeds where Adam failed.

And instead of abandoning us in our shame, Jesus steps directly into it. That's why Jesus matters. Not because Christianity is about trying harder. But because Jesus restores what sin fractured.

So let me land the plane with this tonight. Every single day you are being invited into competing stories.

One story says:
"You define truth."
"You define identity."
"You define purpose."
"Do whatever makes you happy."

But God's story says:
"You were created on purpose."
"You were created with dignity."
"You were created for relationship with God."
"You were created to trust the One who made you."

And honestly, the older I get, the more convinced I become that every major decision in life eventually comes back to one question:

Do I trust God's story... or not?

Because whenever humanity rejects God's voice, chaos increases. But whenever people trust God's story, life begins to flourish.

Not perfectly.

Not easily.

But rightly.

So maybe tonight the question for you is this:

Whose voice has been shaping your life lately?

Culture?

Fear?

Comparison?

Relationships?

Social media?

Pressure?

Or God?

Because Genesis reminds us that before there was shame, there was blessing.

Before there was hiding, there was relationship.

Before there was chaos, there was peace.

And the invitation of Scripture is still the same today:

Trust the story God is telling.

Observation Questions

1. What repeated phrase do we hear throughout Genesis 1?
2. What does God do with the chaos in Genesis 1?
3. What does it mean that humans are made in the image of God?
4. What changes immediately after Adam and Eve sin?
5. What does Adam and Eve's response to sin reveal about shame?

Deeper Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Genesis starts with a good God creating a good world?
2. Why is it important that humanity was blessed before sin entered the story?
3. What are some "voices" competing for students' attention today?
4. How can social media shape the way we think about our identity?
5. Why do people hide parts of themselves from others?
6. What are some modern ways people "hide" like Adam and Eve did?
7. Why do you think temptation usually sounds good at first?
8. What's the difference between God's voice and culture's voice when it comes to identity?
9. Why do you think students struggle to believe they have value apart from performance?
10. How does Jesus restore what was broken in Genesis 3?

Personal Application Questions

1. Which voice shapes your thinking the most right now?
2. What's one area of your life that feels chaotic right now?
3. Have you ever tried to build your identity around something besides God? What was it?
4. What's one "mask" students wear to hide insecurity or shame?
5. Is there an area of your life where you're struggling to trust God's story?
6. What would it look like for you to actually trust God more this week?
7. What's one truth from tonight that you needed to hear personally?

Leader Follow-Up Questions

- “Why do you think that affects you so much?”
- “Where do you think that pressure comes from?”
- “Have you always felt that way?”
- “What do you think God would say into that situation?”
- “What makes trusting God difficult there?”
- “How can our group help you with that?”

Closing Group Challenge

Go around the circle and let every student answer this:

“What’s one voice you need to listen to less... and one way you need to listen to God more this week?”