

# God Is Good: Creation

## Genesis 1

### INTRO

Genesis 1 — <sup>1</sup> In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup> The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

<sup>3</sup> And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. <sup>4</sup> And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup> God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

<sup>6</sup> And God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” <sup>7</sup> And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. <sup>8</sup> And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

<sup>9</sup> And God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. <sup>10</sup> God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

<sup>11</sup> And God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth.” And it was so. <sup>12</sup> The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. <sup>13</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

<sup>14</sup> And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, <sup>15</sup> and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. <sup>16</sup> And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars.

<sup>17</sup> And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, <sup>18</sup> to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. <sup>19</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

<sup>20</sup> And God said, “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.” <sup>21</sup> So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird

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according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.<sup>22</sup> And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.”<sup>23</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

<sup>24</sup> And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.” And it was so. <sup>25</sup> And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

<sup>26</sup> Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

<sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image,  
in the image of God he created him;  
male and female he created them.

<sup>28</sup> And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”<sup>29</sup> And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. <sup>30</sup> And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. <sup>31</sup> And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

## PRAY

**What is the goodness of God?** When we say God is good, what does that mean? ***What does it mean that God is good?*** That seems like such a simple question that would be very easy to answer, doesn't it? In attempting an answer we may begin by describing his attributes, which are expressions of his goodness. We might say that his goodness is seen in his holiness, his faithfulness, in his compassion and mercy, in his righteousness — or any of his moral perfections. All of those things are true, but they are the fruit of his goodness, if you will. They flow from his goodness, but don't define it.

I had lunch with a pastor friend, who is smarter than me this week, and ask him what it meant that God was good. He said, “God is good, and good is God.” That may sound like a dodge, but it captures the inadequacy of human language to describe his goodness. Our language uses

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comparison to identify what is good. “Ice cream is good; broccoli is bad.” Well that won’t do it all, will it? That’s just a preference. Someone may actually think broccoli is good!

“Protecting life is good; murder is evil.” Perhaps we’re doing a little better there, but it is still rooted in comparison. Everyone in this room would agree that protecting life is good. But there are those who believe abortion is good. They are morally blind, but in their blindness think exterminating a child is good. Good cannot be determined by internal, subjective means. Good must be in a category other than sinful humans. God is the category. There is no comparison. As Creator he is **other** than his creation, so comparison to created things is not possible. We cannot get him to a place where we can judge him by any standard. **Isaiah 46** stirs our hearts to worship as God declares, “**I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me.**” In **Isaiah 40** — “**To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these?**” He is beyond comprehension. Be captivated by this, and so **give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!** (1 Chronicles 16:34)

The point is **God alone is good**, and therefore the standard by which we understand all good. He singularly exists as pure good, and is the singular source of good. Our only knowledge of what is truly good, then, must be rooted in the person and work of God. No created thing produces goodness in itself, but can only reflect the goodness of its Creator. **Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.** (**James 1:17**)

I am not trying to be overly complicated or overly philosophical. I am trying to help us see that the only way that we understand what good is by knowing God, who is good in and of himself and is the perfect, holy standard. We cannot know good apart from God. Whatever we call “good” in our world is so only so far that it reflects or echoes God’s goodness. God alone is the standard and supply of goodness, and we experience good as we draw near to him and orient our lives to him. **The nearness of God is my good**, as Psalm 73:24 says.

***Why is that important?*** We live in a generation that is rejecting God in every way that it can. The world is **dead-set** on a **reset** that will redefine what is good, and thereby change or edit God himself. But He is unchanging, as we just sang and just read. It is critical that we know that our unchanging God is the source of unchanging good. We must understand that if we reject God, we reject good. Life, blessing, and human flourishing are expressions of God’s goodness. He is the source of life,

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blessing and flourishing. Rejecting God as he is, and as he reveals himself means departing from good issues from him. To reject God is to embrace death, cursing, and futility.

### **God's goodness seen in Creation**

Now, while we cannot compare God to anyone or anything, we can see and describe the outworking of his goodness. All of God's ways and works, all that God says, flow from his goodness — they express it. His expression of goodness towards us and his commands lead to life, blessing, and human flourishing. The opening words of Scripture reveal our God's goodness flowing forth in creation as the Author of Life brings all things into being for his glory — and our good. God is satisfied in himself and needs nothing; he creates and gives life so that all that his glory and goodness may be known and experienced.

His work, his word, and his ways are all loving expressions of his goodness. In the account of the six-day creation that we read in Genesis 1, five times<sup>1</sup> we are told that God said his work “was good” as he brings one thing after another into being. After he creates the human male and female as the crown of creation, he pronounces it all **very good**.<sup>2</sup> Let's consider briefly at his work, word, and ways that reveal his goodness through in creation.

**v. 1 — In the beginning God created...** He created out of nothing for something. He had a plan. Every aspect of everything that is has intent and design. We will explore the intent more next week, but consider the goodness of God revealed in his design. Liquid and solid. Oceans and dry ground. Air and land. In each of these domains God creates purposely the beings he places there for his glory. Birds have wings to fly in the air. Fish have gills. Humans have hands, feet, voices and senses to exercise dominion over the earth and be fruitful and multiply. Anyone who has ever been creative in anyway understands that when you are working on something, whether something utilitarian, or a piece of art, you have a plan for what that item will do. Leonardo da Vinci did not take cans of paint and throw them on a canvas and have the Mona Lisa show up as the paint dried. Every brushstroke was carefully crafted to capture beauty. In a similar way, God created all that there is to reflect his glory, and in the case of mankind specifically, to exercise dominion over the creation as a reflection of God's authority. Part of glorifying is enjoying God, as the catechism reminds us: The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 25

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 1:31

Consider the kindness and goodness of God and his design of the human eye. The healthy eye is able to perceive millions of colors. Dogs can't do that. He did not have to give us that ability. But God, in his goodness, allowed us to see the colors of the rainbow and use that aspect of creation and worship. Do you recall from our memory work in Revelation 4 and 5 the detailed mention of colors that present in heavenly worship? God's goodness is displayed through his intent and design of creation. We will see more of that next week as we look at how he created us male and female. For today let's simply observe that how our bodies work, our eyes to behold beauty, our mind to conceive plans, and our muscles to lift and move to bring order and usefulness out of chaos — we don't have a complete understanding of God's intent for us, but we have awareness God has been kind to us in our physical design.

**v. 3 — And God said, “Let there be light...”** God's goodness is reveal in what God says — in his word. The first words, God speaks produce light out of darkness. What a powerful picture this is. The symmetry of light and darkness runs through the scripture. Light is symbolizes of the knowledge of holy God and his ways, to the Hebrew mind. Darkness represents godlessness and ignorance and sinfulness. How remarkable that the first words of God recorded in the scripture produce light.

God reveals himself, and all his moral perfections in his word. We know God through his word. I think the psalmist echoes this in **Psalm 119:130 — The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.** Our good God speaks and leads us out of sinful foolishness into truth. What we read in Genesis 1 is a perfect creation. What we see in Genesis 3 is a ruined creation that leaves mankind darkened in understanding and in a moral abyss under the curse of sin. He could have simply left us in moral and spiritual darkness, which is what we deserved by our rebellion. But he spoke so that we would have understanding and turn to him for life and wisdom.

Of course, we cannot miss the greatest speaking that God did through the incarnate Word: Jesus, the Savior. **John 1:1–4** teaches us the greatest expression of the goodness of God — In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The word of God came to drag us out of deaths darkness into the kingdom of light and life in Christ. To all who did receive him, who believe in his

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name, he gives the right to become children of God. Nowhere is God's goodness more on display than in the salvation of sinners through faith in Jesus, the Son.

**v 28 — And God blessed them.** The goodness of God is seen in his blessing of the man and the woman whom God created in his own image. The triune God, — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — created mankind to know and commune with him. He blessed them, intending life, multiplication, and flourishing as they walked with God in obedience. The concept of blessing means that God's face is turned toward them, meaning nearness and close relationship. The goodness of God is seen in the relational intimacy that God equipped mankind with as his image bearers. They were able to know and relate to him in ways that no other aspect of creation wise. He came down in the cool of the evening and visited with them.

There are other things we could address, and more things we will address next week. Today I simply want us to see that God is good, and he cannot act or command us in anyway other than as expression of goodness. Those commands and actions — even in the very design of creation — are our good. Embracing his character, knowing and obeying his word — these are ways we experience the goodness of God. This is how we experience his life, blessing, and human flourishing. If we ignore or edit God, we lose all good. We remain in darkness and deadly foolishness apart from his word. In considering the great darkness of the sexual revolution that has gripped the West for over a generation, we must know God's plan for human sexuality is not one option among many. His good plan is the only option that leads to life, blessing, and human flourishing. It is through his plan and his way we experience his goodness. Departure from his ways is not improvement and advancement. It is death and cursing. We must know this, believe this, and embrace this, if we are to live, and know, God's goodness. Let us understand all of his design, and all of his commands are for our good, because our God is good and intends our good and what he creates and commands.

Now let us worship our incomparable, unchanging, good God, who does not treat us as our sins deserve, but as a Father has compassion on his children, so he has compassion on those who fear him. Let us draw near to God, for the nearness of God is our good.

PRAY