Creation's Cause & Crown — Delivery Transcript

Genesis 1:1–25 (ESV) · Wes Terry · Sunday, January 8, 2023 · *In The Beginning*

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...up and lead on a Sunday morning, so you did a great job as well. If you have your Bible you can open it to the book of Genesis. We're starting a new series this morning in that first book of the Bible. We thought we just finished the last book of the Bible. We might as well go back to the beginning, at least for a handful of verses. I don't know if we'll preach through the entire book, but we'll get a couple of chapters down the road nonetheless. And the book of Genesis is the book of beginnings.

That's what the word Genesis actually means. Oddly enough the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, but the word Genesis is a Greek word that got attached to the book of the Old Testament. The Hebrew name for Genesis is not Genesis, that's a quiz for you next week. You can look that up on your own. But Genesis just means beginning. Everything has a beginning, right? The vast majority of things, outside of, like, the number seven. I don't think the number seven had a beginning or any number really. There are a couple of Platonic eternal ideas that are wrapped up in the nature of God.

Those didn't have a beginning. But everything else in our world had a beginning. I was thinking about beginnings this week as I was preparing for this message and this coming February will be ten years that I've been the lead pastor of Broadview. I've been around Broadview way longer than that. I got here in 2005, I think. But David retired in 2013, February. Was it thirteen or twelve? I can't remember. Coming on 10 years, whatever that math is. I'm from Roby. But I started thinking about the beginning, like what was the beginning of that?

Because I used to do the music— the nine— we had the 9:40 band, and I was a music guy. And I was serving over at West Campus and I remember having the conversation with Cody Whitfill, who's still a mentor of mine. He had me preach for the Wednesday night youth. And

I didn't think I did all that great of a job, but he pulled me aside the next day in staff or after staff meeting, he said, Wes, you need to stop doing music. You need to go to seminary, and you need to pastor.

So I said, well, okay. So I stopped doing music. I started going to seminary and I became a pastor. So was that the beginning? I don't know. I surrendered to ministry my senior year of high school after wrestling with the Lord. And maybe that was the beginning. I did have a conversation with pastor Jerry Vincent and Jonathan Teague, who was my youth pastor at the time. He had a shape in that. When was the beginning? It's kind of hard to nail down, but I know it had a beginning. Broadview's going to be sixty-four[1] years old this coming July.

And Broadview had a beginning. Oddly enough, did y'all know that the beginning of Broadview Baptist church was actually a group of people from Temple Baptist church who were meeting in cottage prayer meetings, like they were getting in their house and they were praying together fervently, wrestling with God over a vision to plant a church on the southern tip of Abilene. That's kind of crazy to think of this as the southern tip, but it was the southern tip of Abilene and they planted that church. That was the beginning, those those prayer meetings, Temple Baptist church.

Audra and I are going to be eleven years married this Saturday, January 14th. She put it on my ring so I would never forget it, but I left my ring in my brother's house when we were harvesting a deer last weekend. So and then we were at staff retreat all week, so I haven't got my ring back on, but I know when the date is. It's January 14th. And that had a beginning. I was thinking about that this morning, the beginning of our relationship. When did it start was it the nerdy, awkward Facebook message that I sent her saying, hey, this lady in our church keeps telling me to ask you out.

You want to go out with me? Let me tell you kids, that's how it was done back in the day. Was that the beginning or was it like we went I think our first date was to Starbucks. And I can't remember if it was the first date or the second date. It was one of the two. We went to Roby. And I remember hanging out with her in Roby thinking, man, I can, she's different. Like I can be me in ways that I can't be me around other people and either than other girls that I dated up to that point.

I thought it was something special. Maybe that was a beginning. Maybe it was the beginning was my mom and dad, you know, teaching me what to look for in a spouse. I don't know. But it had a beginning. Everything has a beginning. Everything that begins to exist has a cause. Can we agree on that? Things don't just spontaneously come into being without some kind of a cause. There has to be an originator. And the interesting thing is cosmologists and scientists, whether you're Christian, atheist, doesn't matter the vast majority of scientists agree that our universe began to exist.

So if everything that begins to exist has a cause and our universe began to exist, that means what? Our universe must have a cause. Now, people who are not Christians or theists, they'll say the universe. Some say the universe is eternal. That's no evidence for that. Some say there's a multiverse no evidence for that outside of Marvel movies. And even if there is a multiverse, that multiverse had to have a beginning. The universe had a beginning, and that beginning is what Christians refer to when we talk about God. You don't have to be a Christian to get to nature's God.

You don't have to have a Bible to get to nature's God. Romans 1:20 and Psalm 19 say that the creation declares the glory of God and that his invisible attributes have been clearly seen, his divine nature clearly seen by what has been made. So there is a sense in which we can reason back to God from nature. Using philosophy and morality and cosmology and science and teleology and design. All of these arguments for God's existence. And that's a fruitful enterprise. I love that kind of stuff. I love Christian apologetics because a lot of people in our culture don't buy the Bible, don't believe the Bible.

But if you can get them to a place where they acknowledge there's a God that exists and it's a God who's personal and who's good because we carry this moral guilt and we're going to give an account to him, then how are we to be rightly related to him? You can do all that without the Bible. But nature's God is an incomplete picture of the God who caused the universe. So for the next couple of weeks and months, we're going to explore the biblical vision of the origins and the beginning of our universe and the God who created all that is.

Genesis gives us unique insight into the origins of our universe. It gives us things that no other book gives us and no other record can give because the scriptures and the book of Genesis in particular were inspired by the God who created. It raises and answers questions that cannot be found in nature alone. They must be revealed by the one who made nature, namely the God of creation. Now why I'm so excited about this series is because this book raises and answers questions that everybody asks. I think this is going to be one of the most relevant sermon series that I've ever done.

And the answers to these questions are answers that will be perennial. Will have perennial relevance in your life. They will be relevant all the time. Questions such as, why is there something rather than nothing? Why do I exist? How do we get here? What is here? Well, I mean, what is this? And when did it happen? How is it created? Is there a God? If there is a God, what is he like? What is man, what is woman? Those are questions that our culture is asking in a less than serious way.

What is good? What is evil? What's wrong with our world? What's wrong with me? How do we fix it? And can it be fixed? Can our world be salvaged and can I be redeemed? Is there any hope for me? All of these questions are raised in Genesis 1, 2, and 3. They're answered in Genesis 1, 2, and 3. And your answers to these questions form the foundation of your life.

And you don't have to be a— Everybody has an answer to these questions. Whether you think you do or not, you're operating, you're living based on your answer or ignorance of the answer to these questions.

And when we get the truth to these questions, we get the true answers and we build our lives on that foundation. Then we will put ourselves in a position to experience true human flourishing and joy as God originally designed it to be. Our answer, if you're taking notes, our answer to these questions fundamentally shape the way we look at and live in this world. And so we got to answer the questions rightly. That's why we're doing the series. So with that in mind, let's look at Genesis 1. I want to answer three questions this morning.

They're not real creative. I had to write the sermon last night because we were at staff retreat all week. I say had to. I could have wrote it the week before when I wasn't preaching, when Dustin was preaching, but someone played hooky all week and hung out with their kids instead. So I'm a little under the gun this week, so not a lot of creativity. Who is the creator? How did he create? And why? Are our headings. And we'll begin with a question of who starting in Genesis 1:1. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."

I've always been struck by the simplicity of Genesis 1:1. It doesn't come out and try to prove God's existence or explain God's existence. The hows and all that stuff. It just assumes that God exists. It assumes that this God existed prior to creating, so he's an eternally existent God. And then it begins to explain everything in creation based on the reality that that God does exist. And is the creator of all that is. There's not two gods, there's not many, many gods creating all different kinds of things. There's one God, eternally existent, and he eternally existent and he created everything that there is in creation.

If you're taking notes, the always God created all that is, keyword on all. He's always existed, he's eternal. He existed prior up to creation, that point of creation, and he has He is the source or originator of everything within the creation. There's nothing in creation that has not been made by him. You know that because this verse is kind of like a summary statement. The author, who I think is Moses, is saying God created the heavens and the earth. And what he means by heavens is essentially not like heavens where God is, heavens.

What he means by heavens is everything up there. And then when he says he created the earth, what he means is everything down here. Which is a pretty good summary of everything, right? All the stuff up there and all the stuff down here that's everything, right? That's the summary statement. In the beginning, God created everything. He existed prior to creation, and he created everything that there is. In creation. He's the always God and created all that is. Then verse 2 tells what Paul Harvey would say is the rest of the story.

And it's amazing the details. That go into this and what he includes and what he doesn't include. Really pretty fascinating. So it says in verse 2 that the spirit, that's the, I'm sorry, 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. Now, when you read verse 2 and you say the earth was without form and void, what's the first thing that comes to your mind? How many of you is like a deep blue dot in space?

Anyone? Bueller? Bueller? No. That's what I think of. But I guarantee you that's not what Moses or whoever wrote this was thinking of because he did not have NASA. There was no NASA in Israel at this time. There were no Elon Musk sending rockets up into space. When he thought earth, what he's thinking is the stuff. Material, physical stuff, maybe dirt, maybe just like the raw material, physical things of the universe, he is saying that is all that existed and it was what? Without form and void, which just means there was no structure to it.

It maybe just kind of think it's floating around. There was no real rhyme or reason. It was just kind of chaos. There was just this material floating, these words without form and void are actually two Hebrew words that rhyme. That's one of the reasons I think that Genesis 1 is like a song. Because it has lots of repetition and lots of words that kind of rhyme together. These words are the Hebrew words *tohu* and *bohu*. They're really fun to say. And when you say them together in Hebrew, we use the word and, which is the word *wa*.

So it's *tohu wa bohu*, which just sounds fun to say. Like oh you got to finally clean all your dishes. Tohu wa bohu! You know, it's that just feels right, right? Or how was your day today, honey? Tohu wa bohu. It was— it's— it was just without form and void. Very melodramatic. That's what the words mean. Formless, shapeless, wild, meaningless. That's the Hebrew word *tohu*. And then *bohu* means emptiness. Wasteland. It's used in the book of Ecclesiastes[2] to talk about the futility of life without God. It's just bleh. *Tohu wa bohu.* And essentially, what the author, Moses, is trying to emphasize is that when God created, it wasn't like everything was like just in design immediately all at once.

What God did is he took chaos and raw materials that had no design, no purpose, no organization whatsoever, and he brought them into order. And he did it out of nothing. He took nothing and he turned it into something. He took chaos and he put it into order. He took what was empty and he filled it full of life. The always God created all that is, and the way he created it was by taking nothing and turning it into something. And that is a good word for us in 2023. You know this because if you read the rest of Genesis, and we're going to do this in Genesis 1, you see this structure from formless to formed and from empty to full.

In days one, two, and three, you see God create the forms. And we'll get into this in detail in a minute, but day one, he creates light and darkness. He creates structure around that idea. He creates structure between the waters underneath and the waters up above. He separates the waters and in between the separation he has what's called the expanse or the sky. That's

where the airplanes go and where we are when we're not face down on the dirt. That was structure. It didn't used to exist. God creates it on day two, form.

Then on day three, form again. He separates water and land, and then he gives the land vegetation, the second half of day three. He goes from formlessness to formed in days one, two, and three. Guess what he does on days four, five, and six? He goes from empty. To full. He takes his forms that he created day one, two, and three, and he fills it full of meaning and life on days four, five, and six.[3] Day four, which corresponds to day one, which was separating light and darkness. Now he's doing that through filling the earth with the sun and the moon, or filling the skies with the sun and the moon.

In day five, which corresponds to day two, which was the creation of the sea and the sky. Are the sea, the water below, the water above, and the sky in between. Now he's filling it with sea creatures and birds. And then day six, which corresponds to what day? Day three, good job. He created what on day three? Land. And vegetation, all that stuff on day three. Now he's filling the land with living creatures, wild beasts, livestock. And creepy crawly things. So the point is God takes our nothing and turns it into something.

He takes chaos, he brings it into order, he takes futility, and he gives it meaning and form and he takes what's become lifeless. And he brings it back to life. Now the reason this is relevant, I think, for our church in 2023 is because we have a lot of people, a lot of members in our church who are starting 2023 with nothing. There are a lot of people in our church who died last year, and you have widows who are who have a new normal now that their loved one is gone, or widowers.

You have people who've lost their job in this economy, who don't have the money that they used to have. They don't have the same level of income that they used to enjoy. You have people who are getting older who don't have the same strength that they used to enjoy, the same physical capacity, and maybe they feel discouraged by that. There are people who don't have the same freedoms and rights that we used to enjoy. There's all of these things that create a sense of inadequacy or lack. There's several people in our church coming on the heels of a nasty divorce and they're thinking.

Can I have joy again? Can I have a family again? And this is a reminder from the pages of Genesis 1. The always God who created all that is can take your nothing and turn it into something. That's just who he is. That's how he operates. He first builds the form, and then he fills the form with the fullness of life. The always God can take your nothing and turn it into something. Third truth about the who: the always God is ever present. Look at verse 2 again. The earth was without form and void.

Notice it says that darkness covered the face of the deep. These are important Hebrew words. And the Spirit of God, this is the Hebrew word *ruach*, Holy Spirit, I believe, was

hovering over the face of the waters. Now he's using these words darkness and deep intentionally. A lot of other creation myths out there, you may know this. There's the Babylonian creation myth and there's all sorts of other ancient near Eastern cultures that when they talked about the creation of the world the darkness and the deep were kind of like the source of the anti-gods.

So you had like the good God and the evil god. You guys remember the yin yin yang, yin yang as the country boys like to say, with the You know what I'm talking about with the black thing with the white dot and the white thing with the black dot? It's very sophisticated very sophisticated description of the very profound logic behind Taoism and Buddhism and all that kind of stuff. Star Wars, am I ringing a bell here? You've got the good and you got the evil and it's like this equal but opposite forces always held in tension that's not Genesis.

Genesis is a is a correction of that. He's saying that's not the God of the Bible. The God of the Bible is not like in tension with some other dark God, there is God, and that's it. He's sovereign. He's over the darkness. He's over the scary things. Yes, there's evil creatures. Yes, there's all kinds of scary stuff. But God's not intimidated by it, and they are subservient to his creative plan. He's hovering over the face of the deep. And then the word *ruach*, or— I'm sorry, the word deep is the word for ocean.

That's for the Babylonian God, the evil God from Babylon came from the deep. It's always kind of like this anti-god, not so in Genesis. And then finally he says that the *ruach* is hovering over the face of the waters. Which could mean wind, could mean breath, could mean spirit. Context determines what the word means. I think here it's a reference to the Holy Spirit, which is why the ESV capitalizes the S. The point is the always God is ever present. He's ever present even when you don't feel him, even when you can't see him, even when you're in the scary dark place, the always God is always near.

He's ever present. And the way to think about this I think is if you were to take this idea of the Trinity present in Genesis one at the moment of creation, if you were to take your hand, can everybody do this? Just take your hand, pull it up to your mouth. And say the word, I mean really close, where you can feel the breath on your hand and say the word Trinity. Did you feel air hit your thumb? Could you see the air? If you can, you got some stinky breath.

You know you need you need to go to the doctor. You couldn't see it. But you know it's there. That's the— that's the Holy Spirit. God is spirit. The Holy Spirit is spirit. He cannot be seen. Jesus said he's like the wind. You can see its effects, but you don't know where he's going and you can't see what he's doing that's what the Spirit of God is doing in Genesis. Well, what's the Father doing? The Father is speaking. God, we're going to see in a minute. God speaks and it was.

And what is he speaking? He's speaking a word. And John 1:1 says that Jesus is the Word. In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, the Word was God. Nothing in creation that has been made was made without Him. So the Father speaks, the Son is the Word, and that Spirit is that breath that is always present with and in agreement with. And essentially wrapped up in the speaking and the word. That's the Trinity. It's not a perfect example. And I'm not saying that the word begins to exist like Mormons do.

That's incorrect. Jesus is eternal. The Spirit is eternal. The Father is eternal. There is this eternal Trinitarian dance of a speaker, a word, and a breath. And that's what you see in Genesis of the always God who creates the Spirit hovering over the deep. He's always present and he takes nothing and he turns it into something. Now the rest of the chapter answers the questions of how and why, and we don't have a lot of time. One of the goals out of our staff retreat is for Wes to preach shorter sermons.

So I'm not doing good so far. Let's pick it up chapter one verse three. He's going to dig into the creation days. Now creation is built around the framework of a week. So God's creative acts are put into the framework of a week. I know there's tons of debate about are the days of the week literal 24 hour days I don't have time to get into that discussion this morning. Just know they could be 24-hour days. A lot of people say they're not. And there are good reasons to think that maybe it's more figurative and poetic.

Certainly Genesis 1 is a song. It's written like a song. I think it's true history, but maybe there's some elasticity in the Hebrew word Yom. Again, we don't have time to get into all of that. You can read it either way. I don't think the timing of the question of when is the most important question for the author of Genesis 1, who I believe is Moses. The important questions are how God creates and why. So look what he does on day one, verse three. God said, let there be light, and there was.

And then God saw that the light was good and God separated the light from the darkness. Now when you're reading verses like this, what you want to do is pay attention to words that get repeated. Words that get emphasized over and over again. So far, the word God is emphasized quite a bit. Verse five says, God called the day darkness, and he called I'm sorry, he called the light day, and he called the darkness night, and there was evening and there was morning the first day. And God said, let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.

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 and God called the expanse heaven, and there was evening and there was morning a second day. You noticing any repetition so far? You've got the words evening and morning and the Hebrew word day. You've got the words God over and over again. He speaks, he separates, he calls. And then you have the creation

doing exactly what God tells it to do. Verse 9, God said, let us, verse 9, God said, let the waters under the heavens be gathered together in one place and let dry land appear.

And it was so. God called the dry land earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called seas, and God saw that it was good. 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. And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their kinds, and trees bearing fruit. In which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning the third day.

So like we said earlier, days one, two, and three are all about what? You already forgot it? Starts with an F, rhymes with orange. Form. And you see God creating form. Day one with separating dark and light. Day two. Separating sea and sky, and day three separating water from land. There's also something unique about day three, and that there are two creative acts, right? God creates the land, but then he gives the land life. He endows it not just with living vegetation, but he endows the vegetation with the ability to reproduce, right?

He says to the seeds yield seed or he says to the plants yield seed and then he says to the seed to reproduce life because that seed goes into the ground, it dies and it creates a new living thing. So now creation is being endowed with the same kind of creative powers. That God Himself employs in the creation act. So it's kind of mirroring or reflecting the glory of God in doing what God has told it to do. Verse 14, there's this transition in day four. 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 for years.

And let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth, and it was so. 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. And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, to rule over the day, and to rule over the night and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was a morning the fourth day.

Now remember, day four corresponds to what day? Day one. And what does God do on day one? He separates light and darkness. Now what he's doing is he's creating two things called the greater light, the sun, and the lesser light, the moon, and he's saying to the sun and the moon, I want you to do what I did on day one. I'm going to let you fill it up. And all of a sudden, with the sun and the moon, we have a thing called time. Now we've always had time. Time is just a measurement between two events, but now we can measure time.

Why? Because I know what time it is by the location of the sun in the sky. This was before iPhones. So how you tell time? Now that we can measure the time of the day we can measure days against the months and the months against the years. And if you ever get confused, we

have these things called seasons. How do we get our seasons? Does anybody know how we get seasons? It's our season is based on our place's proximity to the sun,[4] right? So when we're closer to the sun on Earth's axis, it's the summertime.

And then when we're further from the sun on the Earth's axis it's winter time and for some reason in Texas the axis keeps switching back and forth. I don't know, I don't understand it. But we have seasons. Most people in other places of the world have seasons that matters. That gives time meaning. It gives it significance. Now all of a sudden we can have birthdays. Every year comes the same time. Why? Because I can measure time. And we can have festivals. And all of a sudden time has significance and meaning because God filled it with meaning.

How did He fill it? Sun and moon. It's a big deal. Then he does the same thing on day five with sea creatures and birds. God said, verse 20, let the water swarm with swarms of living creatures, let the birds fly above the earth, above the expanse of the heavens. And so God created sea creatures and every creature that moves with which the waters swarm according to their kinds, that's a big deal, and every winged bird, according to its kind, and God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the sea, and let the birds multiply on the earth.

And there was evening and there was a morning the fifth day. Now this whole bit about according to its kind, that's one of the struggles I have with the macro view of evolution. That and the fossil record isn't all that great. That we all came from primordial soup. At least the author of Genesis seems to suggest there were special creative acts of God. Now, you can have microevolution within species, but he's creating each thing according to its kind. Verse 24, now that the earth is now that the sky is filled with birds and the sea is filled with sea creatures, verse 24.

The earth becomes filled with the living creatures. So God said, let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds. And he breaks it into three categories livestock, the creeping things, and the beast of the earth. So wild animals tame animals and the mushy middle called insects, each according to their kinds. And it was so. 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 kinds, and God saw that it was good.

So just like God gave time and he filled it with meaning, now he's taking the ocean and he's filling it with life, and he's taking the air and he's filling it with life, and he's taking the land and he's filling it with life and he took all of his forms and he gave it. And he gave it fullness. And then just like day three had two creative acts, he created the dirt and then he greened the dirt with vegetation. Now on day six there are two creative acts. The first act was the living creatures, wild, tame, and insects.

The second act is what I'm going to call the crown of creation. The creation of man in God's image. So God said, let us make man in our image, and 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. And so God created man in his own image. In the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. We're going to do a deep dive on this next week.

But suffice it today, that's the end of day six, and God completes his process in verse 31 by saying He saw everything that he had made, and behold, it wasn't just good, but it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning the sixth day. So there's one week, six days of work, one day of rest. We'll look at that later. Days one, two, and three, he creates the forms. Day five, six, and days four, five, and six, he creates the fullness. Within the forms, he gives it meaning, life, and significance.

Now we could spend all morning going into each particular day and having all the debates about evolution and day-age theory and gap theory and all that stuff, and I would probably love it, and y'all would be bored to death. That's not the main point of Genesis chapter one. There are two foundational theological implications from Genesis 1. One has to do with how God created, one has to do with why God created. We don't have a whole lot of time, so let me hit them very quickly. How did God create? What does he do to create?

He speaks. God creates through his word. He speaks the word and then the creation does exactly what God's word said for the creation to do. The implication for that theologically, which I believe is an intentional theological point by Moses, is that there is still today creative power in the Word of God. When God speaks, he creates through his word. And the blessing for us is God's word was not just spoken at creation that we no longer have access to. God's word was not just spoken, but it was written by the prophets, by Moses, by Elijah, by the New Testament authors.

And it wasn't just written down. Now today, Hebrews 1 says God used to speak in the prophets. Today he has spoken to us by his son. Jesus is the Word, John 1:1. In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God, and he created everything, and the word became flesh. And he dwelt among us, and we've seen his glory, the glories of the one and only who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. And so we today have access to the Word of God in ways that are an embarrassment of riches.

When you compare to what they had going on in Genesis 1, and yet none of us avail ourselves to the power of that word to the degree that we ought. John 1:3 says, all things were made through Jesus the Word. Without him was not anything made that was made. That's a powerful word. I don't know if your word has that kind of power. I was joking with the other services that I have three children in my home, one of them is like two years old, one of them is eight, and one of them is five going on fifteen.

And a chocolate lab who will never stop being a puppy. I think when are you finally going to grow up? I have never felt like my word is less powerful at any other time in my life. It is it can be extremely frustrating, but it's extremely comforting to read Genesis 1 and say there is a word that never loses its power. The grass withers, the flowers are going to fade, but the word of God will endure forever. And I'm not big on the name and claim it, health, wealth, prosperity gospel.

I think it leads people astray, but I wonder if we, in more Baptist, Reformedish circles, throw the baby out with the bath water. And we neglect the power of the spoken word of God. All the hocus pocus stuff. Maybe it's not hocus pocus. Maybe there really is power in speaking God's word, memorizing God's word, singing God's word. It does tell us to sing to one another psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Why? There's power there. In the first service we were singing standing on the promises of God and I was all worried because I had to write a sermon on Saturday night because I was gone all week and I was like Lord this is going to really stink.

And they were singing stand on the promises, and then the Lord used those spoken words to remind me: his word accomplishes what he intends for it to accomplish. It's a double-edged sword, pierces between bone and marrow and spirit, the secret intentions of the heart. The Lord's ministering to me through the spoken word. There's power in the spoken word, so we should read the word, we should sing the word, we should love the word, we should draw the word, we should meditate on the word. And how many of us have been Christians for twenty or thirty years and you still haven't read the word.

You still don't read the Bible. It's Sunday morning only. Or you started to read the Bible and then you kind of got discouraged because you hit Leviticus. Just skip Leviticus for goodness sake. Just keep reading the Bible. Get up a little bit earlier. Stay up a little bit later. Create a little section in your day, I'm telling you, if you can finally do it long enough that you catch it, that you taste it, that you finally see it. It will change your life forever because there is power, life-giving power in the Word of God.

Pray it over your children, speak it over your children. Preach it, teach it, sing it, give in the word. Second second point very quickly. That's the how. God's how is by the word theological implication. Avail yourself to the power of the word. Get in the word. Read the word. Okay. Second question is why did God create? And this one's a little more difficult, I think, to extrapolate. And to me, it's all laced in with this word that gets repeated seven different times in Genesis 1 and it's the Hebrew word *tov*, or *tob*, and it's translated good.

Interesting that it happens seven times, just like there's seven days. Happens on day one, happens on day three, happens twice on day three, once on day four, once on day five, twice on day six. In fact, on day six, God doesn't just say it was good. When he has man created in his image, enjoying his creation, God says, now that is very good. Maybe it's because there

was a woman in there. That was very good. Finally we made the ladies. Probably not, but yeah. It's good. What does good mean? What do you mean, good?

Well, the Hebrew word has like a range of lexical meaning, and when you put it in its context in Genesis 1, it actually could mean quite a bit. It could be good in that it's accomplishing its purpose. You might call that teleological goodness. It's just a fancy word for it does what it's supposed to do. God said reproduce and it reproduces. God says, be fruitful, multiply, and they are. And God says, according to your kind, and they do, according to their kind. They're accomplishing their teleology, their telos, their purpose. Could be good in that way.

It could be good practically. Like it's functioning the way it needs to function for the old for the overall system to function like the system needs to function. And our you think about our solar system and our universe and planet earth and the way everything has to be just so that the circle of life can do the things that the circle of life is supposed to do all of it's functioning the way that it's supposed to function. There is a practical goodness, so maybe it's good in that way. It could also be aesthetically good in that it points to God And says, look how wise he is, look how strong he is, look how good he is, look look how creative he is.

It's aesthetically good. And then it could be good in a moral sense. That it promotes righteousness. It enables us to see God, love God, worship God, enjoy God, and follow in his ways. It could mean each of those things, it could mean all of those things, I think it probably has those things plus a little bit more. If that sounds way too technical, just think of it this way. When you taste a an amazing piece of meat, which we did as a staff on the way back from staff meeting when we went to Llano, Texas, and we stopped at what was the name of it, Harold's— Cooper's.

Whoo. Man. Cooper's is so good. And like I didn't want to stop eating. It was so good. I don't know how they did it. It was just so good. Or when you see a really amazing piece of artwork like the Mona Lisa or if you don't like Mona Lisa, then whatever. You just you're struck, you're wrapped up into it. And when you say of that artwork, man, that's really good. Or when you say of delicious food, like if you tasted my chicken and you said, man, that's good. You're not just saying something about the chicken.

Or the art, are you? I mean you are. You're saying something about the art and the chicken, but not just about that. You're actually saying something so much more than that. You're pointing past the art and the food and you're pointing to the artist. And the cook, the grill master. That's what's going on in Genesis 1. When God says this is good, yes it's good because it's working like it's supposed to work and helping the system function. And all of that stuff, but it's also good because it says something about him.

It shows his glory and his beauty, and that's why God created. God created to glorify himself. He said, God sure seems hung on himself. Well, if you were God, you should be hung on

yourself. He's the only person in all of the universe who should be hung on himself because he's absolutely awesome. And so he created things. To show how awesome he is, so that when we see those things, we go, man, God's awesome. He created it for his glory, but not just for his glory. Notice also the crown of creation was what?

Creating man just like God to rule over the creation just like God does to have dominion. There's this idea of man enjoying God's creation. Be fruitful and multiply. I don't know if you've ever tried that, it's somewhat enjoyable. Enjoying the things that God has made. So God created why to glorify Himself. He created for his glory and for our joy. That's the crown. That's why. And you know I know this is correct. Why do I know this is correct? Because in Genesis 3 it goes away and God spends the entire Bible.

Getting to Revelation 22, which what happens in Revelation 22? God recreates the world. He rests in heaven with his creation, made in his image, no longer sinful, glorifying him and enjoying him forever. That's the point. That's the point of Genesis 1. So God made for his glory and for our joy. That's the why of creation. That's what Genesis 1 is telling us. The problem is Genesis 1 is followed by Genesis 2, which is followed by Genesis 3, and what happens in Genesis 3 is sin enters into the world because a serpent tempts Eve.

To take some fruit from a tree she shouldn't have taken it from and Adam standing there doesn't stop it and they disobey God's word. The word that gives life they say no I'd rather have death. And they sin against God, and death enters in, and it ruins everything. And Genesis 3, all the way to Revelation 20. Is a display in all of human history has been a display of sin uncreating the world. So how in God's name will we ever recover and enjoy God's original design? How will we ever recapture God's why of creation?

Well, Genesis 3 has this little seed of gospel hope. There will come someone from the seed of the woman who will crush the head of that serpent. And all throughout the Old Testament, there's going to be a Messiah who will save my people from their sin. He will free the captives. He will release the prisoners. And that Messiah came in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. God, the Word who created everything, took on flesh. And he took on flesh for the very express purpose that he might become obedient in his flesh to the plan of God, which was to die.

And not just die any old death, but to die a substitutionary, sacrificial death on a Roman cross. And in the death of Jesus, what Jesus is doing, having lived the life we should have lived, having Perfectly done, Genesis 1, 2, and 3, the right way. He'd never sinned. He took his perfect, sinless, spotless life of absolute perfect righteousness. And he died the death as if he was a wicked sinner, just like you and me, so that by God's grace, his righteousness could be credited to us and our sin. Credited to him, he atones for our sins, and he gives us the chance to recover and pursue God's original design.

We can be made righteous. Not by trying hard or by doing our best, but through repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And Genesis 1 doesn't make it explicit, but it's laying the seed, the groundwork that God's will for your life is for you to say, man, that's good. Man, our marriage is so good. Having these this children, this family, it's so good God wants you to experience and enjoy his creation so that you can look up at him and say, you're so glorious. You're so good. And that can be regained and recovered through repentance and faith in his son, in the spoken word in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so as we conclude our time together this morning, I want to encourage you, as we think about Genesis one. To draw your attention there. Maybe this morning for you it's just a discipline. You're a Christian, you have faith in Jesus, but you never spend any time with him. And you never read the Bible, you never engage with the word, and you say, I don't have any spiritual life in my bones, that's the reason why. Maybe for you it's just a simple act of saying, this is the year I will not quit.

I'm skipping Leviticus, and I'm going to skip a few others while I'm at it. And I'm going to read the get the F-260 plan. F-260 foundations. It skips all the hard stuff. Do something to get in the word. Maybe that's your response. Many of you are people who are starting '23 without a lot of hope. And you need you just need to cry out to God a prayer of desperation. God, I got nothing. And I need you to turn into something. My life is over. I lost my kids. I lost my marriage.

I lost my wife. I lost my job. I have nothing. I need you to turn it into something. And he will turn it into something through repentance and faith in his Son, who is available to each and every one of us? He is not far away. He's ever present. If you'll just repent and believe and cry out to him, he will save you. Heavenly Father, we thank you for this time and your word. We do thank you for the book of Genesis. What an amazing book. And we pray as we study it that it would come alive and transform us and bless us.

Create life and meaning and significance as it was originally intended to do. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

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1. Transcript note: spoken as "sixty-seven years old this coming July"; Broadview was officially constituted on July 26, 1959 (first service June 14, 1959), so it turned 64 in July 2023. Source: Broadview Baptist Church, "Our History" (broadview.church/history). ↩
2. Transcript note: spoken as "It's used in the book of Ecclesiastes"; *tohu* does not occur in Ecclesiastes (its word for futility is *hebel*, "vanity"). *Tohu* is used in Isaiah for emptiness and futility (e.g., Isaiah 40:17; 44:9), and *tohu wa bohu* recurs in Jeremiah 4:23. Left as spoken. Source: Blue Letter Bible lexicon, H8414 (תֹּהוּ), concordance. ↩
3. Transcript note: spoken as "on days five, six, and seven"; the filling of the forms takes place on days four, five, and six (as Wes goes on to explain). Source: Genesis 1:14–31 (ESV), BibleGateway. ↩

4. Transcript note: Earth's seasons are caused by the tilt of its axis (which hemisphere is tipped toward the sun), not by Earth's distance from the sun; the Northern Hemisphere actually has winter when Earth is closest to the sun. Left as spoken. Source: NASA Space Place, "What Causes the Seasons?" (spaceplace.nasa.gov/seasons). ↩