

Christ Community Covenant Church
Beginnings: Finding our Story in God's Story
Genesis 1
Pastor Dave Scherrer - April 3, 2016

New life is great!

- Springtime
- Babies: Jess and Kyle Aldred, Ryan and Diana Shively, Heather and Ben Jaeger, Scott and Becki Parr, Adam and Hannah Papazoglou

Baby Pic

New life is what God does in Christ Jesus. We know that God is a creating God

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ²The 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.

And we also know that Jesus Christ is the center figure of the God head's creative powers . . .

Colossians 1:15-20

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. ¹⁹For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

So new life is great, but I think a case can be made that a new lease on life is greater . . .

A new lease on life . . . is greater!

What does that idiom mean? – *“A new lease on life”*

We're about to embark on a study of Genesis from a particular perspective. We are going to look for our story in the greater story of God. We are going to look for transformed lives and the deepened glory and purpose that comes from redemption. Let's look at one of the stories of transformation and redemption but from the New Testament, the story of Saul the Persecutor of Christians:

(brief history of Paul and Acts 9)

Acts 9:15-18

But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. ¹⁶For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.” ¹⁷So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” ¹⁸And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; ¹⁹and taking food, he was strengthened.

A truly inspiring account!



Caravaggio, 1601, Odescalchi Balbi Collection of Rome.

This is the ultimate new lease on life . . . a transformed life! The transformed life is critical to the Christian faith. When we speak of finding our story in God's story we are ultimately talking about our transformed life in Christ. The story of God is the story of redemption – of reclamation – I used to be lost but now I am found. I used to be blind but now I see, I used to live in darkness but now I live in the light. I used to be a slave to sin but now I am set free to choose holiness. I used to be at war with God but this same Paul would tell us in his letter to the church in Rome (Romans 5:1) **that since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.** I used to live in the land of the living on my way to the land of the dead. Now I am among the dying on my way to the land of the living.

This book is the story of redemption. As we will see from Genesis 3 on, this is the ongoing story of humanity being saved, one revelation at a time, from our disastrous choice in the Garden of Eden to try to be like God.

Now one of the great questions of philosophers and theologians that comes after “Does God exist?” For most of us that is a pretty easy answer. We're here because we believe that God exists. But the second question that comes right on the heels of the first is, “If he exists and is complete and perfect in every way, why did he bother to create?” A good question really and it stands at the front of our study of Genesis begging to be answered.

Genesis: Why bother creating?

He creates to bring glory to Himself

He gave us free will because beings that love Him freely brings Him glory

He redeems us from our helpless condition because redemption brings God glory

There is a verse in Isaiah that is familiar to many of us. It goes like this
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.

It goes on to say that He is going to gather the nation of Israel back together after being taken in captivity saying He will bring back “Everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory whom I formed and made.”

Isaiah 43:7

⁷ everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”

The use of the words “created,” “formed,” and “made” are pointing us back to the original act of creation. This is why Israel *ultimately* exists. Because this is why all things ultimately exist — **for the glory of God.** Let's go back to that previous slide:

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After we come to terms with the idea that creating time and space and humanity in that time and space gives Himself glory – we might then ask “Why take the chance humanity will choose poorly by giving us free will?” Again the answer is that beings who love Him freely brings Him glory. And the story of God is one of redeeming humanity because redemption brings God glory. Do you get the drift – it is not about us but it is instead all about God’s glory! Everything has been created for God’s glory. This is why God created the world — “that he may be glorified.” Which does not mean: “that he may be *made* glorious.” Don’t take the word “glorify” and treat it like the word “beautify.” To beautify means to take a plain room and make it beautiful. We don’t take a plain God and make him beautiful. That is not what glorifying God means.

When God created the world he did not create out of any need or any weakness or any deficiency. He created out of fullness and strength and complete sufficiency. So we don’t glorify God by improving his glory, but by seeing and savoring and showing his glory (which is the same as knowing, loving, showing).

Or switch to the word “magnify” (as in Philippians 1:20, “that Christ be magnified” (*megalunthesetai*). We magnify his glory like a telescope not a microscope. Microscopes make small things look bigger than they are. Telescopes make unimaginably big things look more like what they really are. Our lives are to be telescopes for the glory of God. We were created to see his glory, be thrilled by his glory, and live so as to help others see him and savor him for what he really is. To know, to love, to show his glory.

That is why the universe exists. If this takes hold of you the way it should, it will affect the way you think and feel about everything. Now you know why everything exists. You don’t know everything. There are billions of things you don’t know. But you are never at a loss to know something important about everything. Because you know that everything exists for the glory of God. You know something about everything. And this is one of the most important things you can know about anything. And so to know this one thing — that all things exist for the glory of God — is to know something supremely important about everything. Namely, for what purpose it ultimately exists. That is amazing.

And this of course includes 4Cs! Our little church was created by God and we exist to bring Him glory. Our journey of faith has been to bring God glory. And now we are in a way beginning again and that too is designed to give God glory.

The 4Cs journey of faith – Beginning again!

What I mean by beginning again

- About 14 years ago we had hopes of building a new home on land we had purchased at 100th and Wadsworth. There was a change of Senior Pastor leadership and then a recession and we were not able to do that.
- For years we struggled to find God’s ‘Plan B’ – a church building that we could rent or buy that wouldn’t be as expensive as building from the ground up. The land was put up for sale in 2006 and since that time we have been hoping that God would release us from that financial burden and find us a place to worship Him and to do ministry from. Two years ago He gave us this property equivalent to phases one and two on our planned building) at an amazing price (about \$25 a foot) (we were going to build for almost \$175 a foot). Now we are perhaps only a month or two from closing on the land and ***we will get a new lease on life.***

I firmly believe that the hopes of building at 100th and Wadsworth was not a mistake, but it was just not to be. God led us, moment by moment, even though some of those times were included deep waters and difficult purifying fires. These were designed to temper our faith and to expand our faith so that when we would find ourselves here we would be ready for a mighty work of God. I believe our greatest days of ministry are right before us. Three years ago we were facing the possibility of closing our church. Since then we have seen His favor and faithfulness. Now we see that all that was to transform us, to give us an even greater hope and purpose. Just like Paul was saved on the road to Damascus, we cannot rest here and say “This is nice” - not when there are neighbors in our community who do not yet know Christ. Not

while there is still injustice and populations of the marginalized and under-honored who need to know the place that they can have in Christ.

We, 4Cs, has been transformed and are being given a new lease on life so that God can create a new thing in us and so that God will receive the Glory! As we approach the Communion table and stand in anticipation of a study of this great book of beginnings, let's remember two things:

1. All things exist to give God glory
2. All things that exist were Created by and all things exist through and for Jesus Christ and this also is to the glory of the Father and Holy Spirit.

That means you and I, this moment and the Lord's table all exist to give God glory. Let's look at that famous first sentence in Genesis as we approach the table . . .

In the Beginning . . .

This means that before time was time, in the unending fellowship of the godhead, God had all this in mind. You, me, this church, all of it in the mind of God from the beginning.

God . . .

Not some big bang or some incredible against all odds, once in a gabillionth chance of physics that anything exists . . . but God . . . the personal, loving, transforming and redeeming God who loved you enough to send His only son so that whosoever believes in Him would never die (and created this sacrament to remind us !)

Created . . .

He created life and created life again. He took the sting of death away and gave us the table to remind us that now we can live with him forever and ever and ever. "God chose us in him *before the foundation of the world* . . . to the praise of the glory of his grace" (Ephesians 1:4, 6). Grace was not an afterthought in response to the fall of man. It was the plan, because grace is the summit of the mountain of his glory. And he created the world for his glory. He planned the world for the glory of his grace. This table like Genesis is a creation of foundations and promises . . .

Foundations and Promises: Looking back to look forward

Just as we will see in the study in the weeks to come God has established all of creation to show us the reality of His firm foundation and to demonstrate again and again that His promises are good.

The Lord's Table Prayer of Examine

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

The Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Sharing the elements Offering Closing song Benediction:

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.