The Handiwork of God

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. And I've invited our church, those who would like to, to read along with me this year in a Read Through the Bible plan.

We are using a plan that has 25 readings a month, which allows if there's a day or two that you miss, or if you're sick or out of town, or just need some extra days to catch up, it allows that time. Also, by reading just 25 readings a month, it builds in about five or six days where you can go back and maybe reread something that was hard to understand or do some further study in certain portions of scripts that you've read that month.
Here's the really good news. We've printed a bunch of those reading plans, and we keep running out of them. We've printed a lot more for today again, and so we've got them at the Ministry Connection.
They're also out at the guest information, and so when service is over, if you don't already have one, I invite you to go and pick up one of the reading plans, or you can also download them straight from our homepage on our church website.
[1:19] Here's the really good news, though. There's 25 readings a month. Now, I'm no mathematician, but I did the math this morning. And if you haven't started yet, and you start today, there's exactly 25 days of January left, which means you're not behind.

So, if you haven't started or you wanted to and you just didn't get around to it, whatever it may be, if you pick up the reading plan today, just start with month one, day one.
You've got 25 readings for January. You've got 25 days of the month left, so you will be right there with us. And something that I'm endeavoring to do this year is I'm trying to walk our church through that reading plan, those who would like to join with us in doing that.
And so, my plan is each day of the readings to record a video of about 10 minutes or so, just walking through the text we're reading that day with five observations from the text, five applications from what we've read, and then a summary from the reading of Psalms that we're doing each day.
And so, I've already done the video for today, and so all of the first seven days are available. Now, right now I'm doing that on just my own personal Facebook page.
[2:36] So, if you're on Facebook, you can catch those each day on my page. Jeremy, I'm going to put them on. Jeremy tells us that he's got a plan. Do we still have a plan?

We have a plan. We may or may not have execution, but we have a plan. And the plan is to take the videos that I'm doing and put them over into a format besides Facebook for those who may not be on Facebook to be able to get those.
And we may do that through just our own podcast. It would just kind of be FBC through the Bible. I have now said more than I understand about whatever we're talking about.
All that to say, send all your questions to Jeremy, and he'll be happy to help you with that. But we hope to be able to do that hopefully soon. If you're on Facebook, you can catch those readings.
If you're not, hopefully we'll be able to make the audio of that available through some other formats here pretty soon. And don't feel like you've got to watch those videos every day. If they're helpful, great.
[3:38] If they're not, don't worry about them. But if you want to catch them every day, you can. If you want to go back and just watch them occasionally, that's fine too. But my hope, Lord willing, is to do that through all 12 months of the year, just to walk with you through our reading.

And so I've enjoyed doing that the first week. And we'll hope we can do that for the rest of the year. With that in mind, I want just for this Sunday, I just wanted to bring a message here from Genesis 1.

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Since so many of us have read the early parts of Genesis here in the first week of the year. And as I mentioned a moment ago, next Sunday we'll jump back into the Gospel of Mark and continue our exposition through that Gospel through the end of it.
But what I want to do for a little bit today is I want to zoom out and just take a big picture view of what we learn about God and creation.
And then I want to zoom in and we're going to look at one specific portion of creation to show you God's detail and His precision in all that He creates.
[4:53] And then we're going to zoom back out again and look at the takeaway of what that means for us today in our world. Genesis 1 is so familiar, not only because we've read it a lot, but if you've ever read through the Bible and didn't make it all the way through, you at least got Genesis 1.

And so Genesis 1 may be the most well-read chapter in all of church history. Because long before you get to Leviticus and Numbers, you get Genesis 1.
And you may not make it to Genesis 3, but if you've ever tried to read through the Bible, Genesis 1 we've got, all right? And so it's familiar with us. But I want to show you that it's more than just merely an account of how God made things, that there is a big picture view that we need to understand that relates to the fullness of God's sovereignty and of His power and also what it means for us as His creatures, both for today and for all eternity.
So what does creation teach us about God? Well, we understand when we look at the entirety of Scripture that the Bible says something that may actually sound kind of strange to our ears at first. It says, The fool says in his heart, There is no God. That's Psalm 14 and Psalm 53. It's a foolish person who goes through life pretending that there is no God, that there is no Creator.
[6:29] But we also know that the Bible teaches us that apart from the intervening work of the Holy Spirit, there are none who seek God, no, not one. Now it's true, people will seek the blessings of God.

People will seek the things that only God can provide. But man on his own, apart from the work of the Holy Spirit, will not seek repentance and seek to exalt the name of God.
The world has no desire to see God or to worship God or to obey God, not left to themselves. And keep, if you would, Genesis 1 marked there, but turn with me to Romans chapter 1.
I just want to show you a picture of how the detail of creation is maybe even more important than we realize. In Romans chapter 1, look with me starting in verse 18.
It says, For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.
[7:48] For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For His invisible attributes, namely, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world in the things that have been made.

So, they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man, and birds, and animals, and creeping things.
In other words, Romans 1 says, what mankind will do is he will take everything God has created, people, the sun, the moon, the stars, the animals, even the smallest creeping things, and will worship the creature rather than the creator.
Some people say that if man gets rid of God, he will believe in nothing. I don't think that's accurately said. I think when man gets rid of God, he'll believe in anything.
[9:32] And see, also, our world today. Do you ever wonder how people who are well-educated and seemingly fairly sophisticated can actually believe and espouse such utter foolishness in the ways that they think?

How does that happen? Well, it happens when you have a heart that suppresses the truth of what's been revealed to them and instead embraces idolatry.
Romans 1 speaks to it. Your headlines give you examples of it. All over the world today is just example after example after example of people who claiming to be wise have exchanged the truth of the glory of God and instead worshiped themselves or worshiped that which has been created instead of worshiping the creator.
Now, the Bible tells us that in the beginning, God created. The very familiar words of Genesis 1 or you could go to John 1 that says in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the

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word was God.
He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him and without him was not anything made that was made. The Bible is clear that God is the creator.
[11:10] How did he do it? Well, he spoke all things into existence by the power of his word. Make note of Psalm 33 verse 6.

By the word of the Lord the heavens were made and by the breath of his mouth all their hosts. God created orderly and deliberately.
Revelation 4 verses 9 to 11. And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne who lives forever and ever, the 24 elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever.
They cast their crowns before the throne saying, worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power for you created all things.
And by your will, they existed and were created. In other words, one of the things that happens in heaven is that those who are redeemed give glory to God in part because he is the creator.
[12:22] Now if you wonder, how important is it that you believe Genesis 1? You need to know that in Revelation 4, part of what the people redeemed are doing in heaven is giving God glory because he created all things.

Genesis to Revelation is clear that God is the creator. He spoke it into existence. It's not narrative. It's not myth. So much so that before the throne of God, it's one of the specific things given to us, revealed to us, that is giving glory to God is the praise of his people praising him as creator.
It matters to believe that in the beginning, God created. If that's not true, then the praise around the throne of heaven is false.
If you believe the book of Revelation, then you must believe Genesis 1. And we take from that that we are to worship the creator, not his creation.
[13:57] We learn from Genesis 1 that God is a God of order and variety and beauty. Again, the psalmist in Psalm 19 says it this way, the heavens declare the glory of God and the skies proclaim the works of his hands.

Every sunrise, every sunset, every star, the sun, the moon, everything you see when you look up, you are seeing the handiwork of God as the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
And because of the work of his hands, we owe him our allegiance. Because he has created, we owe him our worship.
Make note of Acts 4, 23 and 24. It says, when they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them.
And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them.
[15:15] What are the apostles doing in Acts 4? They were giving praise to God, namely, worshiping him as creator who created all things.

Genesis, Psalm, 19 in particular, others as well, Acts 4, Romans, Revelation.
I could show you more, but there's a quick sweep through different parts of your Bible telling us, showing us how the people of God are to believe in God as creator and worship God as creator.
So when you read Genesis 1, you're not reading just some well-told story. You are hearing how things came to be, but more than that, it's an invitation for you to worship God.
Now this is important for us because as we begin a new year with many of us trying to read to the Bible in a year, we've got to remind ourselves that information and knowledge is essential to our faith, but that's not where it terminates.
[16:35] The knowledge we receive by reading is merely an invitation to us to worship. So beware, it is possible to read to the Bible in a year and not worship.

It is possible to gain lots of knowledge as you read the Scripture and not worship. But according to Genesis and according to Acts and according to Revelation, those who believe the truth and know the truth of God as Creator, the right response to that is our worship and our praise.
So as we zoom out from creation and just take a big picture view, what we see is that God created all things orderly, beautifully, and good.
And His creation is an invitation to us to worship and to praise. So, no matter what you're going through in life, every day you see the heavens declare the glory of God is an invitation for you to praise the God who created.

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Every day you enjoy the benefits of His creation. is an invitation to you to be a worshiper.
[18:12] And if we miss that, then we've missed the point of the first sentence of the Bible, in the beginning God created.

This is an invitation for you to trust Him, to believe Him, to love Him, and to worship Him. So, let's look now here at Genesis 1.
That's zooming out. Let's zoom in. We're just going to zoom in on one specific part of Genesis 1.
Day 1, God creates the material and the light.
Day 2, God creates the seas and the heavens. Day 3, God creates the earth and vegetation. Day 4, God attaches the light to the luminaries.
Day 5, God will fill the sea and sky with creatures. Day 6, God will create animals and man. So, day 1 is light. Day 4, are the bodies to be light givers.
[19:16] Day 2, are the seas and the heavens. Day 5, the sea creatures and the birds that fill the skies. Day 3, earth and vegetation. Day 6, animals and man to populate the earth and to eat.

So, let's just look at one small part of this here as we zoom in. Let's look at verse 20. Genesis 1, verse 20. 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.
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 according to its kind and God saw that it was good and God blessed them saying, be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters and the seas and let birds multiply on the earth and there was evening and there was morning the fifth day.
So, God's going to create. He creates sea creatures and birds. Again, verse 20. Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures.
We're talking now about things being created that move. This is different than plants. These are things that move. In English, it's a polytoton.
[20:43] It's a word that means it's repetition of the same word with a different usage. So, here's what the text is saying. Let the waters swarm with swarms.

It's a literary device. It's going to swarm with swarms. It's going to be filled with living creatures that move on their own. When you see birds, instinctively, birds know as you leave today, there's a bird flying low.
That bird instinctively knows to get out of the way of the car. He creates creatures that have consciousness and the ability to move. Verse 21, So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves with which the waters swarm.
Just an interesting note here about this term of sea creatures. The term in its original text can be translated as a dragon or as a serpent.
It was known in Canaanite literature as the enemy of the main fertility god. So, in Near Eastern mythology, such creatures were worshipped.
[22:02] What we see in Genesis 1, though, verse 21, is explaining how foolish it is for people to believe that because the sea creatures are not the enemies of God.

The sea creatures are the creation of God. What that means is it reminds us that God may have rebels, but He has no rivals.
Everything in creation is submissive to God who created them. Let me just give you another example of how the Bible sees this.
Job 12, verse 7, But ask the beast and they will teach you the birds of the heavens and they will tell you or the bushes of earth and they will teach you and the fish of the sea will declare to you who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this.
In His hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind. In other words, you just can't escape this. If you believe the Bible, you must believe that God created all things and that as creator He is sovereign over all things and worthy of our worship.
[23:37] Verse 21, God saw that it was good and blessed them saying, Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters and the seas and let birds multiply on the earth.

Now day six involves the creation of animals and of man. Verse 24, Livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.
Livestock refer to animals that can be tamed. Creeping things are the insects, the small animals, short legs, low to the ground. Beasts of the earth are four-legged animals that are not easily tamed.
Verse 24, and it was so. God spoke it into existence. And God saw, verse 25, that it was good.

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Verse 4, the light is good. Verse 10, the dry land and sea is good. Verse 12, the plants are good. Verse 18, the heavenly bodies are good. Verse 21, sea creatures and birds are good.
[24:43] Verse 25, land animals are good. Verse 31, man is created and it is good. Which brings us to a question.

What happened? What happened to this good creation? Psalm 8, when I look at the heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him and the son of man that you would care for him?
So we zoom back out for a moment. Let's take a big picture look here again. What is our response to understanding God as creator?
if you believe that in the beginning God created, if you believe that God is sovereign over the creation even of the smallest creeping things, smallest things in creation and the big things, if you really believe that God created the heavens and the earth and the sun and the moon and the livestock and the sea creatures and even the smallest creeping things, what would that mean for us today?
What's the practical outworking of what we read in Genesis 1? Let me suggest to you at least three things.
[26:19] One is gratitude. It should make us to be grateful people that God has given us what we need to live and what we need to survive.

If you read an anatomy and physiology book, it's just amazing.
The more you learn of how God has created the human body to work and to accomplish what God's given us to do, the more you learn about creation, how all of creation is working.
It's just phenomenal how God has done this. It should make us grateful. He has given us everything that we need for life and for godliness.
We should be grateful. Second, we should delight in His creation. We should be amazed by His creation.
[27:28] If you're able to go to a beach and look out and see the vastness of the ocean, you ought to just feel stunned and amazed. If you're going skiing and you look over the snow-capped mountains, you ought to just take your breath away at what God has created.

Or if you're just driving home from work, it gets dark around what, 3.30 this time of year here? You go home from school on the bus, the sun is setting this time of year just about.
You don't have to go on vacation somewhere, just go in your backyard. Just look up and just be amazed at the beauty of God's creation.
delight in what He has made. See every part of what He has made as your invitation to worship Him, to delight in the works of His hands.
And third, it should create within us trust. Trust, because God is created in a way that has a purpose. It's not just beautiful, it's purposeful.
[28:39] God has a purpose for all of His creation. Now, we're all learning and one of the things I hope to learn this year is to give you an explanation for why God created gophers.

I don't have an answer. I don't. I know that God creates on purpose. I know that His creation has a design. That one, I'm just 50, I've got some years left to figure this one out.
I don't know why God created gophers other than just to torment me and remind me that I'm not God. But we can trust that God has a purpose because God has created a way that meets our every need.
But do know this, if God has a purpose for the ant, and He does, and the mosquito, and He does, and maybe even the gopher, here's what you can know.
God has a divine purpose for you too. You're not an accident. You're not here by chance.
[29:49] You're not here by happenstance. You're not here by coincidence. You were beautifully and wonderfully made.

Purposefully. And what you have to do is you have to see your life through the lens of God as creator, not through the lens of what the world says about you.
Remember, the world doesn't love God. The world doesn't worship God. The world doesn't believe God. So why in the world would you listen to what the world says about you?
And this is a mistake people make all the time. They take their self-worth from what the world says about them. A world that doesn't believe God.

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Why would you listen to them? So the world says you've got to be rich. The world says you've got to be powerful. The world says you need to be popular.
[31:00] The world says you have to have a lot of things. The world says you have to be beautiful in their eyes. The world says you should be taller or you're too tall.

You should be smaller or you're too small. The world says you should look different. You should act different. You should dress different. You should be different.
You should achieve different. You should be known differently. Why are you listening to a world who doesn't even believe God to get your value and worth from the world?
Don't. Instead, look at your life through the lens of the truth of God's word that you were wonderfully and fearfully made knit together in your mother's womb by the hand of God the creator and all that he has created is an invitation for you to trust him and to worship him which means if you woke up breathing today your very existence is an invitation for you to worship and praise God.
Do not view your life through the lens of a system that doesn't know or love God.
[32:31] Friends, you are here with purpose. You are here with design. You are here for a reason. Live every day grateful.

Every day delighting in the goodness of God and every day trusting in God. Now, as we close, let me just go back to what I said a moment ago.
In Genesis 1 over and over and over again it was good, it was good, it was good, it was good. And while it's still true today that the heavens declare the glory of God and the skies proclaim the work of his hands and while it's still true today that you have a reason to trust and delight and be grateful in his creation, we have to say what happened because while we can still see the handiwork of God, we can also look around us and see this world is a mess.
what happened? Well, Genesis 3 tells us it's called sin.
And if you'll go to Genesis 3 for just a moment, after sin enters the human realm, we get in Genesis 3 what are called the curses.
[33:56] This is the effects of the fall. Verse 14, the Lord God said to the serpent because you have done this cursed are you so the serpents cursed more than the livestock, livestock are cursed above the beasts of the field, the beasts of the field are cursed so the animal realm has been changed.

Verse 15 is the promise of a redeemer. Verse 16 is the consequence of sin for the woman. 17, 18, and 19 the consequence of sin to the man and even to earth itself.
What happened to creation that has changed things is simply called sin. Now with that in mind, if you would just turn one more time with me to Romans chapter 8 and we'll close this morning.
God created and that should give us a sense of gratitude and delight and trust yet we understand that sin has temporarily changed things.
Romans chapter 8 verse 18 says, for I consider that our sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.
[35:34] Watch this. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.

For the creation was subjected to futility not willingly but because of him who subjected it.
Stop for just a minute. Genesis 1 God created and it's good. Genesis 2 retells the account of creation as mankind men and women as the chief of his creation and it's good.
Genesis 3 Adam and Eve sin and now everything has changed. The earth the animal realm the human realm everything has changed even creation itself subjected to futility but look at your last two words in verse 20 because of him who subjected it in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God for we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now and not only the creation but we ourselves who have the first fruits of the spirit grown inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons the redemption of our bodies for in this hope we were saved when you look at the world around you and you see the evidence of the fall it is as though a labor a lady in labor awaiting to give birth the pain the trauma the heartache is real but it gives birth to the promise in other words the pains of this world that you experience are temporary and the creation is groaning but one day will be restored just as your physical body groans and will one day be restored why because the
God who created all things is bringing everything to a purposeful end namely the redemption of his creation Genesis 1 is not some small trivial piece of information Genesis 1 sets our theology for

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everything we know about God and even the life to come because the God who created is the God who sustains and the God who sustains is the God who will call all things to their appointed end when the wicked will be judged creation renewed and where you will live for all eternity according to [39:33] Revelation 21 without pain without sorrow without death without tears behold all things have become new the God who spoke Genesis 1 into existence is the God who will bring all things home!

So as you read your Bible this year read with an eye to learn absolutely but by responding to the invitation to delight to be grateful and to trust in the Lord your God God our Father we thank you for your word you have given to us I pray that it would be helpful today I pray that as we many of us labor to study and read through all of your scripture this year that we would do so with an eye that would behold your power and your greatness and your glory pozw my heart can make if you can i really would know it can but do it as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as as

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