

“Foundational”
Genesis 1:1-5; Job 38:1-18;
Hebrews 1:1-4; Luke 6:46-49

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Do you remember a beginning moment? A moment in your life that was just incredible? One of those for me was the first time I held a child, our child. She just had her 25th birthday. That moment was incredible, astounding. There have been other moments that were incredible.

I think that moment when you first meet that person that you are going to end up spending so much of the rest of your life with can be an astounding time when you recognize that beginning, that moment. There are other moments that seem astounding. Sometimes just bringing home a kitten or a puppy seems astounding. The first day on a job that seems exciting. Those first moments are incredible. You can go away from it thinking, “That was very good.”

As we read Genesis, that’s exactly what we’re reading about. We are reading about a beginning, understanding God as beginning something incredible. We hear God having that beginning moment experience. Over and over again God says, “It is good.” Then God finishes and it is “very good.” It’s an incredible beginning moment, a time we can think about God as creator. In fact I think of this whole first chapter of Genesis as kind of a hymn to the wondrous nature of who God is.

Sometimes, when we think about that, it’s hard not to think about God’s hands actually doing something, but we realize that’s anthropomorphizing things—giving God attributes that we don’t really know exactly. Probably God’s hand wouldn’t look quite like ours. But we come to a reading of scripture like this from our own perspective, so we think about the hands of God creating. We think about God beginning something.

We could spend lots of time on this first creation story because it’s wonderful. There are incredible things about it. In relationship to other creation stories of the time, which all arose out of the gods fighting and somehow humans got spawned in the process, this creation story is a story that builds a creation that is at peace. There is no violence. It’s a creation story that creates a garden. It’s an incredible story. It’s a creation story that suggests there’s a process to creation. The most important thing about this creation story is that it points to a creator. It points to an astounding, incredible God that began things. Now I’m not going to suggest in any way that I have any idea how God did that. But that God did it is revealed and it is important and incredible. That’s one piece of what I want to say this morning. We have an incredible God who is creator.

As you think about going on from a beginning, holding that child for the first time is an incredible thing, but then you get to about 2 years old and you begin to wonder how incredible it is. There’s this thing you have to do, you have to sustain that relationship. When you start a relationship with somebody, that initial glow can be pretty impressive, but then as you go on you have to sustain that relationship. God didn’t just one day

make everything and say, "That was cool," and leave. It wasn't just fireworks that were splattered across whatever God's vision is and then were gone. Part of the incredible thing about creation is not only that it began, but that it is sustained. It's the Hebrews reading from today: he sustains everything with his powerful word.

Again, I'm not going to try to define exactly how God sustains everything. We can guess at some stuff. There are physical laws and all kinds of things that happen over again. But the important thing is that God not only created, God sustains. There's a way that God not only got stuff going, but undergirds and holds and is foundational for the world.

Sometimes when we take communion we think about how we take the bread and we realize that it's the kind of thing that sustains our life. Food sustains us. God sustains us. The other piece to that sustaining is that when we think about God sustaining the universe there's a sense that God cares about it. It's not just that things were created, that God got the process rolling and walked away. A sense of sustaining almost feels to me like God wrapping God's arms around creation and saying, "I care about this. I care about what I've made. I care about what's happening, what's going on."

So as we think about the nature of God as creator and sustainer it points to an astounding, incredible God. It points to a God that has power. That's probably enough. It's incredible to think about God's power. But if that weren't enough, it's not just a display of power; it becomes a gift—a gift to us, that we might have life. He gives us not only a place, but he gives us life and he gives us the continuation, the time. It's not only creating and sustaining, it's that life that goes on. So it's a gift. It shows God's power. It shows God's willingness to give us the gift of life and through that, we not only acknowledge God's power and God's gift of life, but we can acknowledge that we live within creation and there's a certain limit to our ability to see beyond it. We are invited, I think, to live in the creation God has given us, dependent on our God. As we think about the wonder of who God is, as he sends Christ to be among us, it is through Christ that we are pointed back to the creator and sustainer.

I think that remembering God as creator and sustainer is incredibly important, and yet in my life I really doubt if I really live that out as much as I might. I want to think about that idea of God as creator and sustainer and how that is foundational because oftentimes I think I try to live my life kind of like I'm trying to balance it and I just can't quite do it, partly because I think I have to be the one who creates and sustains it all. It would be much more helpful if I allowed myself to recognize the foundation that we're given in God. Through Christ, we are reintroduced to the creator and sustainer and he is the foundation that sustains us. It is upon that foundation that we can live our lives. We know the creator. We know the sustainer. What latches us to that creator and sustainer? It is our trust, our faith. Christ invites us, and it is as we trust in the invitation that then we are able to build our lives. We can build upon this foundation. We are connected to the creator and sustainer of our lives.

I'm going to list three things that I think that does for us. First, it gives us confidence. As we go forward into life, we have confidence; we know the creator and sustainer. That's where I think oftentimes I don't live fully enough because my trust sometimes isn't as good as it might be. The more I allow myself to trust in that one that created and sustains all that is, the more confidence I have in living life.

The second thing it enables us to do is to recognize that we have been given capabilities. We have been created; we have been given this life. We have capabilities. We have things we can do with these lives. We are invited to build upon that foundation.

The final thing I think it does is give us courage. When we have confidence and a foundation, we have courage to try things because we know the world is not going to fall apart simply because I made a mistake. Some mistakes are worse than others, but still, we know the creator and the sustainer so there's a certain courage it gives us to do the trying of life.

I read a little piece in a book about an African nation where there's a way of using the word "trying" that's a little different. When somebody does something really well, they say, "They really were trying." Now in our culture, that would almost be a slam to say, "Well, you tried." But there, that is the way of saying you did well. I like that idea of saying "you tried" when something is accomplished because it takes the focus off the accomplishment and says it's what we do, it's our trying, that is important. When we are building our lives on God's foundation, we can try, and it is that trying that is a gift to us and the opportunity for us.

So this week as we go forth, think about the confidence we can have because we know the creator and sustainer of all that is. Think about the capabilities we have been given. Not that necessarily we have to change the world, but we have the capability of caring for another. We have the capability of love, of generosity. We have all kinds of capabilities, and we can use these, especially if we have the courage to do it, because we know the one on whom our life depends.

Let's pray:

Gracious God, when we think about you as creator and sustainer, it's a little overwhelming. It's hard to recognize exactly what that means. We know it's astounding, incredible, and through it we know that there is the gift, and there's ongoing caring and love that you show. It is through the gift of your son that we are directed to know that gift and to build upon it. Lord, help us to build with confidence lives based on your gifts to us. Let us recognize the capabilities you have given us to share in this life together. Let us have the courage to live life because you are our creator, the one who sustains us. Through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.