

The Life Challenge

"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." John 10:10

Sermon Series: All Around You
Title: God Near in Creation
Speaker: Matt Ewert
Text: Genesis 1:1—2:3
Date: December 3, 2017



INTRODUCTION

Key Question: God, the Architect of creation has designed us to meet with Him in an intimate way through His incredible creation, God's cathedral. Do we have a "tenacious desire" to experience more of God's presence; to know God more deeply and more profoundly?

DISCUSSION

Six Elements of God's Creation: "Behold, it was good" and it still is amazing!

- Light and darkness – 1:3-5
- Heaven and earth – 1:6-8
- Vegetation – 1:11-13
- Sun, moon and stars – 1:14-19
- Living creatures – sea creatures and birds - 1:20-23
- Beasts of the earth, livestock – 1:24,25
- Humankind – 1:26 – 2:3

God is relentlessly near:

- In creation – Garden of Eden
- Throughout the Old Testament – e.g. the Ark of the covenant – the place where Israelites could meet with God
- God is **immanent** – He is near, always connected to the apex of His Creation – humankind; His desire for intimacy with us is built-in, it is ingrained in His very character

Application: Beyond the Christmas Trappings:

⇒ **Erwin MacManus in *Soul Craving – Prequel***

*"God is going up and down the streets of the city, traveling the most obscure paths and **untamed wilderness**, walking on unnamed roads in the most desolate places, searching for the one he loves—and that is you and me, every human being... (who) has longed for love."*

- Do you both know and feel that God is near? Why do we need both?
- On a scale of 1 -10, what's your intimacy with God currently?
- What are the frustrations you experience to know that God is near, a sense of His intimacy?

"This is the story of Jesus, that God has walked among us and he pursues us with his love. He is very familiar with rejection but is undeterred. And he is here even now, still pursuing with his love."

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DISCUSSION

⇒ **Hemorrhaging Faith:** two out of three young adults are leaving the church!

- *Discipleship begins at home. For those who are parents, it is time that we start living our faith and modeling it for our children.*
 - * Do we see ourselves as being intimate with God and do we model that for our children and grandchildren?
- *Young adults are a lonely and tired generation... Young adults want to belong to an authentic faith community and hear words of wisdom and encouragement from those who have gone before them... Mentorship is key.*
 - * Do we talk openly with each other and with our children about our relationship with God – a natural flow that comes out of our intimate relationship with Jesus?
 - * Maybe talking more about the amazing beauty of the Creator God rather than just talking about His beautiful creation?

⇒ In view of this Christmas season (at least the way we tend to construct it) do we have **any chance** of taking the time to spend time in God's creation, in silence, in listening to God's voice, in solitude in God's own cathedral? What would it take?

⇒ Christmas is a noisy, frantic season in our culture! What's the antidote? Ponder this: "The Lord is at hand (near – NIV); do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." (ESV Phil. 4:5b-7)