

What has Humanity done with God's Handiwork

by Duane Troyer

This sermon reflects on the wonders of God's creation as expressed in Psalms 8, highlighting the beauty and complexity of nature and the role of humanity in caring for God's creation. It contrasts the goodness of God's creation with the brokenness and sinfulness of humanity, emphasizing the need for redemption and transformation through Christ. The sermon then delves into 1 Peter 1, discussing the concept of redemption through the precious blood of Christ, the imperishable nature of God's Word, and the call to live holy lives in obedience to God. It concludes with reflections on the eternal significance of the good news compared to the temporal nature of bad news, urging listeners to focus on the eternal truths of God's Word.

Scripture: Psalms 8:3, Job 7:17, Psalms 139:23, Psalms 19:14, Galatians 1:5, 1 Peter 1:18, Daniel 1:8

Topics: "God's Creation", "Redemption through Christ"

Description

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Transcript

I struggled to feel very inspired this morning. Struggled to know what to share. And I don't feel like I have anything new or anything you don't know, but I'd like to read a psalm and then a portion out of the New Testament.

Maybe I'll have a few thoughts to share. Psalm 8. O Lord, our Lord, how wondrous is your name in all the earth, for your splendor is exalted far beyond the heavens. From the mouth of babies and nursing infants, you prepared praises because of your enemies, that you may destroy the enemy and the avenger.

For I shall look at the heavens, the works of your fingers, the moon and the stars you've established. What is man that you remember him, or the son of man that you visit him? You have made him a little lower than

the angels. You crowned him with glory and honor.

You set him over the works of your hands. You subjected all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and besides these all the animals of the field, the birds of heaven and the fish of the seas, and the things passing through the paths of the sea. O Lord, our Lord, how wondrous is your name in all the earth.

The writer here is just expressing how amazing it is when we look at the works of God's hand. Consider the stars. Consider the vastness.

Consider the miraculous work of God's hand. The fact that a lifeless seed can drop into the ground and can create life that brings forth more seed that drops back into the ground, that brings forth after its kind, and on and on it goes. Birds that can fly, and fish that can swim, and creatures that boggle our minds on how they work and how they live.

And then what he says is like, when we consider this greatness, he's saying, what is man that you've considered him, and yet you've taken man and you've set him just a little bit lower than the angels and you've crowned him with glory and honor, and then you've given all this work of your hands, you've given them into man's hand to do something with it, to bring it into subjection. It says here, you've subjected all things under his feet, man's feet, all sheep and oxen, the birds, the fish. How wondrous are your ways.

And God gave us this, and he wants to see what we would do with it. How we would take something that we couldn't make, that only he could do, what we would do with it if he gave that to us. How would we deal with it? How would we express our gratitude for what he's done? The other morning, I caught a swarm of bees in one of my swarm traps that I put out, and so I had to go take care of them early in the morning before they started flying.

I like the early part of the morning anyway. I like the cool of the day. I kind of feel like everybody's different, but I feel like the people who wait to get out of bed until the sun's high miss the golden hour of the day.

But it was a beautiful morning. Not only was it a swarm of bees, it was a big swarm of bees, and they'd already made a whole bunch of honey in the hive, and I took them down out of the tree, took them up to my bee yard, just spent some time out there. It was just a good morning, a nice morning.

You could tell God made things good, and then he wanted us to be caretakers of it, and I was just thinking things like that. I saw a pileated woodpecker, which added to... Those are kind of special around here. I don't see those very often around here, but these great big woodpeckers that are just beautiful, amazing birds.

So it's kind of special, just this nice, special remembering of how good God made things and how good his plan is. And then as I was driving home from that other bee yard and just kind of slowly driving down the farm road and enjoying the beauty of the morning, it was the top of an hour, probably 7 o'clock or something, and I thought, oh, I'll check the news, check what the headlines of the news are this morning. I think the three main things in the news were that the president was gathering with congresspeople to try to legalize abortion, and several police officers got shot in an ambush in Kentucky, and a young father of a two-month-old child shot his wife in the head at a close distance, or it said his mother, the child's mother.

And I just thought, what has humanity done? What has humanity done with this? What have humans done with the work of God's hands? And we do well to remember that though those things that came in the headlines of the news that morning are way out there, and we think, well, we're not that bad, we do well to

remember that we have distorted God's creation. We have partook in the corruption. We have been children of darkness.

We have missed the mark. If you look at the Hebrew word for sin, it's either the exact same word, or I can't really tell the difference. There might be a letter difference or so, but it's really very, very closely related, if not exactly the same meaning as just missed or failed.

Like when there in the book of Judges, probably it is when it says those Benjamites had an army of... The word is katah. I think you pronounce it katah or something like that. The word for those Benjamites, those left-handed Benjamites who could sling stones at a hare's breath without katah, without missing, without fail.

That's really the essence of the word sin. It's like we've missed the mark. We've failed in what God intended originally for us to be.

And I think the reason the only news outlets that have much of an audience are the ones that publish the grossest, worst, horriest news is because that's kind of what people want to hear. They want to hear something that makes them sound at least better than what the news is. But we do well to look unto Christ and to not compare ourselves with that.

So with some of those thoughts, let's go into the New Testament and let's read a portion of 1 Peter. 1 Peter 1. I'll start in verse 13. Therefore, think about... He's talking in this chapter about salvation.

In the previous verses, he's talking about the salvation that Jesus worked. Now Jesus has come and He's worked something. Again, He's worked something that we couldn't work out ourselves and He wants to see what we do with it.

He has redeemed us. He has conquered the devil. He has defeated evil.

And He's giving this into His people's hands again and wanting to see if we could be good caretakers of it this time. And says, Therefore, prepare your minds for action. Keep sober in spirit.

Fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance. But like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior.

Because it is written, You shall be holy for I am holy. If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth. Think about that verse for a little bit.

We consider God our Father. We start our prayers by saying, Our Father, which is in heaven. How often as we pray and we think about that, do we visualize Him as a Father? As a Father and we His children.

In this passage He says, Who impartially judges according to each one's work. Without any partiality. We're not more special to Him than any of His other children.

And we are so prone, when we judge, we're so prone to consider our intentions when we've failed the mark, when we've missed the mark, when we've sinned. We think about, Well, that wasn't our intention. And we think about that.

But when others do it, we see the action. And rightly so, we don't know the intentions of their heart. But we are inclined to judge that according to what was done and ourselves according to our intentions.

And here God is saying, He judges impartially, without respect of person. He judges. So, there's a psalm that talks about remembering that He is our Father.

And in that psalm He's talking about and remember that He has compassion. And He knows that we are but dust. And so, if I don't want to cultivate this image of the Father as some man up there that's just waiting to see where we would miss the mark, where we would miss the mark to be like to strike us.

Although, we do well to remember that He judges impartially and that it's a big deal if we miss the mark. And yet, I want to also make sure that we have a compassionate Father who remembers that we are but dust. And He's compassionate.

He's like that Father whose son had left home and went out and squandered all his goods. He had so utterly missed the mark. He had so utterly failed what the Father wanted for him.

And yet, when he turned around and started coming back home, the Father already saw him from a long distance away because He was there just waiting for that. He was waiting for Him to turn around and turn His heart toward Him. If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth.

Verse 18. Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers. This word redeemed means... I didn't do a study on it this morning, but it means something like to re... If you would take the word apart, it would be to redeem, right? Like to deem back to what was originally meant.

To redo this. Origen wrote the word redemption is that which is given to enemies for those whom they are keeping in captivity in order that they might restore them to the original freedom. So, kidnapping can still happen, but I think it was far more common to happen back in the days when... Back in the days, I guess.

Back in the days when... Or it even is more likely to happen in uncivilized areas, but a traveler always... There was a danger that went with traveling. He might fall under a band of robbers or if it was out on the sea, he might fall into the hands of pirates who would take the person and then hold him at a ransom. And the only way that they would release the captive is if the person wanting him back would pay them gold or silver.

And so once they had their gold and silver, they would return the captive back to his family or back to his country or whatever. And that's kind of the meaning of the word redemption or redeem. And here he says, knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your fathers, but with precious blood as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.

For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you who through Him are believers in God who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory so that your faith and hope are in God. Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently lovingly love one another from the heart. For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable, but imperishable, that is through the living and enduring word of God.

For all flesh is like grass and its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers and the flower falls off, but the word of the Lord endures forever. And this is the word which was preached to you." In the parable Jesus gave of the sower, He said, the seed is the word.

And the seed that was sown out in the parable falls to the soil, makes contact with the earth, it makes contact with soil, and then it starts to grow first a stem, then a leaf, and finally fruit. Here he talks about we've been born again not of perishable seed, if the seed that makes contact with our heart is perishable seed. In other words, if the things that take root in our heart, the things that come to our heart and there find root, find the ability to grow and flourish, if the things that do that are fleshly, if they are earthly, if they are carnal, then it's perishable seed and will bloom for a season, like the grass that produces a flower and soon the sun comes up and it withers and it is no longer remembered.

But if the word of God takes root in our heart, if the words, if Jesus Christ, who is the word and everything about him, if he makes contact with our heart and there he finds, there it, I could say, finds the ability to take root and grow and mature and produce, it's imperishable seed. It is not like the flesh, not like the grass that withers and the flower that falls. The word of the Lord endures forever.

May the Lord add his blessing. You can open it up for, if anybody has anything they want to share. Thank you, Brother Duane.

I just had one small thought and that was, hallelujah, that the bad news is just temporal, but the good news is eternal. It's way more profitable to focus on the good news. I appreciate that.

Maybe just in relation to the, when you woke up in the morning and you saw all the good news around you and then you turned on the worldly news and the bad news, like thank God that's just temporal, but the word of the Lord is forever. Thank you, Brother Duane. It was short and sweet, a good devotion.

Someone has defined the definition of history as one war after another war. Brother Dijon could probably attest to that. People who are, I don't think it's over 100 years old today, the centurions in our country, World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, it's just one war after another.

Galatians 1, 5, for the whole world lies in the hands of the evil one. First John, no, Galatians 1, 5, deliver us from this evil age and First John is that. It's a good reminder, Brother Rickson and his little devotion today.

We're in a battle. Let's wake up. We're soldiers.

Job 7, 17, I think, kind of goes right with Psalm 8. It says, I'll just read that verse there, Job 7, 17. Job is speaking. He says, What is man that you should magnify him and that you should set thine heart upon him and that you should visit him every morning and try him every moment? So what is Brother Darren here, the God of the universe, no beginning, no end, who knows all things, who has all knowledge, looks in Darren, who's only 25, 24, and tries his thoughts every moment to see if he is walking in the light or if he is not walking in the light.

What are all of us that God looks into our hearts to see what's our thoughts, what's it going to be? I think a solution would be, one of them would be in Psalm 139, Search me, Lord, and know my hearts. Or maybe Psalm 19, Psalm 19, Let the words of my lips and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight. The Lord be magnified.

Come to the heavens above By the almighty Holy Spirit let And fill them with hope when they Are hearts
defest from treasures Here below Showed after Christ's Triumph when we ascend And only with His name
Can we joyfully know How our Lord, our risen Savior, Lord and Friend And from that God's Rise and the
ever-spit Maintain and submit To His all-conquering All-victorious Christ In the exalt of us Now leading
them For every sinner's slain The Lord, our King, Lives and waits with us And shall forever Ever live and
reign With our living, joyful hearts we give To Him who gives us life And breath and power and peace And
then to sin With remembrance daily live The life of love and joy And righteousness The hidden life of
Christ Our God is love With Christ unsealed in Friendly force above And ever tasty Blessed was your heart
We today love you And ever praise this love Standing by a purpose true Heeding God's command
Honoring the faithful Few are held to Daniel's plan Dare to be a Daniel Dare to stand alone Dare to have a
purpose firm Dare to make it known Many, mighty men are lost Daring not to stand Who for God have
been a host By joining Daniel's band Dare to be a Daniel Dare to stand alone Dare to have a purpose firm
Dare to make it known Many giants great and tall Stalking through the land And on to the earth would fall If
met by Daniel's band Dare to be a Daniel Dare to stand alone Dare to have a purpose firm Dare to make it
known Hold the gospel banner high On to victory grand Satan and his foes defy And shout for Daniel's
band Dare to be a Daniel Dare to stand alone Dare to have a purpose firm Dare to make it known Hold the
crystal seas for battle Let repentance ride the field He conspires to besoil Reproduce their fruit for you
Pray your fellow man, my brother Lay your curdles low and meek Trust your fields, men, slow and mouny
Full and mouny our spirit you'll be Our iniquities degraded In your stony turf, let's hope Have you grown in
desperation Rooted in such a heart remold Pray your fellow ground, my brother For our husband and our
brother Bruising broken hearts so richly That his barter overflows Have we trusted in our own ways As dirt
found to barter rain While our idle hands were folded God had felt the latter rain Pray your fellow ground,
my brother It is time to seek the Lord Plow in hope with loyal girdle And God's grace will be upon you For
light, for logic Of men this my heiress plead Lord of all, Christ to Thee Lord of all, Lord of all Son of peace
and rest Now we ask Thee, give what is best Christ to Thee, Lord of sorrow Guide Thy messengers and
sing with Thee Lord of all, Christ to Thee Whisper Thy praise, hearts shall raise This still my prayer shall
be Lord, Lord of all

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