



A SERMON

by Rev. Marcella Auld Glass: September 7, 2025



TODAY WE ARE BEGINNING ANOTHER YEAR OF SCRIPTURE READINGS from the [Narrative Lectionary](https://www.workingpreacher.org/narrative-faq).¹ Presbyterian flavored preachers have historically, preached from the 3 year [Revised Common Lectionary](https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/)² readings, which were put together in 1992 by a number of different Christian denominations. I like preaching the lectionary because it keeps me from using scripture to make whatever point I want to make.

I like the discipline of sitting down each week to the assigned texts and seeing the way God speaks through them to enlighten our current situation.

The downside of the Revised Common Lectionary is that it includes only 6% of the Old Testament, not including the psalms, and only 41% of the New Testament.

We now preach from the Narrative Lectionary, which is a four-year cycle of readings that covers the breadth of scripture. The story of scripture is emphasized, helping us connect our lives to the broad sweep of the biblical narrative. Some of the readings are longer than they are in the Revised Common Lectionary.

Some of these stories may be new to you. Some will feel very familiar. I invite you to listen to each story as if you were hearing it for the first time. Don't let what you thought you knew about it keep you from hearing what God may be saying to you today. And if you need a study bible, so you can follow along with the daily readings each week that are listed in the bulletin, we have some available. Talk with me after worship.

The Book of Genesis was not written to be an eyewitness account or a historical reporting of the first day of creation. Today we will hear the first biblical account of creation, from chapter 1. Chapter 2 has a different account of creation. The creation stories are not to help us understand molecular biology or physics. They are to help us understand our place in the world and our reason for being in the world. Walter Brueggeman, one of my seminary professors of blessed memory, once said it is about human's destiny as God's creations, to live in God's creation, with God's other creatures, on God's terms.

The creation stories are also not in opposition to our understandings of biology or physics. Sir William Bragg, who won the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1915 said, **"Christianity and science are opposed, but only in the same sense as that which my thumb and forefinger are opposed. And between them, I can grasp everything."**

I love that reminder that things that are opposed are not always in conflict. How does our relationship with each other change if we consider the idea that God has created us differently—thumbs and forefingers—for the very purpose of coming together to grasp things between us?

Let us enter worship this day, thankful for God's good creation of our opposable thumbs, and other acts of creation too.

Genesis 1:1—2:4a

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.

Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

¹ <https://www.workingpreacher.org/narrative-faq>

² <https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/>

And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth." And it was so. God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky." So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind." And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

So God created humankind in their image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so.

God saw everything that they had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that they had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that they had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that God had done in creation.

These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

AND SO TODAY, WE START AT THE VERY BEGINNING, a very good place to start, as Julie Andrews taught us.

In the beginning.

The Book of Genesis begins with "once upon a time" kind of story, back when the universe was primordial ooze and was without form or substance. God breathed her Spirit over the face of the chaos and brought order. And it was good.

Don't ever forget the goodness of God's creation.

There have been gods throughout history who were largely capricious and destructive. People worship those gods in fear and in hopes of not making them angry. You can see that even today—people convinced God would send them to hell just for kicks, or because they managed not to check off the boxes required to be loved by God. We see people worshiping capricious and destructive gods of power, war, cruelty, and chaos. You don't have to look hard at the news to see the worship of those gods.

In Genesis 1, however, we see God creating in joy and love, taking what was once formless void and creating light, sky, land, sun, moon, creepy crawly things, birds, cows, and even people.

The fact that the hedgehog and the platypus and the penguin exist show me that God finds joy and delight in the creative process.

On [Twitter](#) a number of years ago, people imagined God's conversations as they created animals.

"God creating snakes: How about a sock that's angry all the time".

"God creating horses: Take a donkey, and make it sexy".

"God creating parrots: How about a tie dye chicken that screams actual words at you?"

"God creating dogs: Oh, these turned out great. I'm gonna want all these back at some point".

I'm not sure that's a verbatim transcription of the 5th and 6th day of creation, but I'm sure it's at least partly right. God's work in the creation story is imaginative, delightful, and collaborative.



milty
@themilttron



[god creating snakes]

how about a sock that's angry all the time

12:11 AM - 22 Nov 2015

🔄 426 ❤️ 689

And think of how humanity has continued on as God began, creating art, music, literature, antibiotics, vaccines, pizza, women's basketball, and the comedy of Monty Python.

Our creative work is not the same as God's creating works of course, and sometimes we forget our place as creation, pretending we created the universe ourselves. But when we create to make the world better, to bring beauty and joy to the world, we continue as God began. And God declares that good.

God declares their creation good.

I think this could be the topic of our sermons for the entire year. Maybe eternity.

God declares their creation good.

We read those words. We hear those words. *Do we believe those words?*

I read the news, and I realize how hard it is for us to believe that other people are God's good creation. I hear the critic in my head and realize how hard it is sometimes to believe that I am God's good creation.

And both of those things have to go together. If you only believe God created you good and everyone else is a hot mess, that's a problem. But it is also a problem if you believe God created everyone else good but you were a mistake or disappointment.

God declares their creation good. That includes you. It includes every person you have ever and will ever meet. It includes every person you will never meet. Not all human behavior is good, but each human being was created good.

We have an entire economy and political system we have created to tell us different. We're told other people are not worth loving, or housing, or protecting, or honoring.

Those messages may not say explicitly anything about God. The messaging may be about how the people themselves are responsible for why we don't need to care for them. They are poor because they don't want to work. They should be deported because they should have stayed in their own country. They voted for that candidate we don't like so they must be idiots. Etc. We separate ourselves from seeing the created goodness and humanity of each other all the time.

And it must stop.

Each and every person involved in those stories we tell are people who were created by God, and God declares their creation good. Our policies may still need to limit societies response, but it would be clearer and more honest if the messaging was "these people were made by God and are worthy of respect and care, but we don't want to raise taxes to care for them" or "we're afraid of their difference" or whatever the honest message is.

God declares their creation good. Who are we to say it is not?

And the economy may be even more set up to make it hard to believe that we, in these frail human bodies, could be considered good. We spend well over 100 billion³ a year on beauty and fitness in this country.

We are told, and we too easily believe, that if only our hair, skin, face, weight, strength, fitness, height, body shape, were different, then maybe God might be happy with their creation that is us.

And yes, take care of your body and your health. But don't do it so that God will declare you good. Do it because God already has.

We have to let go of some idealized notion of what the perfect human should look like and remember that in God's good creation process, diversity is built in. We are supposed to be different, with different gifts, different strengths, different abilities.

My husband, among his many gifts, seems to have been built for speed and endurance. He can run for days, through pain. It is impressive to me, and though I have tried to match him in that ability, I cannot. I appear to have been built for comfort. I don't mean to brag, but I can sit for long stretches at a time. He and I are different. God has created us good. God has created us to not be exactly the same.

This past week, we went kayaking up in Sausalito, and as I paddled around the Bay, I watched some sort of pelican/osprey flying fast and impossibly low, inches off the water, as they hunted for lunch, grabbing fish out of the Bay. In Alaska, I've seen bald eagles diving down from great heights to do the same. I also once had a seagull land on my head to steal my hotdog from the bun.

³ <https://www.advdermatology.com/blog/americas-beauty-budgets/#:~:text=Survey%20Reveals%20Average%20American%20Spends,in%202025%20compared%20to%202024.>

God created all of those birds. And thousands more species of birds too. And God has declared their creation good. But God did not make just one perfect bird. God delighted in creating them different from each other, with different skills, needs, and talents.

The choir and I have the best view in the house each week in worship. We get to look out and see all of your lovely faces. I invite you to look around right now at your fellow worshipers.

While God's creation is even more diverse than what is present in this room, we get a glimpse of God's creative decisions here. Not a one of you are the same—not even if you're a twin. We are all different skin colors, different political orientations, different gender expressions, different sexual identities. We have different tastes in music, ice cream, pizza toppings, and favorite sports teams.

God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness."

Look around, friends. All of y'all are the image of God, reflecting the goodness of God. I challenge us all this week to see the goodness of God's creation when we look in the mirror, and when we're walking the streets of our city, even when we're reading the news. You will never meet, see, hear about a person that God did not create in love. May we reflect that love back to them.

The stakes are high. Suicide rates have increased 37% since 2000.⁴

Self-harm, eating disorders, violence—all of these are connected to losing sight of the goodness of God's creation in ourselves and in others.

You, yes you, were created in the image of God. Now tell that to your neighbor.

Who you are is beautiful and good and matters. You are loved. You are enough. You are God's beautiful creation. Go reflect that message to the world.

Amen.

⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/facts/data.html>