Session Two - Notes

We began by looking at God's creating and creation. What did we see?
+ God's existence is not dependent on time or space. God 'already' exists before creation starts
+ as creating begins, there is chaos
+ then God starts to bring order out of chaos by the 'ruah' (wind/breath) which moves upon the chaos
+ The chaos is put into order and harmony by the "dabar" of God, i.e., the "word" of God. God speaks and it happens!
+ God brings into being space, time, matter, energy – all necessary for the rest of creation
+ in an orderly span of time, God brings into being all that is… and it is GOOD
+ nothing God's creates is bad, out of place, evil. The goodness of creation, or the 'sacramentality' of creation is a basic belief of our faith. God blesses all that is!

Observation by Bruce Vawter:

"In a world he never made
man is not doomed to walk bewildered and afraid
but is summoned into being
at the very end of a creative process that declares him,
after GOD himself,
to be lord of all he beholds." ("On Genesis," p. 52)

Is Genesis Chapter One "true?"
+ The account of creation is infallibly true. God inspired the author to teach us the divine message.
+ The truth of this account of creation is NOT to be sought on the level of physics. Using Genesis 1 to create a conflict between "Science and Faith" is a misunderstanding of what Genesis 1 is trying to teach us
+ Genesis 1 gives us a theology which reveals an understanding of all that is. We are being told the truth about why things exist
+ This theology is absolutely unique in the history of ancient and modern thought. It provides a coherent explanation which helps us to understand ourselves, and our relationship to God and to the rest of reality.
+ We exist because god created us for a purpose. The fact that we share in the "Divine Image" articulates the meaning of our lives, i.e., our mission, vocation and fulfillment.
+ we find joy and meaning in life when we live according to the nature of the Divine Image with us, and when we allow God's Word and Breath to bring order to the chaotic parts of our existence.
+ contemporary people who reject this revelation in the name of 'science' accept the conclusion

that they themselves and the world in which they live need no explanation, only a competent description. Hence, men and women in the world are ultimately meaningless. Their lives have no ultimate meaning or purpose, since everything that 'is' is the result of the random 'chance' of the evolutionary process. Without answers to questions like "Why does *anything* exists at all" and "Why do *we* exist at all," how does life have any real meaning, purpose, goal or coherence?

In Ch. 2 we begin to wrestle with vexing questions:
1. Where does sin come from?
2. Where do wars and discord have their origin?
3. Why must we work painfully for a living on this earth, if we were given 'dominion' over it?
4. Why is childbirth so painful?
5. Why is the relationship between man and woman at times joyful, and at times difficult?
6. Where does death come from?

In other words – in Ch. 1, God brings order out of chaos. So Ch. 2 has to explain, *where did the new chaos come from?*

SPRITUAL HOMEWORK FOR THIS COMING WEEK:
Read Genesis Ch. 1 and 2 each day

Day One – *There are many names for God in the Bible, such as* ***The Lord, God Most High, Savior, My Rock, My Fortress, My Salvation, I AM, My Shepherd, Father, Abba…***
Which 'name' of God is most helpful to you as you pray. What other scriptural names and images for God might help to deepen your experience of God?

Day Two – *we are made of dust. To dust we shall return. How does that help us to understand ourselves better? How does it help us to understand what is really important in life, and what is worth doing?*

Day Three – *God is portrayed as a potter, holding us in His hands, molding and shaping us. Is there some part of your life that currently needs God's 'shaping'?*

Day Four – *Have you ever had an experience in which you felt God filling you with the breath of life? How does your experience of human breath help you to understand the nearness of God?*

Day Five: *as you experience God's creation right now, how do you see the hand of God at work in the way that the natural world is created and place in order?*

Day Six: *how has God given you all that you need to flourish?*