

Genesis 1 - The world God makes

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[0 : 00] Good morning, church. It's my pleasure to read to you this morning from Genesis. I'll give you half an hour to find it.! It's on page three. I think we've already got it.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty. Darkness was over the surface of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, let there be light. And there was light. God saw that the light was good. And he 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 vault between the waters to separate water from water. So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it.

And it was so. God called the vault sky. And there was evening. And there was morning. The second day. And God said, let the water under the sky be gathered to one place.

[1 : 19] And let dry ground appear. And it was so. God called the dry ground land. And the gathered waters he called seas.

And God saw that it was good. Then God said, let the land produce vegetation, seed bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruits with seed in it, according to their various kinds.

And it was so. The land produced vegetation, plants bearing seed according to their kinds, and trees bearing fruits with seed in it, according to their kinds.

And God saw that it was good. And there was evening. And there was morning. The third day. And God said, let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night.

And let them serve as signs to mark sacred times and days and years. And let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth. And it was so.

[2 : 25] God made two great lights. The greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness.

And God saw that it was good. And there was evening. And there was morning. The fourth day. And God said, let the water team with living creatures and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky.

So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teams and that moves about in it according to their kinds.

And every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them and said, be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas and let the birds increase on the earth.

And there was evening and there was morning. The fifth day. And God said, let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds, the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind.

[3 : 42] And it was so. God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds.

And God saw that it was good. Then God said, let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals and over all the creatures that move along the ground.

So, God created mankind in his own image. In the image of God, he created them. Male and female, he created them.

God blessed them and said to them, be fruitful and increase in number. Fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, and over every living creature that moves on the ground.

Then God said, I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth, and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.

[4 : 55] And to all the beasts of the earth, and all the birds in the sky, and all the creatures that move along the ground, everything that has the breath of life in it, I give every green plant for food.

And it was so. So, God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning, the sixth day.

Amen. Great. Thank you so much for reading for us, John. Let me pray as we come to God's word. Let me pray. Loving Heavenly Father, we thank you that you are a God who not only made us by speaking, but now loves to speak to us through your word, by your spirit.

And so we pray this morning that you might help us to listen well, not so much to me, but to what you are saying through me. I pray that all of us, including me, might have tender hearts to your word.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. If you were with us a few weeks ago, I introduced to you this four-part series that we're doing on creation.

[6 : 07] And you will have heard my kind of pipe dream of time travel, right? So I got you to imagine this idea of time traveling and going back into ancient times and putting something modern in the hands of someone ancient.

And so we thought about a Roman soldier who might be sitting in a Tesla or a Victorian who was holding an iPhone. And the point of the illustration was to make us sort of realize that the Roman soldier in the Tesla and the Victorian with an iPhone would have no idea what to do with what you had given them because they had no idea where that came from or what purpose it was made for. And the point of the illustration is that in the absence of solid answers for where I came from or why I was made, then we are also similarly lost and confused.

And worse than just lost and confused, we tend to misuse what we have been given, misuse our own lies by using them for purposes which they weren't intended.

Like a Victorian using an iPhone as a hammer, for example. Chat GPT is a wonderful thing, isn't it? Now, you don't need me to tell you this because you see this kind of brokenness all around you in the world, don't you?

[7 : 29] It's in our communities, it's in our families, it's in our workplaces, it's even in our church.

This sort of restlessness in our own souls, this sense that we have not quite arrived at the place that we long to be.

A sense that it doesn't all work together well, it doesn't quite fit. And that's why I want to suggest to you that whether you're a Christian or not this morning, whether this is the first time you've been in church or you've been coming to church for longer than most people in this room have been alive, I want to suggest to you that you must lay this foundation first.

These truths are so foundational and we need to keep returning to them, this doctrine of creation. Now, the focus last time was on who made the world. We saw that the world was made in Genesis 1-3 by an eternal, triune God who made the world from nothing for his glory.

And we thought about how that means that our lives are given to us for the purpose of worship. We are here to make God look great, to ascribe worthiness to him. Not so much in just what we sing, but in all of life, given to us to reflect the glory of another.

And if you didn't hear that, I'm not going to tell you all over again. You can go back and have a listen to it. It's on the church website. Now, we're going to move on this morning to think about how that God of creation creates.

[8 : 51] So the how God creates, the what God creates, and the why he makes it in the way he does. So how, what, and why is our territory this morning.

And we're going to start with how. How. Now, you will have noticed, as John read, and you will have known if you were here a couple of weeks ago, that we saw that God makes the world from nothing by speaking.

But you will notice that there is a lot more detail than just that in Genesis 1 and 2. So look down at it with me. Verse 1. God creates from nothing. God, in the beginning, creates the heavens and the earth.

And the earth is formless and empty in the beginning, says verse 2. What follows, then, having made this formless and empty world, is that then God orders that world by forming and filling it in the six days that follow.

So on day 1, in verses 3 to 5, he forms the light and separates it from the darkness, making a space called day and another called night.

[9 : 56] In day 2, in verses 6 to 8, he forms a vault between the water above and the water below, a vault he calls sky. Then in day 3, in verses 9 to 13, he gathers the waters and forms a space that is called dry land, which produces vegetation and plants.

Then on day 4, verses 14 to 19, he starts filling. And he first fills the day and the night with the sun, moon, and the stars. Then on day 5, he fills the sky of day 2 with birds and the waters below with living creatures.

And on day 6, he fills the land from day 3 with living creatures, including men and women. And then on day 7, which we didn't read, in chapter 2, verses 2 to 3, God ceases from his creating work and calls the day holy and rests from the work of creation.

So here you have this pattern of forming and then filling what is formed, or separating and adorning, as some theologians call it, creating the space and filling the space, so that the formless and empty chaos of verse 1 becomes the formed and filled world that we're told is very good in verse 31.

Now, let me just point out a couple of fairly obvious things from this that we have just read. Notice, firstly, the importance of repetition in these verses. John read it beautifully to us, didn't we?

[11 : 29] And we notice that there's just repetition all the way through. Lots of words get repeated over and over. And it starts with the word day, doesn't it? There was evening and there was morning.

We then see that God said, and the result is always, and it was so. Culminating in this, and God saw that it was good.

And then at the end, it is very good in the culmination of creation. So there's a sort of repetition and structure. God says, it happens, it's good. God says, it happens, it's good. And all of those build this sort of six and one pattern, don't they?

Six days and then one day rest. In other words, God, the God of creation is the God of order, not the God of chaos. God is the God who brings order out of chaos.

That's the first thing to notice, repetition. Second thing to notice is that not all your questions are answered. I don't know about you, but maybe you have some burning questions that you would love to ask, Genesis chapter one and two.

[12 : 32] But as you read it, you realize that they are not answered. It's not a scientific document, is it? It's a theological one. Not because it doesn't have anything to say about science or how we study the world.

In fact, it has rather a lot to say about those things. But rather the intention here is that you and I see the structure, the purpose, the plan and the beauty, even while we're not told everything that we would love to be told.

So just take the word day, for example. The intention is clearly that we understand these to be six days, to be days. You know, that's the way the word is used. But when you look at them, they're unusual, aren't they?

So we're told that there is evening and morning on each of those days, even before there's a sun to rise or a sun to set, until it's created on day four. Then on day seven, there is no evening and there is no morning, because in some sense we're to understand that there is an endless day seven. Now, what does that mean? Well, we're not really told. Now, we're to understand that that means that there are some bad questions to ask Genesis 1, because you're just not going to get them answered.

[13 : 38] It's the same, I think, with the split between verse 1 and then the days of verse 3 and following. You know, how long was it between verse 1 and verse 3? What was happening? Are those two separate events, or are they just split for literary purposes?

And people disagree about that. It's hard to be dogmatic about an answer, because we're not told. Now, it's important to see this, because I think sometimes Christians have approached Genesis 1 as if it was written primarily to refute Darwin.

That was certainly my background at Sunday school and at youth club. Now, Genesis 1 does, at a number of points, refute Darwin really clearly. But that's not why it was written.

It is instead to teach us who God is, what this world is like, and what our lives are for. As the creeds say, Genesis 1 teaches us to believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth, that through him all things were made.

Now, that's not to say that Genesis 1 is some kind of myth or some kind of poetic fantasy. It's clearly not that. It's history being told theologically. The Westminster Shorter Catechism, which is this question-answer thing that we were talking about earlier, says that the work of creation is God making all things of nothing by the word of his power in the space of six days, all very good.

[15:00] That's the point. A guy called Augustine, who was an African bishop, was writing in the fourth century and debating with a guy called Felix. And he said this, which is really helpful, I think.

He said, The purpose of Genesis 1 is to make you a Christian, to make you believe in God, to know that your life was given to you by someone else, to live for his glory.

That's why it was given, not to make you a mathematician. And the good news about that is, it's much easier to become a Christian than it is a mathematician. So that's how God made the world. God made the world in six days by speaking. But next, think exactly what does God create? What does God create? Now, I know what you're thinking. You're thinking, this is a really dumb question, Steve.

Why are you asking what does God make? God made everything. We've just talked about that with the children. It's obvious here. God made the world. That's what we've been going on about. So what do you mean? Steve, you're making this more complicated than it has to be.

[16:12] Well, I'm sorry. That's not what I'm trying to do. I know that is sometimes what happens, but that is not my intention. I want us to think carefully about exactly what God is making here.

Because then I think the implication and the application of these chapters will become more obvious. So jump down to Genesis chapter 2. Genesis chapter 2 is not an alternative creation account.

It's telling the same story of Genesis 1, but it's telling it from a different kind of angle, different camera angle. So you will see different details. But let's read it from verse 4.

Look down at chapter 2, verse 4. This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, when the Lord God made the earth and the heavens. Now no shrub had yet appeared on the earth and no plant had yet sprung up.

For the Lord God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground. But streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground. Then the Lord formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.

[17:19] And the man became a living being. Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden. And there he put the man he had formed. The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground, trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food.

And in the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. A river, watering the garden, flowed from Eden. From there it was separated into four headwaters. The name of the first is Pishon. It winds through the entire land of Havilah where there is gold. The gold of that land is good. Aromatic resin and onyx are also there.

The name of the second river is the Gihon. It winds through the entire land of Cush. The name of the third river is the Tigris. It runs along the east side of the Asher.

And the fourth river is the Euphrates. The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the Lord commanded the man, you are free to eat from any tree in the garden.

[18:23] But you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. For when you eat from it you will certainly die. Now we don't have time to go through that verse by verse.

But I want you to notice that God places man in a garden that he creates. That's in verse 8. So man is not plonked in the world in general.

Right? God doesn't create humanity and just throw them into the world in general. Instead he puts him in a garden in particular. A garden that we assume has limits. It's in the east.

It's not in the west. It's not covering the whole planet. In fact it seems that to a certain extent the rest of the planet is quite barren according to verse 5. That the world needs a gardener in order to flourish.

God has started with the garden. And humanity has given the task of both looking after that garden. And in some sense expanding that garden to fill the world.

[19:18] More of that next week. But in the middle of the garden are two trees. The tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We'll be thinking about those next week.

Alongside those trees are rivers flowing from one headwater. Four rivers. Sourced from the garden and flowing out. And there is the blessing of precious stones in verse 12.

Particularly gold. Good gold gets mentioned. And then in the midst of the garden God speaks again. But not now to create. But rather verses 16 and 17 to give rules for living in the garden.

A contract bylaws. If you want to live here you've got to live like this. If you don't live like this you will be thrown out of here. Now put this together with me for a second.

How does God make the world? Well in a pattern of six and one by speaking. What does God make? God makes a garden from which rivers, gold and God's covenant word ring out.

[20 : 16] That's the how and the what. Now hold those things in your mind if you can. And think with me about why. So what I hope you're beginning to get an idea of.

Is that God could have made the world in any way that he chose to. Right? He could have just done it like that. And just taken a moment over it. In fact Augustine thought that that's probably what God did.

He made the world instantly like that. That's the God that he thought Genesis 1 taught us. But that's not how he describes it is it in Genesis 1. I suppose too God doesn't have to make a garden either does he?

Could have made a theme park. Could have made us roller coasters and a log flume or something like that. He could have built something different to this. But he doesn't. He makes a garden with trees and gold.

More than that God could have chosen to record the account in any way he chose to. He could have chosen to record the details in a different way to those that he has recorded it. He could have given us the answers to all the burning questions that we've got.

[21 : 18] But he doesn't does he? Instead we're told that God makes the world in six days by speaking. Creating a garden into which humanity is placed. And the question is why? Why?

Let me try and illustrate what's going on here for a moment if I can. If you were to see me pull up in my car in a field. Right? Open the boot of that car.

And get out of the boot of that car a tent. Pitch it. Roll out an airbed. And a sleeping bag. You would assume from both the how and the what that the why is I intend to stay there for some time.

Right? I'm intending to go on a holiday. Maybe. The great camping holiday where you live like you're penniless and homeless for a week and call it fun.

Right? I actually quite enjoy it. That made it sound like I don't. But I do quite enjoy it. You see you would understand the why by the how and the what. Yeah? You understand that. Okay. That's what's going on here in Genesis 1 and 2.

[22 : 19] You see the how. A pattern of 6 and 1. And an unending day 7. A garden with trees and rivers and endless gold. That is meant to lead you to the why. A why which becomes increasingly clear as you read the rest of the Bible.

Which is that God is creating and ordering the universe. He is forming it and filling it. Planting a garden with the intention. And here it is. Of being there himself.

God is active in the 6 days. But he is present in the 7th day. A day that doesn't end. The finale of creation is God entering his rest.

And inviting humanity to join him in it. Theologian Gerhardus Vos put it like this. The garden is the garden of God. Not in the first instance an abode for man as such.

But specifically a place of reception of man into fellowship with God. In God's own dwelling place. In other words what's being described in Genesis 1 and 2.

[23 : 23] Is not just creation in general. Not a purposeless world where you're just launched off to go and do whatever you want to do. What's described in Genesis 1 and 2 is a temple. God building a place for himself to dwell with people.

And for them to dwell with him. God in the divine image in a sense is pitching a tent. And inviting us to join with him. Now maybe that seems a stretch to you.

Or maybe it doesn't seem that important. But let me try and show you why that's important. Let me try and run you through the story of the Bible if I can. Really, really super quick. I'm going to give you some spoilers if you've not read the Bible before.

But that's okay. Okay. In chapter 2 we've seen God makes the world and people to live in the garden that he's planted. But what happens which we'll see in a couple of weeks time. Is that in chapter 3. Adam and Eve who he's placed in the garden.

Rebel against God. Break his law. Reach out for the forbidden fruit. And eat it. And are excluded from the garden. Shut out. And the way back is guarded by the flaming swords of cherubim who were put in the way.

[24 : 29] Literally they are put out of the presence of God. They are excluded from the temple. And death comes to them. Because life comes from being in the presence of God.

And death comes from exclusion from his presence. And the rest of the story of the Bible really in a sense is the story of how is that relationship, that fellowship between the God who made us and the people who he made, how is that restored?

How can we get back? And it's interesting, isn't it? It's not really so much, you know, how we want to get back into the garden. Because we didn't really, we kind of ran from the garden.

Really the story is about how can God make something again, which is a place where it is possible for a holy God to now dwell with rebellious sinful people. How can he transform them so that they can now dwell with him?

Where will Eden be? Where can a holy God have fellowship with unholy people? Now that desire of God to restore the garden is symbolized in the Old Testament first by the building of a tabernacle tent.

[25 : 36] Moses, who you might know, who led the Exodus, is then taken up a mountain and given instructions to build a tent where God's presence with his people would be represented to them, where they could hear his words.

Then in the days of the kings, that temporary tent is superseded by a stone temple that Solomon built in the center of Jerusalem, a place where the priests would attend in the presence of God, entering into the Holy of Holies where God's presence was represented.

Only then could they access it through blood sacrifices. Now think about those buildings. This is fascinating, right? The tabernacle instructions are given to Moses on Mount Sinai.

How? God makes Moses wait on the top of Mount Sinai. How long does he make him wait? Six days. He gives him the instructions about the presence of God and dwelling with him on the seventh day.

How then do those instructions come? Six speeches. The final speech? Sabbath day. Right? Rest with God in the tabernacle.

[26 : 48] Then take the temple. Amazingly, for some reason, the temple is decorated like a garden. Trees and flowers are engraved on the inside. It's like Eden.

The cherubim are there. And it's covered in gold. Good gold. And it's built over seven years. And it's built over seven years. But when that temple is eventually destroyed by the Babylonians, the prophet Ezekiel has a vision of a restoration of a temple.

And what does he see? A river flowing from the temple, watering the nations. In other words, as you read the Bible, when you come to things like the tabernacle and the temple and the rebuilding of the temple, you have to think, oh wow, that's like Genesis 1 and 2.

God is rebuilding Eden. This is paradise restored. God is coming to be with his people. Exclusion from the presence of God is not forever.

And the ultimate fulfillment of that is the coming of the Lord Jesus. John tells us that Jesus tabernacled with us. And Jesus talks about the temple being his body.

[27 : 49] The place where we meet with God. Where God has finally come to be with his people. Becoming the sacrifice for their sin in his own body on the cross. And what happens as Jesus dies?

Well, the curtain of the temple is torn open. Not so much so that you and I can just wander into God's presence. We have no instinct to do that. But so that God can escape the Holy of Holies, if you like, and enter into the world that he has made.

Paradise is open again for all to come through Jesus' sacrifice. And when you get to the end of the Bible, what do you find? Well, Jesus returns in resurrected human flesh.

God coming to be with us. And where does he come? Well, not to a garden, but now to a city. A city which is a perfect square, just like the temple. Full of the gold of Eden and the beauty of the world. Rivers are flowing from there. And in the midst of it, a tree. The tree of life. An eternal Eden. A city for God to dwell with his forgiven people for all eternity.

[28 : 53] Now, here's the thing, right? God makes the world to be with us. That's why. And God rescues us through Jesus Christ so that we might be with him eternally.

Perhaps this helps us just see that the horror of the brokenness of our world. I know in a room like this that many of us have experienced the horrors of a broken world in all sorts of different ways. But let me tell you that the thing that is wrong in the world is not simply the stuff that we do wrong, right? There is a big problem of immorality in the world, isn't there?

It's in our lives. It's in our world. We see it. It's not... The problem in the world is not less than that, but it's a lot more. You see, if it was just the fact that the world did stuff wrong, then our big problem would be guilt.

And we all do feel guilty, don't we? It depends on how sensitive you are to the degree to which you feel it. But I'm sure I could stand here and make all of us feel guilty if I wanted to. But that's not the point.

[29 : 53] You see, the truth is that you could be a faithfully married man who loves his wife and his kids, provides for them generously, and you could still feel lost and purposeless.

You could keep all the rules at work. You could pay all your taxes. You could avoid the gangs. You could drive at the speed limit, even the 20-mile-an-hour ones. And you can still see the futility of it all, especially if you get sick or something bad happens to you that someone else does.

What is the point of it all? And here it is, isn't it? The purpose of our lives is not just to be good, but to be with God.

That's the purpose. God has made us and made this world that we might be with him. And the big problem in our world is not simply the immorality in our world.

The big problem in the world is that we have rejected God's presence. We're not so much like or just like the unfaithful bride or bridegroom who goes off and has relationships with other people.

[31 : 04] We are like that. But even before that, we're like the bride who never showed up, who left the groom standing, didn't turn up for the wedding day.

Oh, do you know what? I'd rather not be with you. We're like the friend who not only keeps offending us and crossing us, but when you arrange to meet, they always bail at the last minute because they've always got something better to do.

They just leave you standing. That's how we relate to God. You and I were made to be with God, to enjoy his presence, to live with him forever.

And we, you know what? I'd rather live by myself, thanks God. I'd rather just leave. You know, humanity is thrown out of the garden in Genesis 3, but frankly, they wanted to leave anyway.

And that means if this is why God made the world, for the purpose of being with his people, then it means that your life is given to you for the purpose of being with him.

[32 : 01] And whoever you are, wherever you were born, whatever your interests, you were made for God. Perhaps it's better to put it the way around. God makes the world like this. It means that for you and I, home, home is with the Lord.

God makes the world like this, that we might find home in him. And until we are with him, we will always feel kind of out of sorts. You know, the nice new flat that you've just rented might be brilliant, right?

But it still won't fix it. Because creation was not made for you. You were made for God. And God created you and the world that he might be with you. That new relationship that you're enjoying, that won't fix it either.

Because ultimately, you weren't just made for one other person or a community of other people. You were made for the presence of God. The money, the possessions, the health, the connections, the success, none of those will do it.

Because you weren't made for stuff. In fact, there's a sense in which, isn't there, that the stuff that we have and the stuff that was made has been made for the purpose of being the arena in which we might encounter and enjoy the presence of God.

[33 : 17] God formed the world that he might fill the world. That's home. And anywhere else you don't quite belong. As Augustine said, our hearts are restless until they find their rest in God.

And where do you find that rest, right? We can't go back to Eden, can we? The tabernacle and the temple are gone. Where do we go? We come to Jesus, the one who gave his life for us on the cross.

God himself in human flesh, inviting us into relationship with him through the forgiveness that he offers. He comes to us and offers us God's presence, even as we wait still to be with him.

Let me finish with a true story that I read this week. I suspect the names have been changed in the story, but the story itself, I'm assured, is true. Let me read it to you as we finish. Katie came to London from China to study, and she stayed around for work.

A decade later, she was incredibly successful, but she said this about her life. Outwardly, I had what everybody else would have called a very successful career.

[34 : 28] I earned a lot more than my peers. I could afford to travel. I was going on four international trips a year. I lived in a nice area of the city. I was hanging out with important people.

I should have been content, but really I felt empty on the inside. So like many modern people, I went with a therapist.

I had sessions for about nine or ten months. I went through my childhood issues, and that was really healthy for me, but it didn't go anywhere. It still didn't answer the questions of why I was born into this world and what the meaning of life is.

So then I moved on to philosophy. I enrolled myself on courses. I even went on a summer school at a university. But I started to realize that philosophy is a subject that is about not answers, but questions.

They use one question to answer another question. That's what philosophy is about, at least to me. Katie then called her Christian friend. Her Christian friend encouraged her to go to church, and this is what she says about that.

[35 : 33] The Bible talk really hit me. It was based on a story that Jesus had told, and something clicked inside me. At the end of the sermon, we stood up to sing. I was reading the lyrics, and something just overcame me.

This overwhelming feeling of love. It's hard to describe, but for the first time in my life, I felt completely safe. Not physically safe, but like supernaturally safe.

I remember I came out of the church building, and I was a little bit shocked at myself. Do you know what? Katie came home that Sunday.

That's what happened. She came home to the God who'd made her for his presence. Whose presence we now only access through Jesus Christ and his death on the cross. Listen, you might have been a Christian here for years.

Let me say to you, you are home in the Lord Jesus, and one day you will be finally home, and it will be glorious. And if you have never yet come home, can I encourage you and invite you to welcome Jesus Christ and come to him and find that you have been made for him, by him and for him, to enjoy him forever.

[36 : 49] Let me pray as we close. Heavenly Father, we thank you so much that you would want to be with us.

What an incredible idea that people like us have been made to be with you, to enjoy your presence, to enjoy your creation, to live our lives not only for you, but with you, by our side.

And Lord, we pray, please, that maybe if we've never yet come home, that we might find our home in Jesus. And for those of us who've done that, who still live in the sort of, the brokenness of this world, with the chaos around us, help us to find settled rest in Jesus and that promise of eternal peace and home with him.

In his name we pray. Amen. Amen. Thank you.