In The Beginning, God...

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Preacher: Mr Colin Nicolson

[0:00] Now if we turn together to the portion of scripture which we had read earlier on in the book of Genesis.! Genesis chapter number 1.

And we'll just read from the beginning of that chapter. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
The earth was without form and void and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters and so on.
In the beginning God. Now it hardly needs to be said that the place to begin reading a book is often at the beginning.
And I admit that as a young boy I had the silliest habit ever where I would read a book from the back to the front. Which made absolutely no sense unless you were reading the Bruins.
[1:13] And it hardly then needs to be said that the best place to begin reading a book is at the beginning. And still many people have the habit of reading the last chapter of a book first.

But if you try that with the Bible you will become very confused indeed. The best place to begin with is indeed at the beginning.
Scripture didn't start out by saying in the beginning the earth was without form and void. Scripture didn't start out by saying in the beginning before the sun and the solar system existed.
It didn't even start out by saying in the beginning in a land far far away. Scripture simply begins by saying in the beginning God.
And immediately the reader of the Bible is brought face to face with the fact of God. And you notice here there is no argument to prove his existence.
[2:30] There is no introduction to lead us up to the point. There is no room here in the opening chapter of Genesis for speculation or philosophizing.

It is by revelation and not speculation that we are brought face to face with the God who created the universe.
There is no other introduction. There is no other baseline commentary. There is not even time to duck. There is not even time to take breath and to step back.
Genesis 1 verse 1 draws a line in the dirt. And it asks everyone to step over. And as A.W. Pink points out, false religions and human philosophies begin with man.
And in some cases seek to work up towards God. But here the Bible begins with God as the one who was in the beginning.
[3:36] And the one who made all that is. And we must in all our thinking begin with God. He is the source of everything else.

So then it is no accident that the first sentence in the Bible has reference to God. It is no accident that not only in the beginning, but also at the beginning, and also from the beginning that God is mentioned.
For it is from this very opening sentence that all other themes and doctrines flow. Everything else that is mentioned from this very point on are like rivers that are flowing from their great source and their great fountainhead.
And nothing else makes sense. All human endeavor is completely futile unless at the very beginning of everything we try to do is God.
You see, it's God that creates value in this world. And it's God that creates value in us. And without God you're left with nothing that has any intrinsic value or any worth to it in this world.
[4:57] Everything you see becomes a mere accident. A chance collection of atoms and a chance collection of molecules. There is no plan and there is no purpose.

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Unless at the very beginning, unless at the very fountainhead of all that we are all about. It's God himself. You see, the Bible begins with God.
And we must begin with God always. And when the world rises up against us and where all our dreams are shattered, in the light of every providence, let us stand back from them all and respond first by seeking God and his kingdom.
On the back of all and above all and before all, in control of all, is the God of Genesis. The God who was in the beginning.
And like this opening verse, the verse of this word of God, let him first be in our thoughts. Let him be first in rank.
[6:03] Let him be first in station. Let him be first in our waking moments. In the beginning. God.

And friend, this morning, use the Genesis 1 verse 1 principle. So that in the beginning of everything you do, God.
At the beginning of your day. At the beginning of that job interview. At the beginning of that hospital appointment. At the beginning of that meeting. At the beginning of that meal. At the beginning. God. And this morning, I want to suggest to you that there are two great themes which flow from these opening verses in Genesis. Which reveal to us something about the creator of the world. That reveal to us something about God himself. First of all, there is a definition of his nature. And secondly, there is a demonstration of his nurture.
[7:04] These two things. A definition of his nature. And a demonstration of his nurture. So first of all, then let's look at his nature.

What does this reveal to us about God's nature? You see, to speak of the world as God's creation is first of all to make an affirmation about God.
God in the act of creation is declaring something about himself. You see, by calling God the creator and everything that constitutes the world his creatures.
The Christian faith affirms the utter otherness and the utter transcendence and the lordship of God. Creation out of nothing means that God alone is the source of all that exists. He is not part of this world.
[8:03] And the world in some way is not mysteriously part of God. God is the mysterious other on which everything else depends.

But to confess that God is creator is to say so much more. You see, God is just not simply a mysterious other.
God is not simply a concept, but a proper name. It's just not in the beginning God. But think of it like this. In the beginning, there was a being whose name was God.
Not the far off distant God of ancient philosophy, but a God with a name. A God with a personal identity. The God of Abraham. The God of Isaac.
And the God of Jacob. In the beginning, there was a God who called Abraham. A God who wrestled with Jacob. A God who Moses saw at Horeb. In the beginning was God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
[9:08] Who took upon himself flesh in the person of Jesus. Clothed in his person in the rags of our humanness. In the beginning was God who gave himself a face.

Who gave himself a history. And who gave himself a name. And a whole range of human experience. Who in Christ was once the child in a manger. Who in Christ once walked the shores of Galilee.
And the streets of Jerusalem. And who in Christ was crucified between two thieves. There this morning, my friend. If you want a picture in your mind of the God who created the world.
It is not a picture of a distant being on a throne. Untouched and mysterious and untouchable. No, friends. This God is not a remote God.
His nature is not a nature of seclusion. In the very act of creation. God himself has chosen not to be isolated.
[10:11] He has chosen in the very act of creation not to be isolated. And if you want an accurate picture of this God who was in the beginning. Friend, you look at him this morning becoming incarnate.

You look at him accommodating himself to human weakness. You look at him going through homelessness. You look at him going through poverty. You look at him going through shame. You look at him going through pain.

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You look there on that hill. Hanging on a cross. Bleeding. Battered. Powerless. Forsaken. There, my friend, is the God who was in the beginning.
There alone on a tree outside the walls of Jerusalem. Is the creator of the world. God. And the last thing he looks like.
Is God. Our friend grasped this morning the depths. The depths of self-emptying. Which God put himself into.
[11:13] A humiliation so great. That God himself becomes unlike God. A humiliation so great.

That even his humiliation was humiliated. So what I'm suggesting to you is that the God mentioned here. In the opening verses of Genesis.
It's not a concept. Nor an idea. Or a hypothesis. But rather a God with a real name. And a God with a real identity. And a God who has shared his life with you.
This is what creation tells us about the nature of God. For you see. God was not compelled to create the world. There was nothing outside of God himself.
That compelled him to create. There was nothing beyond God. Which made the creation of the world necessary. It was an act of free grace.
[12:19] But yet. In another sense. Creation may be called necessary. And that is in the sense.

That God created the world. In total consistency. With his own nature. You see. Creation was a gift. And when we confess him as creator.
We are saying something about the character of this God. We confess that God is good. And that he lets others. God exists. In fellowship. Alongside of himself.
And friend. What a great insight. Into the nature of God. Friends. This morning. We have a God. Who is not wholly other. And is not wholly transcendent. Beyond reach.
But we have a God. Who in the very act of creation. Makes room. For other people. I want you to think. About that for a little moment.
[13:15] Before the world. Had a beginning. God. Had a being. A being. Which is love.

And this eternal love. Of the triune God. It constitutes. A disposition. To abundant communication. And what I mean by this is. It's to say that the free. Transcendent God. Is generous. And he's welcoming. You see.
Because in the beginning. Was the Godhead. Now this Godhead. Would have been a society. Of love. The father. The son. And the holy spirit. Are together.
Sharing. In a community. Of love. The son. Looks. At the father. And loves. The father. The father. Responds. To the love.
[14:10] Of the son. And the spirit. Is enjoying. The community. Of love. That has been shared. Between them. In the triune. Life of God. There was a life. In relationship.

A community. Forming love. And it's as if. This love. Spills over. In the act. Of creation. As if.
This love. Just pours out. In the act. Of creation. There's also. A sense. That in creating. The world. The father. Was to provide. A bride. For the son.
You can almost see. The father. Talking to the son. Son. I love you. So much. That I'm going to create. And redeem. Out of humanity. A bride. For you. I'm going to bring.
That bride. To glory. And that bride. Will be clothed. In righteousness. And holiness. Forever. And that bride. Will bear your image. And that bride. Will worship you. And that bride.
[15:08] Will serve you forever. This is my love. Gift. To you. My son. The world. Then. Is the home. Through God's.

Creative act. In which the bride. Will be prepared. For her bridegroom. So God. In a sense. Is eternally disposed. To create.
To give. And to share. His life. With others. And to provide. A bride. For a son. So when creation. God. Goes public.
He goes public. With the glory. That reverberates. Between himself. And his son. That glory. Which reverberates.
In the triune God. Between the father. And the son. God. Makes that glory. Public. Like. And you think. The amazing thing.
[16:02] Here is friend. That. Not only now. Is his love. A love. Of like. For like. You see. We also have. A different.

Kind. Of love. And I want you. To lay hold of that. This morning. A love. That is greater. Than the love. That the father. Has. For his own son. This love.

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Which spills over. Is greater. Than the love. That the father. Has for his own son. Because the love. That was in the trinity. Between the father. And the son.
Is a love. That is like. For like. It is a love. That is like. For like. And it is in the nature. Of love.
To love that. Which is of its own kind. A love. Which loves. Because there is a beauty. In the object of love. Love. But this love. Which spills over.
[16:55] In the act of creation. Is that God. Is now loving. That. Which is unlovely. It is not a love. For like. For like.

It is a love. For something. Which is totally different. A love. That loves that. Which doesn't love it back. That is. Creation.
Love. So Genesis 1. Is speaking about. The creator of the world. And tells us something. Of the nature of God. Secondly. It also tells us something. About the nurture.
And the grace of God. See the Old Testament. Begins in Genesis 1. 1. By saying. That in the beginning. God created. The heavens. And the earth. This is the powerful.
Supernatural part. This is where God. Pulls all of the created universe. Out of absolutely nothing. This shows God's mighty power. And this shows God.
[17:50] In complete control. But what is truly special. About this verse. Is not the fact that God. Is demonstrating. His almighty power. Not the fact that out of nothing.

There is now something. Not the fact. That by the spoken word. God shows us his authority. Not the fact that God. Now shows us. Who is in command. No friend.
The real special part. Of Genesis 1. 1. Is that God. Is just. Beginning. God. As it were. Is just. Starting.
God. Is just. Warming up. The first verse. Is not. The whole story. For many. It might have been sufficient.
For many. It would have answered. All the questions. There was no need. For God. To say any more. No need. To further articulate. Genesis 1. 1. Would have said it all.
[18:45] In the beginning. But. It's as if. God. Himself. Is constrained. To speak. As if. God. Himself. Wants to tell.

The whole story. And it is. In the following. Verses. That we see. The power of God. Meeting. With the love of God. You see. Genesis 1. 1.
Speaks of mighty. Power. Verse 2. Onwards. Speaks of. Nurture. And of. Grace. And of love. God. As it were. Steps out of the role. Of the powerful creator. And into the role. Of the caring carpenter. He's ready now. To take all the raw materials.
Of his new creation. And shape them. Into something beautiful. And good. So the real miracle of creation. Is where God's love. Is combined.
[19:41] With his power. You notice. That God. Has not yet spoken. The words. That we associate. With creation. He has not yet said. It was good.

You see. That can't be said yet. Power. And might. Were not enough. To make God's creation. Good. It would have to take. Love. As well.
And it is. This loving activity. Of God. In the work. Of creation. Displayed. In the next four verses. Which are a model. Of the loving activity. That God.
Wants to bring. In completion. Or to completion. In the life. Of each. And every one of us. And just for the last. The last few moments. I want to look. At the part of the story.
If we allow it. Can show us. And illustrate to us. The kind of creating. And recreating. That God wants to do. In the life.
[20:38] Of each. And every. One of us. You see. The loving. Creating. Activity. Of God. In the opening. Verses of Genesis. Is the. Perfect.

Illustration. Of what God. Himself. Recreates. In your life. And in mine. Creation. Is a template. Of God's grace.
And of God's love. And of God's work. In your life. And this loving activity. Of God. Which was displayed. In the creation. Of the earth. And which God.
Longs to display. On your life. And in mine. Takes four forms. And we'll go through this. Very quickly. First of all. God. Readies us. God.
Readies us. He makes us ready. Secondly. He recreates us. Thirdly. He refines us. And fourthly. He rules us. So he readies us.

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[21:33] He recreates us. He refines us. And he rules us. First of all. Then God. Readies us. He. God. Gets us ready. God.

Prepares us. For himself. The creation account. Given to us. In Genesis. Relates to us. In verse two. That the earth. Was without forum. And void.
And darkness. Covered the face of the deep. And the spirit. Of the God. Is moving. Across the face. Of the water. The earth. Now this is a picture.
Of the spirit of God. Hovering. Over his creation. A picture of the spirit of God. Not observing. Creation. From a distance. But a picture of God.
At the very beginning of time. Involved. In chaos. A picture of the God. Who thousands of years later. Would be part of the chaos.
[22:27] Of the cross. Now here. At the very first step. He is involved. In the chaos of creation. And you look here. In this version. We see him. Hovering. As it were.

He's surveying the scene. And he's planning. His next step. He's getting everything ready. For the introduction. Of his loving activity. God.
The spirit. Ruach. Elohim. This indicates. Divine care. The word. Hovering. Is a beautiful word. And if you want to compare.
It's use. Just to give you. A little analogy. Deuteronomy 32. Verse 11. Hovering. The same word is used. Like an eagle. That stirs up its nest.
And hovers. Over its young. And then spreads its wings. To catch them. And carries them aloft. Here the word is used. To describe. Young eaglets.
[23:21] In a nest. They're not capable. Of feeding themselves. They're not capable. Of defending themselves. These eaglets. Are unable to survive. To develop. And to grow. And so are utterly dependent.

On the care of their parents. To hover. Over them. Providing food. Providing protection. And providing warmth. So that they can survive.
Friend. That's precisely the imagery. We have here in Genesis. Because the same Hebrew word. Is used. Of the Holy Spirit. Hovering. Over this.
Undeveloped. Unformed. Unformed. Lifeless. Mass. Of matter. The brooding. Of the Spirit of God. Over the water. Is a major detail.
Of the creation account. It is not a minor one. He is directly involved. In his creation. His hand is never lifted. From the elements. His presence. Is always there.
[24:18] Superintending. Hovering. Over the original chaos. And friend. This is the antithesis. Of philosophical deism.

That suggests. That God. As the originator. Of creation. As if God. As the originator. Of creation. Just created. And as if he wound it up. Like a clock.
And just walked away. Oh friend. What a privilege. To have a God. Who gets involved. In formless voids. What a privilege.
To have a God. Who gets involved. In darkness. What a privilege. To have a God. Who gets involved. In chaos. And what an incredible gift. Knowing. That in our time.
Of darkness. When we need him most. God is right there. Waiting for us. To turn to him. He is waiting. To create a life. In an otherwise. Empty world.
[25:13] And when we get to the point. In our own lives. When it seems. Everywhere we look. There is nothing. But darkness. Right there. On the edge of the void.

You will find God himself. And he is always there. Waiting. And wanting. To create something. Extraordinary. In your life. God is hovering.
God is preparing. God is making you ready. Second. He recreates us. And it is here. That the miracle. Truly begins.
In verse 3. God speaks. Let there be light. And there was light. And it was not until this light. Entered the world. That God saw. That creation.
Was good. When the light. Entered the world. It is as if the world. Had been recreated. No longer. A formless void. No longer chaotic. But now.
[26:10] God pronounces it. To be good. And you want to note here. That this wasn't the sun. And the moon. Kind of light. God created the sun. The moon.

And the stars. Three days later. In verse 16. This light. Was a divine light. A light that came directly. From God.

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To light our world. That light. Was the only thing. That God created. On that first day. The only thing. He created. Why? Why just create light?
Why not just do something else. While he was going about it? You see. If I go into a dark room. I don't turn on the light. And leave. When I walk into a dark room.
I turn on the light. To see what is there. The light is only a tool. For me to use. To do what I really came into the room. To do. Turning on the light.
[27:04] Is never the primary reason. Why I flip the switch. But in Genesis 1. It's like God. Entered the room. Specifically. To turn the light. On.

He turned on. That divine light. And then. He essentially. Turned around. And walked out of the room. That's all he did. On that first day.
Why? Well. Because turning the light on. Was why. God came into the room. You see. God. Wasn't just creating the world.
For us. From the very first day of creation. God intended. To send us a message. Of his plan. For us. From the beginning of eternity. And what was that message?
Jesus said. I am. The light. I am. The light. Of this world. And when God. Created the world. He lit.
[28:02] The world. With divine light. That. Is all. He did. On that. Particular. Day. Jesus said.

I. Am. The light. And without that divine light. There would be no life. On earth. There would be no life. On earth. That God created. In the same way. Jesus. Is the divine light.
And without that divine light. In this world. All there would be. Would be darkness. You see. So God's power. Has now met with his love. And truly.
Creation. Can now take place. Life can grow. And flourish. There is life. Flourishing. Without the sun. God's light. Is giving life. And as the light.
Spreads. Across the formless void. Existence. Begins to awake. Out of her sleep. And the earth. Begins to blossom. And begins to thrive. With the abundance of life. And if you feel the coldness.
[28:59] Of life. Without hope. He wants to give you warmth. By putting life. Into your world. So God not only readies us.

And recreates us. God also refines us. You see. When God created the light. He was still not finished. In verse 4. We read. That God separated.
The light from the darkness. The light never replaced the darkness. The darkness. Now though separated. Remained. It is as if the darkness.
Is used. To glorify the light. Without the darkness. By its side. The light. Would not be valued. So much. And appreciated.
It is indeed. That strange anomaly. That God refines. And glorifies the light. By having it. Coexisting. With darkness.
[29:53] And Christian friends. Today. This is a great comfort. To know. That in our everyday experiences. God uses. The darkest moments. To refine us. In such a way.

That glorifies the light. Sometimes God allows. Us to touch the depths of earth. In order that we may reach. The heights of heaven. Friends.
Our light afflictions. Work for us. A more exceeding. And eternal. Weight of glory. In the beginning. God. But at the end.
Of yourself. There is also God. And our darkest moments. Are but for opportunities. For God. To draw close to us.
Friends. There is no. There is no learning. About the light. Greater. Than in the darkness. Of the schools. Of affliction. And today friend.
[30:49] If you are under. The rod of affliction. God is refining. Your soul. So finally. God not only. Reddies us. He not only.

Recreates us. He not only. Refines us. But he also. Rules us. And you notice. That after God. Separated the light. From the darkness. He gave each. A name. In verse five.
The light. He called day. And the darkness. He called night. He gave the light. A name. But he gave darkness. A name too. And this is suggestive.
Of his power. And his authority. And his dominion. And great. Is our assurance. This morning. That God. Is not only. A king.
Of the light. But God. Is king. Of the darkness. As well. Our days. Begin in the morning. We get up. We go to work.

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[31:44] We come home. And a little while later. We go to sleep. We forget. We neglect. And we slumber. And we accomplish. Nothing. Not God friend.

You notice. At the end. Of verse five. The evening. And the morning. Were the first day. Where we would start. In the morning.
And work. Until the evening. It appears. That God starts. In the evening. And works. Until the morning. And the picture here friend.
Is that God. Is working through the night. From evening. Until morning. So that creation. Might celebrate his work. During the day. God.
Working through. Your darkness. Until the light. Of morning. Appears. Be not afraid. Dear Christian friend. If you find yourself. Lost in the dark.
[32:41] God works. From the evening. To the morning. Be not afraid. If you find. No way of escape. God works. From the evening. To the morning. God works.

In the night. While you sleep. And do nothing. And greater. Will be the light. Of your morning. When you lay hold. Of this. That God.
Is ruling. Your darkness. That God. Never slumbers. Nor sleeps. That God. Himself. Takes. To a completely. Different clock. And no matter.
What comes our way. It has the stamp. Of the king. Upon it. He rules. And is always. In control. And friends. That is just.
The first day. Imagine. What God. Can do. In the rest. Of your life. If you don't. Shut him. Out. After the first.
[33:36] Day of creation. But let him. Continue. To work. In your life. All the way. To day seven. The day.

Of your own. Eternal rest. The day. Of your own. Sabbath. That day. When you will see him. Face to face. And the darkness.
Which covered. The face of the deep. Shall be no more. There will be. Just light. Glorious. Eternal. And joy. Fulfilling light. Where on your own. Sabbath. You will sing. The song of Moses. Joy. And praise. And glory.
Be to the God. Who was at the beginning. Let us pray.

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