



PART NINE – THE GOODNESS OF NEW CREATION

By Pastor David Fields

Isaiah 65:17-19; Luke 24:36-43; Revelation 22:1-5

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.”

Isaiah 6:3

“...the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.”

Isaiah 11:9b

“See, I will create a new heavens and new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more.”

Isaiah 65:17-19

The Christian view holds all of these together:

1. The goodness and givenness of God's creation.
2. The brokenness and devastation that results from sin.
3. The hope of salvation and new creation.

This story, and the longing for renewal, finds its cohesion, center and focal point, in the person of Jesus - God the Son, who takes on a human body:

1. Jesus, the True God, comes in flesh and bone which signals God's continued blessing on the goodness of creation.

2. Jesus dies. His body is ‘crushed for our iniquities’ as Isaiah 53 speaks to – a signal that our world really is that broken. That we are so broken that we cannot possibly save ourselves.

3. Jesus experiences the glorious, powerful resurrection of His real physical body, which signals, once again, that the real, physical and material world matters, and it too will experience real material hope.

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II. God's Good Creation Made New

The Christian hope is material and concrete. Just as Jesus' own body was raised, was transformed, that's what we look forward to. More, that's what all of creation anticipates.

"Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.

² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

⁴ 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

*⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!"
Revelation 21:1-5*

"The first heaven and first earth had passed away," does that mean God is going to destroy this whole creation and just give it all 'another go?' No.

1. God's creation is described as very good – right from the start. That is reaffirmed all through the Bible.
2. Paul speaks clearly of God's hope for creation itself in Romans 8:19-21:

For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God."

3. John tells us what he means about the 'passing away' in v.4: "...for the old order of things has passed away." It means those elements that corrupt and distort creation that will 'pass away,' not the creation itself. What we have in Revelation 21 and 22 is an utter transformation of creation, from what was 'in bondage' because of human rebellion, into what will be.

4. The One on the throne says: "I am making all things new," (NRSV Revelation 21:5b), not 'I'm making all new things.' It's why we read in Peter's sermon in Acts 3:21 that "Heaven must receive him [the risen Jesus] until the time comes for God to restore everything."

Our work continues to matter. This is why Paul can say:

*"Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain."
1 Corinthians 15:58b*

III. Creation, Redemption, Mission

As the Father says of creation in Genesis 1, "It is finished," so the Son says of redemption from the cross, in John 19, "**It is finished.**" Now the Spirit sends us to announcing this new creation life.

*¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "**Peace be with you!**"*

²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

*²¹ Again Jesus said, "**Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.**"*

*²² And with that he breathed on them and said, "**Receive the Holy Spirit.**"*

²³ If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

John 20:19-23

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ALL THINGS BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL
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“As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” - What Jesus had come to do for us – to heal and to save, to forgive and renew – so we are now, in the power of the Spirit, to join in with God for our world.

That final bit seems hard, even harsh: “If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

“And yet, as always, in the Gospel, forgiveness is never reduced to cheap grace, to God shrugging his shoulders and saying, “Oh well, that’s all right then.” Precisely because forgiveness is forgiveness and not mere tolerance, it must go with an implacable refusal to collude with sin, with violence or prejudice or spite, with pride or greed or lust, with any of the things that deface and corrupt God’s good and beautiful creation. Precisely because Easter is about new creation, nothing that distorts or dismantles God’s creation can come there.”³

“You are the salt of the earth...You are the light of the world.”

Matthew 5:13a & 14b

ENDNOTES

1. Gordon Fee. (30 Nov 2014). The First Epistle to the Corinthians: The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Eerdmans.
2. Timothy Keller. (20 March 2018). Making Sense of God: Finding God in the Modern World. Quoting John Updike. Penguin Books.
3. N.T. Wright. (3 June 2014). Surprised by Scripture: Engaging Contemporary Issues. HarperOne.

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Open Up

Can you think of an experience you've had where you've thought, "This is going to change everything?" This is a whole 'new way' of life from now on? What was that like for you?

Dig In

1. **Read Luke 24:36-43.** What strikes you most about this passage? What encourages you? Leaves you with more questions?
2. The Biblical authors describe Jesus' own resurrection body as the best way that we understand our own resurrection life (i.e., Phil 3:21). How does this approach either change or enrich your prior assumptions about the life after this life? How does it encourage you?
3. **Read John 20:19-23.** The disciples, and now all of us by extension, are commissioned and empowered by the Spirit to carry on this 'new creation' ministry, to be, 'salt' and 'light' in our community and broader world, announcing forgiveness that accompanies repentance.
 - a. How do you feel God has gifted and called you to participate in His mission?
 - b. Are there ways you can affirm that gifting in each other? Take some time to name what you see in each other.
 - c. Are there ways that you need to take up this calling in a fresh way this week – living toward the new creation that awaits us?

Prayer:

Take some time to give thanks for God's work of making 'all things new,' especially for how He gives us life through His Son Jesus. Pray into those areas you discussed above and about how you are being called into faithful mission.