

# Creationist 2.0

## *Creating is Generous*

14 August 2022

### Call to Worship – Psalm 84

How lovely is your dwelling place,

O LORD of hosts!

**My soul longs, indeed it faints for the courts of the LORD;**

**my heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God.**

Even the sparrow finds a home,

and the swallow a nest for herself,

**where she may lay her young, at your altars, O LORD of hosts,**

**my King and my God.**

Happy are those who live in your house,

ever singing your praise. *Selah*

**Happy are those whose strength is in you,**

**They go from strength to strength;**

**the God of gods will be seen in Zion.**

### Crown him with many crowns

Crown Him with many crowns,

The Lamb upon His throne;

Hark! how the heav'nly anthem drowns

All music but its own!

Awake, my soul, and sing

Of Him who died for thee,

And hail Him as thy matchless King

Through all eternity.

Crown Him the Virgin's Son,

The God Incarnate born,

Whose arm those crimson trophies won

Which now His brow adorn:

Fruit of the mystic Tree,

As of that Tree the Stem;

The Root whence flows Thy mercy free,

The Babe of Bethlehem.

Crown Him the Lord of Love:  
Behold His hands and side;  
Rich wounds yet visible above  
In beauty glorified:  
No angel in the sky  
Can fully bear that sight,  
But downward bends his burning eye  
At mysteries so bright.

Crown Him the Lord of years,  
The Potentate of time.  
Creator of the rolling spheres,  
Ineffably sublime.  
All hail, Redeemer, hail!  
For Thou hast died for me;  
Thy praise shall never, never fail  
Throughout eternity.

### Prayer of Adoration and Confession

In our world we find delight

*Hymn for the Season of Creation*  
*Susan Jones*

In our world we find delight,  
For creation, day and night,  
Brings us solace, joy;  
Spirit grows, refreshes, gleams,  
as the earth fuels richer dreams  
just by being here;  
May this beauty never end,  
May this solace always be here,  
May the human race take notice  
And show divine compassion.

Maui dolphin skims the waves,  
Gray and sleek, graceful at play,  
Aotearoa's child;  
Paua clings beneath the tide,  
Hiding beauty deep inside,  
Aotearoa's jewel;  
May this beauty never end,  
May this blueness always be here,

May the human race take notice  
And show divine compassion.

Dark to light flies on the moth,  
Mottled, marked, like linen cloth,  
Only found right here;  
Hiding in the darkest nest,  
Kiwi like the night the best,  
Only found right here;  
May this beauty never end,  
May this brownness always be here,  
May the human race take notice  
And show divine compassion.

As we take notice, of the world around us, of the people around us, of  
ourselves

We see brokenness and shame, disappointment and fear

We bring these things before you, our God

Knowing that we are your creation and that we need your forgiveness

*Pause*

Thank you for hearing our prayers

Thank you that as you hold us in your love and compassion

We are forgiven.

Amen

## Notices

Thinking about the future Part 2

Reporting back to Presbytery

Thinking about how Waitaki Presbyterian Parish can move into the future.

Tuesday 6 September, 2pm.

## The Peace

### Reading 1                      Matthew 6:19-24

<sup>19</sup> "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; <sup>20</sup> but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

<sup>22</sup> "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light; <sup>23</sup> but if your eye is unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

<sup>24</sup> “No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

## Reflection 1

Idioms. I think I have talked about idioms before, but I also think they are worth revisiting. An idiom is a collection of words that together mean something quite different to what those words actually say. For example: ‘Don’t put all your eggs in one basket’ or ‘Every cloud has a silver lining.’ Nobody thinks that putting all your eggs in a basket is a bad thing. But we know that it is a reference to not taking unnecessary risks. And clouds don’t actually have silver linings, rather it is an injunction to look for the good amongst the bad. Any non-native speaker of a language will readily tell you that idioms are the curse of learning a new language because having learnt the meanings of all the words they still have no idea what you are talking about when you use an idiom. Imagine talking to a new immigrant from Syria and telling them you were calling it a day before heading home. They would still be wondering what was going on as you got in your car and drove off.

What we don’t think about when we read the Bible is that it is full of idioms, and we are often like the new immigrant staring after the disappearing car and wondering what is going on. A good example of this is one I am sure we have all worked out by now. Jesus tells us, in Matthew 7:6 that we should not cast our pearls before swine. On the surface, that seems obvious enough – the swine aren’t going to appreciate pearls in any way, shape or form. But as we know, Jesus isn’t talking about pearls or pigs. He is talking about not wasting our breath explaining things to people who have no interest in listening. Interestingly, the first part of the sentence is, ‘Do not give what is holy to dogs;’ Dogs in the New Testament is idiomatic for gossips. So we could translate this verse along the lines of, ‘Treat holy ideas and conversation with the seriousness they deserve.’

Which leads us to our reading this morning. Now, there are multiple idioms in this short reading. I am going to focus on just the one, in verses 22 to 24 – The eye is the lamp of the body. Now let’s be honest here. The words of this brief parable make no sense to us. What’s more, I know that I have preached on this scripture before knowing the idiom and did a pretty poor job of it. So, with a little more information the words take on a whole new meaning.

In the context of the Hebrews of the time the idea of the eye as the lamp of the body was a way of talking about how generous a person was. We have a sense of it when we talk about the green-eyed monster of jealousy. When you had a healthy eye you were generous. When your eye was unhealthy you were greedy. So Jesus was saying that a generous person was full of light (another idiom that referred to understanding) and a greedy person was full of darkness or ignorance. His listeners would have understood this implicitly because it was a part of how they spoke.

When taken in the context of the paragraphs before and after we can see that Jesus is speaking to an insidious evil that every one of us faces in some way. I like to refer to it as the worship of stuff. Some people take this worship of stuff to an extreme, building up collections of houses and cars and artwork as if by having sufficient they can ward off the rest of the world. Most of us don't have that option. But it doesn't mean we are any less susceptible to the dangers. Holding onto stuff that make us feel safe, and more secure isn't a bad thing in and of itself until we begin to allow that stuff in the way of our relationship with God. Without us even realising it is happening we begin to find that in place of generosity we begin to grasp. Often it is easy to justify – I need that nest egg for a rainy day, I need that stuff just in case something happens. Then, when someone with need comes along, we struggle to hand over those things that we have become attached to.

Jesus is telling us here that to have a healthy relationship with God we need to have a healthy relationship with stuff – in other words we need to be generous.

I have this feeling that when we give thought to being creators it trains us to be generous. To be generous with who and how we are as well as with what we have. Think of it this way. How useful is a smile that nobody sees? Smiles work best when we give them away. It's no good simply thinking about visiting someone or calling them on the phone. We need to actively get up and visit or get on the phone and call. If our creating means mowing the lawn then we have to get out the lawnmower and get mowing. Likewise with any other kind of creating. And here's the thing - as we create we are giving, we are being generous, because in adding good to the world suddenly others begin to benefit. Not only that, the more we create the better we get at it. As that happens we store up treasure in heaven.

## Indescribable

*Laura Story*

From the highest of heights to the depths of the sea  
Creation's revealing Your majesty  
From the colours of fall to the fragrance of spring  
Every creature unique in the song that it sings  
All exclaiming

Indescribable, uncontainable,  
You placed the stars in the sky and You know them by name.  
You are amazing God  
All powerful, untameable,  
Awestruck we fall to our knees as we humbly proclaim  
You are amazing God

Who has told every lightning bolt where it should go  
Or seen heavenly storehouses laden with snow  
Who imagined the sun and gives source to its light  
Yet conceals it to bring us the coolness of night  
None can fathom

Indescribable, uncontainable,  
You placed the stars in the sky and You know them by name.  
You are amazing God  
Incomparable, unchangeable  
You see the depths of my heart and You love me the same  
You are amazing God  
You are amazing God

## Reading 2                  Philippians 4:4-9

<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. <sup>5</sup> Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup> Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

<sup>8</sup> Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. <sup>9</sup> Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

## Reflection 2

I don't want to spend a whole lot of time here because I think the reading speaks for itself. To my thinking everything about what Paul is saying here is about generosity and creating. Think about the attitude that is created in you when you rejoice. Think about the attitude that is created in those around you when you rejoice. Think of the last time you were really, really excited. How did you feel? How did the people around you feel? We are generous to others when we are gentle and begin to create in them a similar gentleness. When we bring our requests to God we create something that can begin to conquer worry. As anxiety is conquered we are empowered to reach out to others and support and encourage them in their fears.

When we think about those things that are true and honourable and just and pure and pleasing and commendable and excellent and worthy of praise we begin to create a sense of being within ourselves that urges creating along with God, that presses us to be generous with everything about us. I'm not going to say much more here. Instead, I am going to put that list of things to think about up on the screen, one at a time, and invite you to think about something you know about that represents the idea.

True

Honourable

Just

Pure

Pleasing

Commendable

Excellent

Worthy of praise

How are you feeling now? I may be wrong, but I suspect that you are feeling pretty good. And out of that you can consider how to be generous. How to be a co-creator with God.

And the God of peace will be with you.

## We Pray

Creator God who calls us to create alongside, teach us to be generous in our creating. Show us how we can build an attitude into our lives that encourages us to think about these powerful things so that all we do as co-creators with you builds generosity and hope and love within us and in every person with whom we come into contact. Through Jesus who was generous to the fullness of his life we pray. Amen.

## Bless the Lord (10 000 Reasons)

*Matt Redman*

Bless the Lord O my soul, O my soul  
Worship His Holy name  
Sing like never before, O my soul  
I'll worship Your Holy name

The sun comes up, it's a new day dawning  
It's time to sing Your song again  
Whatever may pass and whatever lies before me  
Let me be singing when the evening comes

You're rich in love and You're slow to anger  
Your name is great and Your heart is kind  
For all Your goodness I will keep on singing  
Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find

And on that day when my strength is failing  
The end draws near and my time has come  
Still my soul will sing Your praise unending  
Ten thousand years and then forevermore

## Offering

*<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning>*

Creator God, who brought forth the world as your vineyard, provided every needed resource, and asked only that we bear good fruit: As we give our offerings, remind us again of the fruit you desire -- justice and righteousness are the ones your prophet Isaiah suggests. Forgive us for the times when our offerings have fallen short and when the only fruit you've received is our own self-centeredness. Help us bear the fruit that brings you joy. In the name of your son, our teacher and saviour, we pray. Amen.



## Prayer for Others and Ourselves

<http://www.bruceprewer.com/DocB/BSUNDAY13.htm>

God our holy Friend, you allow us share some of your love for the world. While we are here praying for the world's healing, others are busy implementing that healing. Later, when we are out there trying to give of our best, may others remember to pray for us.

Give your grace to all peacemakers; those who endeavour to resolve with justice all conflicts between nations, and within communities, commerce and industry, parliaments, families, marriage partners, colleagues, and friends.

Let your grace support those who fight with and for neglected people; those small ethnic groups with no political clout, the little people who are being ripped off by the rich and unscrupulous, and the deserted wives or husbands who are raising a family alone.

Endow the merciful folk with your sustaining grace; those who treat diseases, bind up wounds, feed the hungry, re-settle the homeless, care for the orphan, visit the prisoner, encourage the handicapped, watch with the dying and grieve with the sorrowful.

Endorse the work of this church with your enabling grace. Keep it close to the agenda of Christ. Let us be joyful in worship, warm in fellowship, inclusive in outreach, open in decision making, humble and sensitive in reaching out, and gracious toward others of faith.

Bless any servant of yours who is keeping the faith against the odds: those without the encouragement of other Christians at hand, or without even a distant congregation that can pray their names with affection. Please let your grace renew them daily, and may they know your Spirit as Friend and Counsellor.

Visit each of us with your grace, loving Friend. Dismantle our fears, build up our faith, deepen our love, clarify our goals, sharpen our insight, widen our compassion, and open our minds to the new words you wish to speak to our situation.

In the name of the patient, insightful, and healing Christ we offer these prayers.

Amen!

## Jesus is Lord

*David John Mansell*

Jesus is Lord! Creation's voice proclaims it  
For by his power each tree and flower was planned and made.  
Jesus is Lord! The universe declares it  
Sun, moon and stars in heaven cry: Jesus is Lord

Jesus is Lord! Jesus is Lord!

Praise him with alleluias, for Jesus is Lord!

Jesus is Lord! Yet from his throne eternal  
In flesh he came to die in pain on Calvary's tree.  
Jesus is Lord! From him all life proceeding  
Yet gave his life a ransom, thus setting us free.

Jesus is Lord! O'er sin the mighty conqueror  
From death he rose; and all his foes shall own his name.  
Jesus is Lord! God sends his Holy Spirit  
To show by works of power that Jesus is Lord.

## Benediction and Grace

As we go on from here may we be generous in our creating with Christ,  
searching out the best for everyone we meet in our week.

May the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Love of God,  
and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
be with us all, now and forevermore. Amen.

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