

Psalm 104: A Purposeful Creation

Tyler Velin | August 18, 2013

Two weeks ago was shark week on the Discovery Channel. I've never been a huge Shark Week fan, but I do from time to time sit down and watch a few episodes during the course of the week. There is always one thing you can count on when you are watching Shark Week. The producers of the show like to show reenactments of shark attacks, use terms like man eater, talk about their thousands of teeth and huge bite capacity. Really they work us up into a shark fearing frenzy, and then they interview the shark experts and they just tell us how beautiful and majestic the sharks are, how they deserve our respect.

Ultimately these experts are pushing this point because from their skin, to their jaws these sharks are amazingly complex and beautiful creatures. They all sit and marvel at the aerodynamic nature of their skin, their ability to detect electrical currents in the water, their sense of smell and their natural instincts, and that's because God's creation is captivating.

These animals and the deep complexity of all they are didn't just pop on the scene, God authored their beauty and their power. In the same way the producers author the theme of the shows, God authors the construction of creation.

Today we are going to look at Psalm 104 which is a creation Psalm. For 35 verses the author is celebrating the God who created everything. And we are going to look at that, but there is also a very unique theme which pops up at the end of this psalm and we should read the rest of this passage in light of that theme.

What I want us to think about, as we begin to dive into this Psalm is why did God create? Today we are going to see the purpose of God's creation and hopefully with that understanding we will be able to better use creation as a tool of worship.

Pray

Ps 104:1-2

God wears light as a robe. This is a very important image when it comes to understanding this Psalm, God has chosen to enrobe himself through creation. While creation is not God, God has chosen to reveal himself to us in creation.

Creation is one of God's revelation to us. I've worked with youth for six years now and I have learned that in today's culture clothing is part of a cultural self-revelation. Kids wear clothes which communicate an impression of who they are. The clothes are not the kid, but the clothes tell us something about the person wearing them. This is extremely important for us to see. God is revealing himself to us in creation, but what is he revealing. I bring up that question again: Why did God create? I've hiked in Glacier, Yosemite, Yellowstone, the Bitterroots and Zion National Park. I have seen first-hand how breath taking creation is. I have seen valleys carved out of rock, water erupting from the earth, elk as rampant as house cats. But why? What is so important about this doctrine of creation, what is God trying to reveal to us.

Because let's face it, believing that God created doesn't make you a Christian. Muslims believe God created. Mormons believe God created. Church history is riddled with people who believe that God created, but even with that belief led many into heresy. If all creation does is reveal to us that there is a God, that is not enough to make us Christians. James tells us that the demons believe there is a God. Congrats, you've reached demon level.

So I ask again, for what purpose did God create? Was it to entertain himself? Is God so vain a God that he decided to create a set of life-sized legos and just enjoys building and wrecking, creating then stepping back and watching? The doctrine of the Trinity implies that prior to creation God was completely satisfied in himself, he didn't create out of a loneliness or boredom, God existed in complete and eternal satisfaction as God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

For what purpose did God create?

Well let's let the Psalmist take us there. We will let the Psalmist make his own observations about who God is and how he relates to creation and that will bring us to the climax of the Psalm in verses 27-35.

Let's look at **vv 3-9**

God has unique authorship over creation. He sets beams on the waters. No one sets beams on the waters, God does. God made it he can do what he wants. He yelled at the water and the water fled to reveal mountains. Then God decided he wanted more mountains so he called them up from the ground and created the mountains and valleys we live in today. He set a boundary for the sea so that they might not again cover the earth.

I love in Job 38:11 when God is laying the smack down on Job, and he says to Job: "Who says to the waves thus

far you shall come and no further, here shall your proud waves be stayed.” You know why San Francisco, Seattle, Miami, New York and L.A. are not under water, because God holds the waves back. God has author's rights over his creation.

Let's look at **vv 10-18**

Here is your fancy word for the day. God vivifies his creation. God brings life to his creation. He makes springs to sprout, people to grow, grass to lengthen, food to satisfy, wine to gladden, birds to build nests and badgers to find refuge. God satisfies his creation with life.

Look back at **Ps 104:13**

This is a very powerful verse: the earth was satisfied with the work of God. God's life bringing nature was enough to satisfy the earth, there is no want to God's creation because God himself is the life bringer and life sustainer. Each birth, each sprout of grass, each dandelion that pops up does so out of the command and life blood of God himself. God brings life to his creation.

So we have seen that God has authors right's over his creation, we have seen that God enlivens his creation, what else can we learn from **vv 19-23**

God is actively controlling his creation. He makes the moon to mark the seasons. He makes darkness to bring the night. He makes the lion roar and the man to work. There is nothing that happens in your life which is too insignificant for God to have authored and ordained. God is actively laboring in your life.

God is not distant and waiting, but working and establishing his plan in each persons' life across the face of the globe. Right now a thermal vent is erupting in some unknown part of the sea because God has willed that it erupt. Right now an ant in East India is carrying a tea leaf because God has decided that the world would be better off for it. God is active in the life which he brings to his creation.

Ok, so we have seen three observations of God made visible through creation. God has authors rights, God enlivens, and God is actively sovereign and controlling his creation.

Now these three things inform us about who God is, but they do little to help us discover why God created. But David is just getting to the point of the Psalm. **VV 24-26**

If we are to look back at verse 24 we again see the importance of understanding why God created. God's works are made manifest in his creation. What are those works that are made manifest? What is it that we should be seeing inside of creation?

In wisdom God created them. God didn't created on a whim, he created on purpose and with intent. There is not one single organic or inorganic creation on the face of this earth which God created outside of his overarching plan for creation. There is no garnish to creation. God created the things essential to achieve his plan and we stand amazed at the beauty of that creation around us.

Now up until this point this Psalm mirrors most of the creation Psalms in this book. It celebrates God's glory in creation, and what a glory to be celebrated, we have a God who creates and is over all. But David in this Psalm wishes to bring us to a more specific worship of God.

vv 27-30

This is the pivotal text in this Psalm, we are surrounded by beauty and by satisfaction and life and now there is death and dust and dismay.

What is the cause of this death. Is it old age, is it cancer, is it global warming? Look back at Psalm **104:29**. We die, because God has turned his face from us.

In the garden when God created there was no death, there was no hurt there was no pain. There was simply satisfaction and fellowship with God. Remember back to vs 13 where David said that the earth is satisfied with the fruit of God's work, that is true.

God's work was satisfied, but it was the myth of dissatisfaction which was pitched to our 1st parents in the garden. The myth that God was holding out. The myth that the life author, the life giver and the life mover was holding out led us into sin, and that sin has led us away from God.

I was reading a book by a 17th century British pastor named George Swinnock and had a great line to accompany this change in Psalm 104: **Sickness would never have seized our bodies had sin not seized our souls.**

That sin has affected us as moral beings, and it like poison has also polluted the creation around us. Romans 8 tells us that all creation is groaning because of the weight of sin.

Now let's look at David's final thoughts in light of what we have just read. **Vv 31-35.**

David says to the Lord "May you rejoice in your work!" Now God did rejoice in his work. On the seventh day of creation God rested from his creation and said, "It is very good." God was satisfied, God was rejoicing in his sinless work, but then the fall came. We sinned. Where in Gen 1:31 it was very good, God says this **Gen 6:5-6**. God is grieved by sin.

God cannot rejoice where there is sin. It can't happen. That's why David says in verse 34-35, May my meditation

be pleasing to him for I rejoice in the Lord, Let sinners be consumed from the earth, let the wicked be no more. David knew that God would only rejoice in his work when his work became sinless. That means that God rejoices in the judgment of the wicked. God does not delight in sin. God delights in perfection, and brothers, we are not perfect.

But we have one who is perfect. Jesus Christ the righteous one. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says that he who knew no sin became sin so that we might become the righteousness of God. Righteousness means to be made right before God.

Through Jesus, God restores his gaze to us because the sin has been punished. And when God sees us and sees the blood of Christ he rejoices because we have been made righteous before him.

Jesus beat sin and restored creation. Now that is the result of creation. Even in verse 30 David talks about death, but then says that God sends his spirit to again breathe life into us. This is something that God threw in at the end to fix things right. What does this have to do with creation? For what purpose did God create?

Let's read two very important passages: **John 1:1-5**

Do you see that, creation was creation through Christ! Christ was the life which enlivened creation. Now look at the beautiful truth of **Colossians 1:15-20**

The purpose of Creation was always Christ on the cross. The purpose of God's creation, before the foundations of the world, was so that we should be holy and blameless before God as he predestined us for adoption as sons through Christ Jesus. The purpose of creation is God's joy in the redemption of Christ.

Do you see the weight of this? Do you see the beauty of this? Romans 1 says that no man has excuse for they have seen in creation the invisible attributes of God, his eternal power and divine nature. And as we have just seen, the fullness of God is seen in Christ.

People are not condemned because they fail to see creation and realize there is a God. People are condemned because they look at creation and fail to see Christ as its redeemer.

Beloved of Christ, see Jesus in his creation. Do not allow your hearts to be hardened towards your savior, but live for what you were created for. The most human you will ever be is when you are redeemed, for it was for that purpose God created.

God rejoices in his redemption, because in his redemption he is made as sovereign Lord and we are made as joyful subjects all because the culmination of God's creation was the beauty of the cross of Calvary.

Look at our creation and behold our God! Look at creation and see his fullness in Christ. Look at the steams and see the life of Christ as our life giver. Look at the storms and see Christ's power over death. Look at the mountains and rocks and see your permanence through Christ's blood. Look at the breathtaking beauty of creation and know that you are treasured above those things through the surpassing worth of Christ's blood.

Where do we see the purpose of God in creation: in the man Jesus Christ. Where do we see the fullest glory of God in creation: in the man Jesus Christ.

Church, we were made for Christ. Repent and be the fullness of what you were created to be. Bless the Lord, O my soul! Praise the Lord!