

JOY in the JOURNEY VII



“What a Nuisance!” - Genesis 1; Romans 8:18-25

Sermon Idea: *As God’s noble image-bearers, we can find joy in our journey with Jesus by being vigilant, attentive, compassionate stewards of His Father’s creation.*

Intro: Everyone seems to agree that one good thing about 2020 has been the beauty of the God’s creation surrounding us – the glorious trees, the fabulous blue skies, the balmy weather... Then again, there’s been record tropical storms, and forest fires, melting glaciers, rampant pollution, and record warm temps. Is God’s gift of the world around us in trouble and should we do something about it?

Read and discuss Genesis 1:24-32; Psalm 8; Romans 8:18-25;

1. The answer is obvious, but what does God think of his creation? What do you think of creation – what is your favorite realm or side of the created world?
2. What differentiates mankind from the rest of creation in essence and responsibility – two hugely important aspects about us?
3. How does Psalm 8 somewhat parallel Genesis 1 with both the glory of the created world and the pinnacle of creation - humans? What seems to be the natural outcome of observing creation and fulfilling God’s mandate as humans (see vv. 1 and 9)?
4. Can we adequately and obediently worship God if we neglect either praising God for his creation or caring his creation? Can creation care be an act of worship?
5. Turning to Romans 8 – In what ways is creation frustrated and suffering and what’s to blame for that? What will ultimately rescue creation from its wounded state? What signs on earth today display some of creation’s aches and pains?
6. Think of God’s two great acts – Creation and Salvation in Christ, the Creator and Redeemer: Is there any relationship between the two acts of God? Why should redeemed Christians have a better grasp of the importance of creation care and soul care, and of their linkage? (See Hebrews 1:3; Colossians 1:16-20.)
7. Some Christians argue that since the world is one day “going up in smoke” our job is only to worry about getting people saved, not caring for the environment. Does the Gospel/Good News include stewardship of the earth? What do you think?
8. Harking back to last week (...caring for the “little ones” and the “least of these...” note Proverbs 14:31), does working for the earth to be cleaner, safer, more enduring fit into God’s plans for us?
9. What practical ways should we as individuals, families and the church be better stewards of creation?

The Apostle Paul says of Jesus: *“For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth...He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ..For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood shed on the cross.” Col. 1:16-20*