

Management that Matters: Home

Genesis 1-2, Romans 8:19-22

Small Group Discussion

Intro questions

- *Encourage everyone to answer:* In what aspect of the outdoors (or in what outdoor activity) do you most experience God's presence?
- How would you define the word "stewardship?"
- Have you ever thought about the concept of being a steward of earth? Why or why not?
- How does the concept of God's ownership of the natural creation impact how we steward it?
- Why is it especially important, in this case, to separate biblical principle from political strategy?

Read Genesis 1:1-31 (you may want to take turns), and then discuss

- Do you notice anything about God's creative process here that is new to you?
- How does God feel about the various aspects of his creation?
- Which aspect of God's creation elicits the most expressive response from God?
- Multiple Old Testament scholars point out that the language used to describe God's creation of the cosmos is the same language used for the design and building of the Temple. In other words, **the earth is God's Temple**.
 - How does this "temple" relate with or compare to the other "temples" that we've discussed in recent weeks?
 - Pastor Josh said that as a temple, the earth is a "sacred space in which God is to be worshipped and served and known." How easy (or difficult) is it for you to view the natural creation in this way?
 - How can you invite God more into your enjoyment of his creation, so that you encounter him in this temple?
 - How does this perspective help us avoid the extremes of deifying the earth, on the one hand, or devaluing the earth, on the other?
- In v. 28, what do you notice about the job God gave humans, with respect to the earth?
 - "**Subdue**" has the sense of managing and caring for the earth. "**Rule**" has the sense of managing and caring for the earth. What light do these terms shed on our role?
- How do you feel about the concept of being a "vice-regent" over God's creation? (A vice-regent is a person who acts in the name or place of a ruler).
- Pastor Josh concluded that **we are earth's caretakers, put here to cultivate it**—that we are essential for the earth flourish to its fullest potential. How do you feel about this concept?
 - Author Kevin DeYoung says, "*We must resist the temptation to think of humans as intruders from another world wrecking carnage in a pristine environment. Instead we must see ourselves as stewards, called to subdue, enjoy, protect, use, develop, and make more humane God's fallen creation.*"

would argue that Christians should not be seeking a romantic ideal where the earth is untouched by human hands. Rather, we want to think carefully about how we can use our hands to make the earth more hospitable for more people, so that we might enjoy the beauty, grandeur, creativity, and productivity of our Father's world." How does this statement affect you? Can you do anything that would make the earth more hospitable?

- One way that we can be better caretakers of this earth is to use less. Can you think of other things that you can do, at an individual level?
- **Read** Revelation 21:1-4.
 - Some Christians have devalued the earth, based on the idea that it is temporary, whereas heaven is our eternal home. What light do these verses in Rev. 21 shed on this idea?
- This week's sermon concluded with the reminder that **the earth is our eternal home**. How does this assessment square with your view of heaven and earth?
 - **Read** Romans 8:19-22. What does Paul mean to imply by using the metaphor of childbirth?
 - How does this insight change the way that you relate with earth now?

Series re-cap question

- Of all the areas we've discussed during this series—our bodies, our time, our money, our political responsibility, and our earth—which has had the greatest impact on you? Why? What changes do you need to make in any of these areas?

Pray

- Pray for God's help and leading in making the changes described.
- Pray for any other needs that may have come up as you shared with your group.