

Making Commitment Count - Creation

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[0 : 00] Well, a few years ago, I was given a VIP invitation to a special golf day in this really posh golf club in Oxfordshire.

It was actually hosted by an Olympic gold medalist. That's kind of how special this event was. I had all the gear. I had kind of slack trousers, not too dissimilar to what I'm wearing today.

I had a checked kind of jumper. I had one of those caps that golfers seem to wear. I had a bag full of clubs and golf balls. And as I sat in the clubhouse surrounded by these brilliant golfers, I thought to myself, I look the part.

This is going to be a fantastic day, stuffing the next bacon butty into my mouth. And then my name got called and I got to go to the first tee.

Excitement welling up inside me. Come on, this is my moment to make my mark in the sporting world, I thought. So there I am, stood at the first tee, ball on the tee.

[1 : 14] Oh, oh no. I sliced it. I sliced it. I sliced it. Horrifically into the longest rough you could imagine. Completely the wrong direction.

I'd like to say that things improved from there, but they didn't actually. They got steadily worse throughout the day. I truly hacked round that golf course.

I visited every bunker you could imagine. In God's creation narrative, God makes waters and land and all kinds of animals and trees.

And into the middle of this good creation, he places humanity. Then God gives this pinnacle humanity of his creation a mandate.

Be fruitful and multiply. And fill the earth and subdue it. And have dominion over the fish and the sea and over the birds of the air.

[2 : 14] And over every living thing that moves upon the earth. This mandate gives humanity a unique place in God's creation.

We're not just to kind of exist alongside the animals. But we're there to partner with the creator himself. To join in with his work in caring for the world.

It's perhaps important at this moment to note that dominion doesn't mean extract everything from the world. That we possibly can and make it all ours.

It means to care for the creation. It means to live in harmony with creation. As God intended it to be.

To be like a fruitful gardener caring for his garden. It was a world designed by God to exist in perfect harmony.

[3 : 14] Unfortunately. However. A little like standing at the first tee.

Creation gets sliced into the long rough. It gets whacked in completely the wrong direction. As humanity fails to fulfill the mandate God has given.

Humanity abandons the mandate. Turns away from God. And turns on each other. We know the story of Cain and Abel. You know where son turns on son.

And then a couple of verses later. There's a guy called Lamech. Who says. If Cain is avenged sevenfold. Truly Lamech.

Seventy-sevenfold. You see the problem is. God's good creation. The creation that was supposed to work in harmony. Has begun to spiral.

[4 : 18] Into total and utter chaos. And we're only in chapter four. Of Genesis. We haven't got very far in.

It's a pretty bleak start. To a story. And it's into this world. This chaotic world. That ten generations after Adam.

Noah is born. I'm going to show you a little video. Hopefully in a second. I wonder whether any of you have experienced. something like this.

When you've been using. A Windows computer. Error message.

After error message. After error. Some of you are laughing. And saying yes. I've experienced that. Error message. After error message. After error. And then suddenly. It gets to this blue screen. Of death.

[5 : 22] Where you know. You can't do anything. You're frozen. You're trying to move the mouse. Click on everything. Every button on the keyboard. Doesn't work. Nothing. It just doesn't work. It freezes. God's world.

Has experienced. Error message. After error message. After error message. It's like the world. Has frozen. On this blue screen. And the only way.

To fix this. On your computer. Is to hit the reset button. To turn it off. And turn it back on again. And so that's what God. Decides to do. With his good creation.

He says. If I wipe it out. I can start again. And I'll start again. With this guy called Noah. And so God. Floods the earth. He resets creation. And we start.

With creation. 2.0. And in that. New creation. God reaffirms. His mandate.

[6 : 22] That he made. In Genesis 1. And he affirms it. With Noah. He says. Be fruitful. Multiply. And fill the earth. See the mandate. Has not changed. And then God.

Makes a covenant. With Noah. And his family. Never again. Will he flood. The whole earth. Never again. Will he destroy it.

With waters. And when God. Makes a covenant. With his people. He's making. Binding promises. Promises about.

His role. In the partnership. A covenant. A covenant. A covenant. A covenant. Is more. Than just a contract. See. A covenant. Is wrapped up.

In. An intimate relationship. It's out of God's love. For his creation. That God. Makes these promises. A covenant. And so.

[7 : 21] A covenant. Is this kind of. Intimately personal. Yet legally binding. Agreement. And it's that.

Intimately personal. Yet legally binding. Agreement. That God enters into. With Noah. And his family. Says. I will not.

Flood. The earth. Again. And it's bound. In relationship. And it's bound. In law. And strangely enough.

It's not because. Noah is. The perfect. Human being. Read on. A couple of verses. Actually. And you'll find out. That Noah really isn't. The perfect human being.

But God. Ends into that. Agreement. Knowing full well. That Noah. Was still. Sinful. That he would still. Mess up.

- [8 : 16] That he would still. Get it. Wrong. And perhaps. That explains. Why. In this covenant. Unlike any other. There is no.
- Obligations. For humanity. In every other. In every other. Covenant. That God makes. There's always. Some kind of. Expectations. That. That we have. To live up to.
- But not. In the story. Of Noah. And here's why. God. Cannot. Rely on. Humanity.
- For the future. Of the world. Only God. Can make. Commitment. Count. God. It is. It is.
- God. Who can be. Relied on. For the future. Of the world. And nobody. Else. After all.
- Genesis 6. 5.
- [9 : 12] Tells us. All we need. To know. The Lord. Saw. The inclination. Of. Every human. Heart. Sinful. From its youth. Earth. So it's no.
- Use. On God. To rely. On humanity. For the future. Of the earth. God. And God. Alone. Makes commitment.
- Count. Because. His commitment. Is backed up. By every single. Aspect. Of his character. God.
- Is committed. To his covenant. In a way. That you and I. Could never be. Despite that. Intimately.
- Personal. Legally binding. Agreement. We always. Find a way. To wriggle out of it. To break it. Somehow. Whereas.
- [10 : 15] If God. Broke that commitment. He would cease. To be God. He's made a promise. He will stick to it. He will bring it. To fruition. And as a sign.
- To say. Look. I've made this promise. And. And I'm not going to change. I'm committed. To this. He puts a rainbow. In the sky. Now this isn't some. Kind of random symbol.
- That he's just kind of. Plucked out of thin air. You know. He could have equally. Put a load of stars. In the sky. Or. He could have done anything. But he chooses. A rainbow. See. A bow.
- Is a. A weapon. Of war. And a bow. Was God's weapon. Which rained down. Watery arrows. From the heavens. To flood the earth. And in this moment.
- God puts his. Bow in the sky. To say. I'm laying down. My weapon of war. No longer. Will I flood the earth. With watery arrows. And whenever you or I.
- [11 : 16] See a rainbow. In the sky. Not only does it. Show us. That God. Will not. Flood the earth again. It stands. As testament. To the fact.
- That God. Is the one. Who makes commitment camp. That God. Is faithful. That God. Will. Be faithful. But we all know.
- Don't we. That creation. 2.0. Hasn't fared. Too much better. Than the pre-flood. Creation. It's pretty chaotic. It's filled with.
- War. And anger. And hurt. But God. Isn't satisfied. To stick. And watch. His creation. Just. Plunge.
- Into total. And utter chaos. He's not content. With that. And within a few. Chapters. Of Genesis. God is making. Another covenant.
- [12 : 16] This time. With a guy. Called Abraham. And this. Kickstarts. His new plan. His plan. Of. Bringing. All things. Back. To how they should be.
- Restoring. The whole. Of the good creation. Bringing things. Back. To harmony. And ultimately. That plan. Is fulfilled.
- Through his son. His one. And only son. Who was. Crucified. On a cross. And it's that. Death. And resurrection. That makes it possible.

For all things. To be made. New. It's that death. And resurrection. Power. That has won. The day. You see.

God. Is committed. To making. His covenant. Last. And fulfill. His promises. Even if it costs him.

[13 : 15] His one and only son. On the cross. God truly knows. What it means. To make. Commitment. Count. So what about us?

You see. For a covenant. Relationship. To work. At its best. It requires. Both parties. To agree. To be. What they should be.

Whether the other. Is being. What they should be. Or not. Okay. So. For a covenant. To work. At its best. It requires. Both parties. To agree. To be. What they should be.

Whether the other. Party. Is being. What they should be. Or not. Both parties. Are. Mutually. Agreeing. To. Uphold. The.

Needs. Of the other. Above their own. And we know. That God. Will always. Be. What he should be. The problem is.

[14 : 11] We're not always. What we should be. But through Jesus. God is saying. Come and be. What you should be. I know you've. Messed up. But. Come and be.

What you should be. Again. Come and. Come and. Have another go. At being. What you. Should be. See. We're given. A special.

Invitation. By the God. Who makes. Commitment count. To join in. With what he. Is doing. To join in. With his work. Of restoring.

His creation. To what it should be. And that's amazing. Isn't it? That we get to join in. With God. In the work.

That he is doing. We get to join in. In making all things. Good. And well. To restoring. Harmony. Amongst his perfect creation.

[15 : 04] I guess. A little like. My golf day. I shouldn't have been. On that golf course. Right. You have to have a.

If you want to go. And play there. You need to have. A handicap. So you have to be. A pretty decent golfer. To go and play. I'm sure Mike. Could probably. Knock around it. All right. But. You're not a golfer.

Oh no. Well. I'm not either. It turns out. But. I'm not. A decent golfer. At all. I am terrible. But I've been given.

A special invitation. By the club captain. Himself. To come. And play. Around that course. And he knew. That I would be keeping. The green keeper. In business.

For a lifetime. You know. More overtime. Than he could ever have. Or he'd never need. I was given. A special invitation. By the club captain.

[16 : 03] To come and play. And okay. I hacked around the course. But I had a lot of fun. On my way around. I joined in. And at the end of the day. I got to sit down. With everybody else. In the hall.

In the clubhouse. And have the same meal. As everybody else. I got to join in. And each one of us. Has been given. A special invitation.

By the God. Who makes commitment. Count. An invitation. To come. And join in. With what he is doing. No matter how. Unable.

We feel we are. Or even how able. We feel we are. The invitation. Is extended. And here's.

Where it gets. Really exciting. You see. Because the invitation. Is from. The God. Who makes commitment. Count. He makes.

- [16 : 59] Our commitment. Count. Because the invitation. Is from. The God. Who makes commitment. Count. When we partner. With him. He makes. Our commitment.
- Count. No matter. How small. We think it is. And not just. Today. In the world. Around us. But. For all. Eternity.
- You see. When we join in. Partnership. With God. What we do today. Has an impact. In eternity. Let me put it like this. Imagine you're walking through.
- That new city of Jerusalem. That's described in Revelation 21. It's absolutely perfect. It's amazing. And there's buildings all around you. Which are carved ornately.
- And stunning. And you can't help. But kind of. Be in awe of this. The city around you. But as you walk through the city.
- [17 : 55] You. Your eye catches a particular. Stone. And you're drawn to it. So you go over. And you look at it. And you. You notice the scratchings on it. And you think. Man.
- They look really familiar. And then it dawns on you. That. Those were your scratchings. Those were your etchings. And. Yet.
- Somehow. The etchings that you had made. Which were. You know. They're alright. But they weren't perfect. Have been transformed. Into this most amazing. Amazing. And ornate carving.
- On this stone. That forms this beautiful city. That we are part of. You see. When we join in with God.
- Here and now. God makes it. Work in eternity. What we do now. In God's name. With God's help. Changes.
- [18 : 51] Everything. And we can be certain of this. 1 Corinthians 15. 58. Makes this clear.
- It says. Because of Jesus. Our labour in the Lord. Is never. In vain. Whenever we labour with Jesus.
- He always brings it. To completion. It's not wasted. It's fruitful. So where has God placed you. Today.
- Where is he asking you. Inviting you. To say. Come and join in with me. Come and join in. With what I am doing. In making all things new. Maybe it's as simple as.
- Inviting a neighbour around. For a cup of tea. And having a conversation. Starting a relationship. Maybe. It's doing something.
- [19 : 53] Much bigger. Than that. Maybe it's simple as. Becoming ordained. That's the easy job. We get paid. To do this. You guys have the hard work.
- Where is God. Calling you. What is God. Prompting you. This morning. Say come and join in.
- Come and join in. With what I am doing. Come and care. For my world. Come care. For the creation. In it. Your neighbours.
- The environment. I could name. You could list. The list goes on. And on. And on. But maybe. We'll just have a moment. Of. Quiet. To give yourselves.
- An opportunity. To ask that question. God. Where are you calling me? Where are you leading me. This morning? Where can I join in. With what you are doing?