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[0 : 00] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.! For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

Genesis chapter 1, again reading in verse 1. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, let there be light.

And there was light. And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day, and the darkness he called night.

And there was evening, and there was morning the first day. And God said, let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.

[1 : 07] And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so.

And God called the earth. And God called the expanse heaven. And there was evening, and there was morning the second day. Verse 9.

And God said, let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear. And it was so.

God called the dry land earth. And the waters that were gathered together, and the waters that were gathered together he called sea. And God saw that it was good.

And God said, let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind on the earth.

[2 : 07] And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind.

And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning the third day. And God said, let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night.

And let there be signs, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years. And let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.

And it was so. And God made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night, and the stars.

And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, to rule over the day, and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness.

[3 : 14] And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning the fourth day. And God said, let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let the birds fly above the earth, across the expanse of the heavens.

So God created the great sea creatures, and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind.

And God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters and the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.

And there was morning, evening, and there was morning the fifth day. And God said, let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kind, life-stopping, creeping things, and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.

And it was so. And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds, and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind.

[4 : 24] And God saw that it was good. Then God said, let us make man in our image after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens,

over the livestock, and over the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

So God created man in his own image. In the image of God, he created him. Male and female, he created them. And God blessed them.

God said, be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heaven, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

And God said, behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of the earth, and every tree with seed and its fruit. You shall have them for food.

And to every beast of the earth, every bird of the heavens, to everything that creeps on the ground, everything that has the breath of life. I have given every green plant for food.

[5 : 30] And it was so. And God saw everything he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning, the sixth day.

May God bless the hearing and the preaching of his word. Many times, great problems come from losing sight of the big picture.

On December 29, 1972, Eastern Airlines Flight 401 crashed, killing over 100 passengers. One of the worst airline crashes in U.S. history at the time, but afterwards, it was determined that the plane was working properly and in perfect working condition.

What happened? They tried to discover the jet was preparing to land when one pilot noticed that the landing gear indicator light wasn't blinking.

The tiny green light that signals that the nose gear is locked down wasn't blinking. The nose gear was working fine, and the nose gear was already locked down, but the indicator light wasn't working and wasn't lit up.

[7 : 04] The pilots focused on the light. They tried to get it back on. They assumed that because the indicator light wasn't blinking, then the nose gear wasn't locked down, which means a catastrophe at landing.

But as the pilots began focusing on the indicator light, they failed to notice that the plane's autopilot function had been deactivated. They were unaware that the plane was descending.

They were unable to pull up the plane because they failed to notice until it was too late, and the plane crashed into the Florida Everglades.

The nose gear didn't cause the crash. The crew, losing sight of the bigger picture, caused the crash.

There's a similar danger of losing sight of the big picture when we come to Genesis 1. The meaning of Genesis 1 is one of the most debated chapters in Scripture.

[8 : 11] Does Genesis 1 teach us that the heaven and the earth are old or relatively young? Billions of years old or around 6,000 years, give or take.

Does Genesis 1 teach us that the heaven and the earth were created over many ages or over six 24-hour days? And the debates are very important.

Many scientists believe the earth is billions of years old and evolved and developed over many years. It is the world you were inundated with in children's cartoons, aquarium field trips, and family trips to the zoo.

It's everywhere. Our impulse should be to listen to the discoveries of science. God reveals himself in Scripture and also in nature.

In fact, scientific discoveries have corrected our understanding of Scripture over the years. For over 1,000 years, the church believed that the sun revolved around the earth.

[9 : 16] They condemned Galileo for teaching something different. Now most folks would say the Bible doesn't teach that at all. But if science teaches us that the earth is billions of years old, how should we understand the teaching of Genesis 1?

Does it give us the answer? Does it tell us how old the earth is? Now in my opinion, the plain reading of the text, which is the path we should take when it's disputed, is that the earth was created in 24-hour days some 6,000 years ago.

However, I don't think it's as clear as many people argue. There's various views of creation that can be held and still be biblical, and I also don't think it's wise to make it a litmus test for whether you believe and will stand on the Scriptures.

In a similar way, in the end times, there are different views on that too. I think Scripture does that. But the most important concern I would have for this morning is that we must not lose sight of the big picture of Genesis 1.

Informed by science, we come with a list of questions in Genesis 1. When did creation occur? How did it occur? How old is the earth? But those are not the most important questions for Genesis 1. [10:53] Genesis 1 comes to us with a different list of questions. Who is God? What is He like? Who are you?

What does He promise to those who follow Him and trust in Him? As we study Genesis 1, we must keep the context in mind. Genesis 1 was written to a people living in the ancient Near East. They were surrounded by pagan religions with their own creation stories. Babylonian stories, Egyptian stories about the creation of the world. And so this one was written in that context to say something very important to them.

Genesis 1 is also revelation from God to His people. It's not a science book unpacking the creation of the earth merely, but it's a theological book unveiling the sovereign majesty of God, the power of His Word and the calling of His people to trust and obey Him.

So in a word where we're going, there is none greater we must revere and rely on the Lord alone. There is none greater we must revere and rely on the Lord alone.

[12:08] So we're going to break this out in three points. The first is God is absolutely sovereign over life. The first thing we must see from this passage is that God is absolutely sovereign over life.

Last week we developed the truth that God was before the heavens and the earth. God is completely independent, separate from all that is made, does not need anything that was made, even though everything that is made is dependent on Him.

The next truth that's reiterated throughout this passage is that God is sovereign over all He's made. The sovereignty of God is just a way of saying God is the sovereign, the Lord, the King over all that He has made, and He rules over His creation just like a king would over their domain.

So we see that in verse 1. God created the heavens and the earth. This verse functions like a theme for the whole chapter.

God created the heavens and the earth. There's several words in Scripture used for creation, but this one is used exclusively for God. Men and women may make, form, and build, but only God creates.

[13:25] You see it repeated several times in the chapter. Only God creates the heavens and the earth, and the heavens and the earth. That's just a way of saying He creates the heavens and the earth, and everything in between. It's a literary device saying He creates the whole universe.

And so verse 1 is a shot across the bow. It's an arresting beginning. Creation is not the result of a natural process, a cosmic power struggle, or a big bang.

It's the work of a sovereign God alone. It's His handiwork. It's the work of His fingers. Verse 2 begins to unfold the story of creation.

It says, The earth was without form and void. It's underlining this truth that creation went from a formlessness to a fullness.

From a barrenness to a fruitfulness. And you see that in and through the Scripture. And in many ways, this formless and void provides a template for all that's going to happen.

[14:34] In these days, in the first three days, God creates the form of all of creation. He creates the light and the darkness, the sea and the sky, the earth, and causes it to bear fruit.

And then in days 4 through 6, God fills it with fullness. Fills it with animals and birds and fish and people. Created in the fear of Him.

God brought the entire world out of non-being into a being by His sovereign will and then filled it full. But threading through these 6 verses, Genesis 1 underlines the truth that God is absolutely sovereign over all He's made.

All the action is the action of God alone. 32 times, Elohim, which means God, in 31 verses, is repeated.

And then He takes the action every time. So unlike all the other myths going around in these days, it's not this process that evolved or anything like that.

[15:43] It's God alone who's interrupted the course of things and brought this world into existence. And so, God creates. Verse 1. Verse 4.

God saw the light and God separated the light from the darkness. Verse 5. God called the light day and the darkness. He called night.

In the ancient Near East, naming was an act of sovereign dominion. So God names Him to say, You are my day, my dark.

God is expressing His complete rule over all He's made. Verse 7. God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under.

He made the sky, filling it with innumerable stars and galaxies and separated the sea, the waters of the heavens, which is what the Old Testament refers to where the rain and all that comes from.

[16:42] And the waters of the earth, He separates them in a word. Verse 8. God names the heavens, called the expanse heaven. Verse 10.

God called the dry land earth. Again, naming it. Verse 16. God made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night.

What's going on there? Well, ancient Near East, many people worship the sun. They worship the moon. But here they're not even given names.

They're just an object swinging in the sky giving light. No name as if to say, God alone is worthy of worship.

God creates the creatures, verse 21, and fills the sea and the sky. Did you notice that He made the great sea creatures? In ancient time, the great sea creatures rivaled the gods for supremacy.

[17:47] Leviathan, Rahab, these great sea creatures rivaled against the God. But here, they're just created. They're just another creature under His rule. They're not scary. They're gods.

Verse 25. God made all the animals of the earth. Verse 27. God creates man and woman in His image. Genesis 1 is trying to tell us that the story of creation is a story of God's sovereignty, greatness, and holiness.

All creation is ruled by Him, and all creation is trying to tell you. In the magician's nephew, in the book that should be read first, in the Chronicles of Narnia, two children, Diggory and Polly, stumble into another world and witness Aslan, the Christ, in the Chronicles of Narnia, creating the world around Him.

Though fictional, it brings us into what must have been the buzz of creation in the language of song. He writes, in the darkness, a voice had begun to sing.

This is Polly speaking. It was very far away, and Diggory found it hard to decide from what direction it was coming. Sometimes it seemed to be coming from all directions at once.

[19:07] Sometimes he almost thought it was coming out of the earth beneath him. Its lower notes were deep enough to be the voice of the earth herself. There were no words. There was hardly even a tune, but it was, beyond comparison, the most beautiful noise that had ever been heard.

It was so beautiful, he could hardly bear it. Then two wonders happened at the same moment. One was that the voice was suddenly joined by other voices, more voices than you could possibly count. They were all in harmony with it, but far higher, up the scale, cold, tingling, silver voices. And the second wonder was that the blackness overhead, all at once, was blazing with stars.

You would have felt quite certain that it was the stars themselves that were singing, but it was the first voice, the deep one, which had made them appear and made them sing.

It's the same. What Scripture says, the heavens declare the glory of God, the sky above his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, night to night reveals knowledge. All of creation is joined in a song saying, I belong to him.

[20:22] All this is from him. All this is his. All this belongs. He is the sovereign over all that he has made.

There's a lesson for everyone from all of creation. Scriptures say, creation is general revelation. It goes to all people. It declares his glory, announces his sovereignty, and rules.

His invisible attributes and his divine nature are clearly seen. No one can say there is no God because they know it in their heart because it's indisputable in creation.

Creation is unmasking the holiness of God. I love the way Taylor said that a moment ago. There's this idea the holiness of God at its root is his separateness, that he's unlike anything that is made. When the Bible says God is holy, it's saying he's transcendentally separate, unlike all that is made, does not need all that is made.

[21:22] Perhaps the greatest takeaway from Genesis 1 is not about the age of the earth, but about the insignificance of us. R.C. Sproul says, the clearest sensation that human beings have when they experience the holy is an overpowering sense of creatureliness.

That is, when we are aware of the presence of God, we become most aware of ourselves as creatures. When we meet the absolute, we know immediately that we are not absolute.

Meet the infinite, we become acutely conscious that we are finite. When we meet the eternal, we know that we are temporal. To meet God is a powerful study in contrast. That's what Genesis 1 is whispering. Do you see the, we live in a radically man-centered day. Man is the measure of all things.

Everything is oriented around man. It is just, it's intoxicating in a very bad way. Helps you not understand what is truth.

[22 : 38] But God is completely unlike us. We are completely unnecessary. Can you imagine the effect of reading this in chains in Egypt?

God was calling his people to see who he was. Like, there's no battle out there. this is the Lord. Martin Lloyd-Jones used to call the doctrines of grace the iron rations for the soul.

You want iron rations? Trust in the sovereignty of God over all things. That's the iron rations for the soul. Two, God creates and rules through his powerful word.

word. The second thing we must see is that God creates and rules through his powerful word.

There's a pattern to the way in which everyday creation occurs.

There is, first there's divine speech, the repeated refrain eight times is and God said. And God said eight times and the command of God immediately follows the announcement.

[23 : 50] So, and God said just kind of an announcement formula and then the command comes out and then immediately there's a report of fulfillment.

The idea is not that there's a sequence of acts here God speaking and things happening. That's not the idea. God does not speak and these things happen in a sequence one, two.

The idea is that God speaks and his speaking causes these things to happen immediately. That's why the repetition of and it was so because God's command goes out and his command carries all the properties to accomplish that which his command intends in a moment.

It's amazing. That's what's going on when it says in verse three, let there be light and there was light. Verse six, let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters.

Let it separate the waters from the waters and God made the expanse and it was so. The pattern maintained throughout this chapter, I could spend the whole morning just reiterating that pattern but underlines a most important reality.

[25 : 12] Creation is a creature of the word. the means of creation is the word of God.

When the scriptures say the creation is God's handiwork, it doesn't say that because his hands got dirty. When he says there his handiwork is speaking in a way that you can understand because you can only build things with your hands but God is spirit he has no hand.

God creates with his word. Hebrews 11 3 says by faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God so that what is seen was not made out of things that were visible or that are visible.

It was created by the word of God. When we speak our words are at best what we hope will happen. My wife and I summon everybody to the dinner table.

It's just at best what we hope will happen. We hope they hear that summoning rise up begin walking towards the table. Sometimes we have to help them learn what that summoning means but our words are at best just a hope.

[26 : 20] But God's words aren't like that at all. God has God's word has an end in mind but includes the power to bring about all the necessary means to that end. Even down to the smallest cell or Adam God's word is completely effectual.

It contains all the powerful creative properties to produce what it intends. The universe is therefore a creature of the word. No less than you and I. All of it is unnecessary.

All of it doesn't remain forever. Heaven and earth will pass away but my words will never pass away is what Jesus says. Because it's a creature. It's not the result of a process or a power struggle or a big bang.

It's the creature of the word. But creation is also the work of the triune God. Wonderfully John 1 begins in the same way Genesis 1 does.

In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him and without him was not anything made that was made.

[27 : 26] The word is not merely a powerful command. The word is a person the son of God through whom all things were made. Get this God is invisible. He's a spirit. Well the son is the divine

image so all things in creation were written in his image.

God has no face or appearance so that's what's going on. The son of God is there and all things are made through him. But did you notice the spirit? Look in verse 2. The spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

Perhaps this is the Mother's Day verse. You know hovering over the face of the waters like a mother hen hovers over her babies. That's the way it's used in Deuteronomy 32 the only other time in the Old Testament.

In the Egyptian creation story the waters have power and a tongue emerges from the powerful waters. That's what's going on here. Is it drawing out the significance of the deep?

No. The spirit is not hanging out waiting for things to happen. The spirit is present at creation taming the darkness and bringing the creation to light.

[28 : 37] So the idea is God the Father is the spirit who speaks his word. God the Son the divine image in and through which all things are made through the power of the spirit.

That's the way it works and that's what's going on at creation. So we may say in the beginning was God. In the beginning was the word. But in the beginning was also the spirit. spirit. So why does Genesis 1 include this careful emphasis upon the word?

Why would the Israelites have taken what would they have taken away while in slavery in Egypt? What must we take away while similarly strangers in a strange land? In a word we're only the people of God as we are people of the word.

Genesis 1 is laying down planks of the theology of the Christian Bible.

The teaching of creation is wonderfully for all people. All people see God's invisible attributes as power in nature but the teaching of the word is a school reserved for his children. That's what he's telling them.

[29 : 54] To the Israelites bound in Egypt God was saying take me at my word. They're out of power and chains in a strange land but God does not just deliver them again and again.

God does not just rescue them. God tells them he's going to deliver them and then does it. God is giving them a divine order. I'm going to give you my promise and I'm going to uphold my promise. That's what goes on in and throughout scripture and so that's the order that people of God must follow. Take God at his word and wait for God to keep it.

That's what he's telling them. That's what he tells Moses to go in there and say I'm going to deliver you. So that when they did they'd realize every jot and tittle of the word will be fulfilled by the Lord. To us who are strangers in a strange land God says take me at my word. It seems that Christians, especially conservative Christians are always looking for something besides the word of God to cling to and place our hope in.

[31 : 00] I recently saw a 60 minutes episode on the movement birds aren't real. Birds aren't real man.

Birds aren't animals that fly around making nests and what not. Finding little grubs for their young. Birds are actually government owned computerized drones spying on your every move.

It began in the great state of Tennessee in Memphis. You know this movement began. The guys began shouting birds aren't real. Birds aren't real. Making videos throwing them up.

Gathering thousands of followers that believe birds are not real. on 60 minutes the creator of the movement Peter McIndoe finally admitted that it was all a joke after he dropped out of college.

Needed something to do with his time but the movement puts a finger on our current culture's fascination with conspiracy theories. And Christians, conservative Christians seem especially prone to be distracted.

[32 : 18] But God has not called us to solve the mysteries. In fact, one of the repeated commands in the pastoral epistles is watch out for myths and speculations and all these things.

Don't build your faith on all these mysteries trying to figure out. God's called you to know a book. God's given you light and called you to build your life on what is light, what is clear, what is commanded.

That's where you're called to go. It's the word of God alone that we need for life and godliness. The word of God alone we need to be equipped for every good work. The word of God alone that we need to discern the will of God. God is telling the Israelites and telling us for all generations, I will not guide you by dramatic experiences or wet fleeces or liver shivers.

I'll guide you by my word. Third plank God is laying down in this passage is that God redeems from darkness to life and chaos to blessing.

God redeems from darkness to light and chaos to blessing. The third thing we must see is that God does these things. Look at verse 2. Again it says the earth was without form and void and darkness was over the face of the deep.

[33 : 40] Now this verse, if we're honest, seems out of place with the rest of the chapter. It sounds more like a pagan myth in which gods and monsters are struggling and darkness and light are in a battle, a Star Wars-esque battle.

Clearly something is wrong. Darkness is over the deep. The earth is without form and void. Some say, a popular theory on the age of the earth, it's a gap theory.

Some say the earth was previously ordered and fell into disorder and darkness and chaos and after this period, this gap lasting millions of years, I think you just throw a dart at a number or something, the millions of years, God returned to his creation and brought it to order.

The problem is, Scripture explicitly, it never explicitly teaches that the creation was ever marred. Actually, it teaches the opposite. So what is this verse about?

These words for without form and void only occur together in the Bible when referencing judgment. Once in Isaiah, once in Jeremiah. They refer not to the results of creation but a chaos at the earliest stage.

[34 : 58] Was this when evil entered God's creation? Because surely God does not, God is not evil. God does not create evil. God tempts no one. So is this when evil came in?

Is this when Satan fell from light like Jesus said? I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning. Is this when? Was creation God's first act of redemption?

We don't fully know. God is not evil. God is not evil. Nevertheless, running through this Genesis 1 is an emphasis on God being a redeemer.

The idea that it's underlining even right there is not this long pause, but this, not this gap pause or anything like that, but this idea that God is bringing things from formlessness to form.

From emptiness to fullness. We see that. We celebrate that. This morning, God knit us together in our mother's womb. Brought us to this incubator period of nine months.

[36 : 02] He didn't immediately bring it that way. And so that's in a similar way what God did with all creation. And so it's what he's committed to. God is a God who's committed to bring an order out of chaos.

We see that again and again. It's underlying the idea that God's not merely a creator, but a redeemer of all that he's made, continually remaking it and continually ordering it out of chaos.

Text also underlines that God gives light. Look in verse four. God saw that the light was good, presumably the darkness was bad, and God separated the light from the darkness.

Light is good. Light is sweet, Ecclesiastes says. God separates the light from the darkness, that which is good from what is evil. And throughout Scripture, light is the realm of God and the godly who walk in the light.

But darkness is the domain of the enemy and death. Well, this idea, this play out between light and darkness become vital for the rest of Scripture. God is light.

[37 : 07] And then there's no darkness whatsoever. Light symbolizes, though, God's presence with his people and his commitment to redeem them. When the angel of death strikes down the firstborn sons of all Israel, the whole land is covered with darkness.

But the homes of the Israelites are filled with light. When the Israelites make a tent in the wilderness, God commands the people to light a lamp in the most holy place because God is with them.

God follows them with light, with a pillar of fire by night, symbolizing his presence with them. The story of light and darkness continue. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

I am the light of the world, our Lord said. Whoever walks in darkness does not walk with me, but whoever walks in the light will have the light of life. God gives blessing.

Threading through this passage is the word good. God is not just sovereign. God does not just create through his powerful word. God is good. The light is good.

[38 : 14] The creation of the earth and seas is good. The fruit of the earth is good. The sun to rule by day and the moon by night. The changes of days and seasons of time and age.

All these things are good. The fish of the sea is good. The animals of the earth are good. The creation of mankind in his image is good. God does not just bring a world out of non-existence into existence.

God brings creation into an existence marked by the blessing of God. God. There's an over-the-topness that marks every square inch of creation.

What kind of God creates electric eels and brown trout, sharks and penguins, koala bears and praying manas? What kind of God spreads out Orion's Belt and the Horseshoe Nebula, the Grand Canyon, the Great Barrier Reef and the hills of Tennessee?

What kind of God invents Beethoven and Bach, the Beatles and Hank Williams? What kind of God, crass chocolate chip cookies, smoked brisket, cool lemonade, Penang curry and so much more.

[39 : 19] I remember last year I was on the Hiawassee fishing. Probably having a rough day getting skunked or something. Blown around by the wind and the generators turned on which means if you're out there waiting you might die.

So I got out of the water and I was sitting there looking out over the water and that's like one of these rocks looked like it was moving.

I mean what is going on? I was with somebody I said do you see that because I need to get my contacts renewed or something. And it was a little river otter just kind of rolling all over this rock having the time of his life.

I was probably bummed out for getting skunked. I was like that's exactly right. That's the world God has made. A wonderful world where river otters can rub their backs on the rocks and have the time of their life.

That's what it's like to live in God's world. His goodness is over the top. It's undeserved.

Unnecessary. To underline all that he is in himself as the God who's sovereign and good.

[40 : 29] But isn't it the goodness of God that the devil first assaults? He says did God really say you can't eat of the tree implying that eating God's withholding something good?

Man Adam and Eve should say get out. You guys see what this is? The remarkable thing about Genesis 1 listen is that it's just the beginning of the story.

Don't miss the forest for the trees. One commentator said Genesis 1 is a mere curtain raiser to the drama that slowly unfolds in the Bible.

I think that's exactly right. Don't miss it. Genesis 1 is just a curtain raiser. It's not pointing to Genesis 1. It's pointing to the God who has mercy on his people.

Who loves his people. Who's committed to his people. The real story is not the story of creation. That's just the raising of the curtain. The real story is the story of the burning bush. The Passover lamb.

[41 : 36] The Red Sea. The real story is his continued patience. His continued kindness and the rebuilding of the temple. The real story is that every promise that he made is yes and amen in Jesus Christ.

The real story is that the same people who killed all the prophets God gave his son to undo all that stood against us through the cross, the grave, and the resurrection.

The real story is that he came to save. That his over-the-top goodness is not limited to these wonderful things that are made but extends all the way to the gift of his son for sinners who've raised their fist and run from him.

That's what we offer. We want to offer you the full stage of all that God has done in Jesus Christ. We offer you the gospel of Jesus Christ.

You know, we come around, we live in an area where we hear a lot about Jesus Christ. But as Martin Luther said so well, the Christian life hangs on possessive pronoun.

[42 : 40] It's not enough to know that God is a Savior. It's not enough to know that God is a good Savior. The only ones who are saved are the ones that know he is my Savior.

So if you cannot say the Spirit bears witness with my spirit that I am a child of God, then I offer you Jesus Christ. He doesn't want to stand outside of you.

Indeed, there's no salvation outside of him. But if you stand in him by faith and clinging to him, you will have life. And you'll be born again as the first fruits of the new creation that's coming.

So, there's none greater. The Lord alone deserves our worship and trust.

This Mother's Day, I was reading an article in the Wall Street Journal entitled, A Woman Doesn't Need an Office for Empowerment.

[43 : 46] And I was like, the Wall Street Journal? The lady in there wrote, motherhood isn't weak or worthless.

Nurturing children is the most significant and meaningful work a person can do. Is that overstated? Maybe a bit.

But I will say to you moms, there's no one who will have greater influence on your children than you. And nothing will affect them more than what you long for in your heart. If you long for success or power or applause or beauty or a well-rounded, health-free life for your kids, I'm sorry. You're missing it. But if you long for them to walk with Jesus Christ more than anything else, they'll be restless until that's what they chase. So blessed to have a mom that did that.

[44 : 53] One of the great examples that the church has looked to for thousands of years, well, not thousands, but over a thousand, fourth century African theologian, Augustine's mother, Monica.

Monica. Monica was a simple woman. Definitely by today's standards. She could not read. Only what she knew of God was what was told to her.

But she feared God, prayed hard for her children. If you read Augustine's story, she provoked them a time or two, chased them down in ways they need. Many times, Augustine, one of the greatest theologians, perhaps the greatest one in the history of the church, said the reason he became a Christian was because of the prayers of his mama.

The prayers of a righteous mama, availeth much. In a prayer about her, he once said, she attended to her sons, suffering birth pangs, so to speak, again, every time she saw them leave the true path and move away from you.

I wonder if those are your birth pangs. Happy Mother's Day. Be that kind of mama. What your kids need you to do is to teach them how to sing with all of creation.

[46 : 17] What they really, really need is not a well-rounded life. What they really, really need is a new heart to fear the Lord, to worship Him, to love Him.

If you stand over them crying out for that, you've done them the best service. May God help us. Father in heaven, cast ourselves onto you and confess our need.

Thank you and praise you for your word. Pray that anything helpful would be remembered, anything not helpful would be forgotten. Pray that you would, by your word, conform us to the image of Christ and direct us to your heart.

Cast ourselves onto you. In Jesus' name. Amen. You've been listening to a message given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.

For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at trinitygraceathens.com Thank you, absolutely, absolutely, you