

***Finding Joy in God's Creation — August 5 & 6, 2017***  
**Follow-up Bible Studies**

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**Day One: Job 38**

- From where does God speak to Job (1)? How does he begin his address (2-3)? What is your response to this opening? What makes it a good launching pad for proving what Psalm 24:1 proclaims: “the earth is the Lord’s and everything in it”?
- Summarize the God’s proclamations about many facets of creation (4-41). How do you think Job felt to hear from God in this way? Which section speaks most to your heart? Why? Does any part fill you with joy? Why or why not? If you could sum up all of these pronouncements in one word or phrase, what would it be?
- Spend some more time reflecting on the truth that this is God’s world; it is not ours to mistreat and endlessly exploit. Ask the Holy Spirit to reorient your heart toward this truth. What is at least one specific action you feel led to take as a result of this reorientation? How might this cultivate more joy in your life?

**Day Two: Psalm 19**

- What do “the heavens” communicate about the Lord (1-6)? Look around you: what is declaring “the glory of God” right now? Tonight, look up at the sky with great wonder, as David likely did when he wrote this psalm. This week, take a walk and notice how creation testifies about God’s glory. Pray you’d be faithful to practice these habits and that they’d bring you the joy of the Lord.
- What topic does David address next (7)? Assess the value of the Lord’s law (7-11). Meditate on verse 8 in the context of Genesis 2:15. As a created image-bearer of God, how does the work of your hands, whatever it may be, “give joy to your heart”?
- Describe how David relies on God alone for truth and holiness (12-13). What “willful sins” of humanity harm creation? How are you complicit in them, and how can you instead bring healing to what’s damaged? How does David conclude this psalm (14)?

**Day Three: Psalm 148**

- How does this psalm begin (1)? Where does the psalmist first direct his commands (1-4)? Imagine angels, the sun, the moon and all of the heavens praising the Lord. What does it look like? What does it sound like? Why should these entities praise God (5-6)? For what similar reasons should people praise the Lord?
- Where does the psalmist direct his next batch of commands (7)? What animals does he tell to praise God (7, 10)? What other aspects of creation must do the same (7-9)? Like you imagined of the heavens, what do you think it looks like and sounds like for all of creation to praise God? What sorts of people are commanded to praise the Lord (11-12)? Why is God worthy of praise (13-14)?
- This week, pay close attention to how creation experiences the joy of being God’s masterpiece by doing exactly what he’s made it to do. Notice the splendor of a field of flowers, a bird’s song, a beautiful sunset, a refreshing rain, etc. How can you also experience the joy that comes simply from being God’s creation?

**Day Four: Ecclesiastes 3:9-15**

- What question does the author pose (9)? He then seems to go on a tangent; summarize what he ruminates about (10-12). What do you think is the common thread of this tangent?

- In resuming the topic of “toil,” what are the author’s remarks (12-13)? In verse 10, work is a burden, but here he extols it as a gift. What do you make of this? When it comes to “working creation,” what are your experiences of it as satisfying and a gift from God? Ask the Lord to show you anything you might be missing, and to speak to you about how to draw joy from this new awareness.
- What is true about everything God does (14)? Echoing verse 11, what does this mean for the Lord’s relationship to time (15)? What motivates him to move in this way (14)? What is your response to God’s omnipotence and ability to stand outside of time? In applying an eternal perspective to work, one reflects this aspect of his glory. Think of some ways you can cultivate this mindset.

#### **Day Five: Revelation 22:1-5**

- While this week’s sermon focused on Eden’s beginnings; this final Bible study tells of its glorious restoration. Who escorted John, the author of Revelation, through his vision (1)? Describe the “river of the water of life” (1-2). What is found on the banks of the river (2)? What is the purpose of the “leaves of the tree” (2)? How does this image relate to Romans 8:21?
- Note that it’s *this* creation we are part of today, not an entirely new and future one, that will be restored and freed from sin. God wants us to joyfully care for creation because it will be part of his future glory. This is why part of our church’s mission statement is to “partner with Christ to heal the world.” What role do you play in this? Pray God would inspire you with ways to expand it.
- What will “the healing of the nations” look like (3-5)? Picture this scene in your mind’s eye. What do you see? What do you hear? Conclude by praying these verses out loud.