

Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

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Will We See Sadie Again: What Does the Bible Say about the Creation, Old and New?

May 21, 2023

Sermon Text: Romans 8:18-23

Scripture Reading: Romans 8:1-17

Rom 8:18-23 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. (19) For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. (20) For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope (21) that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of

the children of God. (22) For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. (23) And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Recently our faithful furry friend, Sadie the Labrador retriever who lived with us for about 15 years, died. She is buried out back with her sister Sasha who died 5 years ago. Many of you have experienced the loss of a loyal pet who loved you, frankly, more than most humans. The loss is painful and a sharp grief. We have lost others to death – Buster, buried in Montana and who lived also about 15 years, Brandy, another 15 years, also buried in our back yard.

So as we experienced losing Sadie, my thoughts began to go to this question, which I have made the title of this series (a title which may be a bit puzzling to you, but stay with me) – *Will We See Sadie Again?*

This is a question which many people surely ask when they lose a beloved animal friend. We know that the Bible is very clear as to our human loved ones who die in Christ – we most surely WILL see them again. They WILL be raised from the grave. But what about these other creatures the Lord has given us? I thought to myself – this is not an unimportant question. It directly concerns the gospel and the redemption we have in Christ – not only us, but the redemption of *the entire creation*. If we fail to understand that in Christ all things are going to be reconciled to God (except the devil and the wicked of course), then we are going to fail to get a clearer picture of what the New Creation is going to be like.

I hope that I will be able to put this series of sermons together in a book so that it can be used as a tool

to present the gospel to more people. As I said, this question – *Will We See Sadie Again?* – is one that touches many, many people who do not know Christ. In large part it is how death touches them.

Consider the related biblical subjects:

- The First Eden and God's creation of the animals
- The Last Eden – the New Heavens and Earth
- God's purpose in creating the animals – how they differ from man in respect to the image of God. Do animals have souls?
- The blessings animals provide to man – consider for example, rescue animals.
- God's loving care of the animals – how He feeds them
- The image of a little child and the asp and the lion and lamb in the New Creation
- Why did God command Noah to include animals on the ark?
- And perhaps the most vital aspect – *man's sin and its*

effect upon the entire creation.

- The curse and the fear of man in the animals
- Man's sin evidenced in cruelty to animals
- How the animals fulfill their purpose – even the donkey knows her master – but man does not.

Do you begin to see it? *Will We See Sadie Again?*

NOTE: This past week Verla and I were watching a youtube video about fishing for Spring Chinook on the Sandy River east of Portland. Two very well known long-time guides were fishing and as the bite was slow, they were telling some stories from the old days, one of which was about “Willie,” a friend of theirs. Willie is dead now. If you know much about the drift boats around here you have seen Willie drift boats often.

Well, in one of these stories about Willie, they told how he was dying of cancer and he told them he was

making plans for an unconventional memorial service. He was going to be cremated, and have his ashes put in quite a few small vials to be distributed to his fishing buddies so they could continue to take Willie fishing with them. Sure enough, one of the guides in this video pulled out his Willie vial (by the way even these guys acknowledged that Willie was quite a boozier and a vulgar guy), and in the box with the vial was, as this guide said, “words of wisdom from Willie.”

The fear of death follows from the fear of life,
A man who lives fully is prepared to die at any time.
You go to heaven for the climate,
And you go to hell for the company.

So these two men laughed and praised Willie for his words of wisdom. What do you suppose they would say if you told them Willie is in hell, there is no company there, he is in torment because he refused Christ and he will be there for all eternity?”

I shared this story here because it is a perfect example of the wicked philosophy of so many of the people all around us. Here these men were on a beautiful river, catching salmon – all created by God, and yet they are refusing to acknowledge Him or give thanks to Him. In fact, they are mocking him, just as their buddy Willie did. This sermon series has only one application for such people – don't be deceived, God is not mocked, whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

But for anyone who really wants to know, who sees death of loved ones and of loved creatures, this series is for them and if they do not know Christ, I hope that what we will find in God's Word will lead them to a saving knowledge of Him.

Our Theme Verses

Rom 8:19-21 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. (20) **For the creation was subjected to futility**, not willingly, but because

of him who subjected it, in hope (21) **that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption** and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

There is a direct connection between man's spiritual state and the condition of the entire creation. When we laid Sadie in the grave, one of the truths that came into my mind was – she was not to blame. Animals don't sin. There is only ONE creature in the universe that sins – and that creature is man. Death spread across the entire creation when Adam sinned.

When Christ comes and ushers in the New Heavens and Earth, when He raises us from the grave and death will be no more, the curse fully gone, not only will Christ's people experience the fullness of their redemption, but as Paul says, "the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain (share in) the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

Understand. The world and all that is in it right now – every created

thing, including of course the animals, is in bondage. To what? To corruption. To death. To decay and disease and suffering.

Toward the end of her life, Sadie (as with our other animals), progressively deteriorated. Joint pain, liver and bladder troubles, sores, deafness – why? How come? She never sinned. *It is because God established a link, a connection between man and the creation.* When man sinned, a great darkness and death spread over everything. Death came on scene in all its forms of disease and pain suffering. *Christ's redemption not only redeems His people, but He redeems the entire creation from the bondage to death that it is in.*

Paul personifies the creation. He says that it groans, that it waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God in their future glory. We live in a groaning world. That is to say, we live in a world *where things have gone very wrong. Where death and decay are the norm.* This has been reversed in Christ, but not yet in its complete fullness. A great consummation

day is coming, now but not yet you see.

2Co 4:16 So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.

Your hearing, your joints, your eyesight, your, liver and kidneys and....your entire body – wasting away. But if you are in Christ, the real you, your inner self, is moment by moment, day by day, becoming more and more alive until that day when even our bodies are raised.

Start at the Beginning

As the Sound of Music put it, the beginning is a very good place to start. So let's do that. Let's go back to Genesis and make some observations about *in the beginning.*

Gen 1:20-31 And God said, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens." (21) 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.

(22) And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.”

(23) And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

(24) And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.”

And it was so. (25) 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. And God saw that it was good.

(26) 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 and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

(27) So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (28) And God blessed them. And God said to them, “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 heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.**”

(29) And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food.

(30) And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so.

(31) And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Now, let's take notice of a few important things here:

1. Life characterized the entire creation. We see words here like "swarmed with swarms," and "fruitful and multiply,"
2. God filled the air, the seas, and the land with life.
3. There was no death. Every higher creature was vegetarian. Meat as a food would come after the flood, but not now in this age of innocence.

Gen 9:1-3 And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. (2) The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. (3) Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything.

4. The animals had no fear of man. Man ruled and had dominion over them. No animal attacked man.

NOTE: what did it mean that man had dominion over all creatures – the birds, the sea creatures, the animals on land? It surely would mean that they were present for man's benefit. No great white shark would ever attack man. No grizzly bear to fear. Man's rule even extended into the sky.

NOTE: In the Lord Jesus Christ we see a reversal of the curse and elements of the new earth illustrated. For instance, consider his command to His disciples to cast their nets again – and they were filled with fish. Or even back in the wilderness, the Lord giving the Israelites quail as meat. Daniel preserved in the lion's den. Perhaps as we go through this series of messages we will learn more about what these things are teaching us.

5. There was no famine, no hunger, no lack. The Lord gave man and the animals a great harvest of plants, with

no hard-labor sweating brow effort required. No plant that would do harm – no poisonous plants, no poison oak...nothing of that kind.

What was the purpose of it all? And specifically, why did God create the animals? Surely the answer must be, 1) For the glory of God, and 2) as a great kindness to man, and to teach man to be humble and worship only His Creator.

Job 40:15-24 “Behold, Behemoth, which I made as I made you; he eats grass like an ox. (16) Behold, his strength in his loins, and his power in the muscles of his belly. (17) He makes his tail stiff like a cedar; the sinews of his thighs are knit together. (18) His bones are tubes of bronze, his limbs like bars of iron. (19) “He is the first of the works of God; let him who made him bring near his sword! (20) For the mountains yield food for him where all the wild beasts play. (21) Under the lotus plants he lies, in the shelter of the reeds and in the marsh. (22) For his shade the lotus trees cover him; the willows of the

brook surround him. (23) Behold, if the river is turbulent he is not frightened; he is confident though Jordan rushes against his mouth. (24) Can one take him by his eyes, or pierce his nose with a snare?

Listen to John Calvin on this (he preached through the entire book of Job and you can buy the 3-volume set at Banner of Truth Trust) –

“Here is behemoth, which eats hay like an ox.’ God, then, is making a significant distinction between the types of animals of which he is speaking and oxen. So, without spending too much time on it, let us note that in this passage God chose a kind of animal we are to be especially delighted by. So we are talking about an elephant, which has such a robust body that the text says that ‘his bones are like brass, and his little bones are like bars of iron.’ For it is an incredible object to us who are not accustomed to such, but those who see those animals are obliged to be frightened by just the look of them. They seem to be made by special

design and not by nature, given their size.

Now, if we were really wise, we would not have to go beyond ourselves to contemplate God's majesty, but men have to be referred to animals because of their ingratitude, we must have such examples as are given to us in elephants and similar animals. Do we really examine the fact that God created those animals with such size and shape? Even though we have had no other indications of his power, we still do have an opportunity to lower our heads and worship that exalted majesty which is made known in those wild animals.

And it is worth noting that we are told that 'these elephants are created with us' to show us how God, in accordance with his will, differentiated and constituted a wonderful order for the world by which men must indeed be delightfully astonished when they think about it, as they will if they have the personal discretion to consider what is quite apparent.

Consider a man who has a small body and he is nonetheless established as lord and master of this world. Why were all these things created if not for our use? We see an elephant, which is much more powerful, and that it can overthrow a company of men with nothing but a kick. So, when we see these things and that such an order exists in the world, it shows us clearly that God, when creating us as small as we are, granted us a great blessing and revealed himself to us at the same time in brute beasts also.

If we are content to know what he has placed within us, if we think about the brute beasts, we will find in them something that astonishes us. And let us also note that if domination by size were the emphasis, elephants would be superior to us. But what happens? We see that they allow men to dominate them like small colts in a stable.

So we see on the other hand that God has deprived them of many things. When we see that, do we not have something to glorify

God's goodness for? For how is it that elephants do not devour us all? They eat hay as oxen. So, since these animals could be fierce enough to abolish humankind from the earth but feed on grass throughout the mountains and yet do not exert such fury as they could by their great size, how does that happen except that God intended to tame these animals in order to give us room to live here below? And then, since we are surrounded by so many other species of wild animals, could we continue a day in this world without being devoured if God had not imposed a secret bridle to restrain the fury of these savage animals?

And so, let us learn to study the works of God in such a way that we magnify His power, His goodness, His wisdom and His justice, as is fitting, by humbling ourselves and even nullifying ourselves inasmuch as we are nothing.”
[Sermons on Job, Vol 3, sermon 155, Banner of Truth Trust]

the other creatures? Well, sometimes elephants do kill people. Sometimes even peoples' pets kill them. Why is this? Something has gone very wrong, and if we are wise we will see this and be led back to the cause, which lies within we ourselves. We will plan to look more at these things next time.

And yet, what do we see in this fallen world in regard to man and