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Tillamook, Oregon

You Must be Born Again!

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

[Part 3]

June 4, 2023

Sermon Text: Romans 8

Scripture Reading: Psalm 144

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.

Recall then from last time this commentary by John Calvin:

On the one hand, then, the Holy Spirit warns us in this text not only that we ourselves are in a state of dissipation, but also that *we have brought the whole world to the same state and keep it there daily by our sins, and that there is no other remedy but for Jesus Christ to repair everything and make such a gathering and union that we may be joined again to our God.*

Death is a constant reminder to us that all is not right in this world. Not even in the entire universe. It is not as it is supposed to be. It is not as God created it.

The great salvation we have in Jesus Christ is a far-reaching redemption. It is a redemption not

only of the Lord's elect, but it is a redemption and restoration of the entire creation which came under the curse when Adam sinned. Let's continue this morning considering how, in Christ, God is taking us back to Eden, and even beyond the first Eden.

The Animals

As I have mentioned before, I began thinking about this subject recently when our faithful friend Sadie the Labrador died after living with us for nearly 15 years. And as we have seen, Sadie never sinned – yet she died. Why? Romans 8 tells us – *because of man's sin*. The entire creation came under the curse and part of that curse is death.

Think of it – God created animals in Eden:

Gen 1:20-25 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.

We know that none of the animals were suitable for Adam. Man was created in the image of God, the animals were not. Therefore God created Eve.

But clearly, the Lord had a reason for creating the animals. And it wasn't for man's food originally.

The creation was fashioned for man and for the glory of God. Furthermore, there was no fear of man before the Fall. That changed after the Flood –

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.

The animals were originally created then for man. For man’s enjoyment. For man to marvel at the works of God.

The Flood and the Animals

Now, have you ever given thought to this question: *Why did God tell Noah to put the animals on the ark?* I mean, think of it. How much

easier would Noah’s task have been if he didn’t have to build an ark big enough for all the animals? And yet:

Gen 7:1-9 Then the LORD said to Noah, “Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation. (2) Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals, the male and his mate, and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and his mate, (3) and seven pairs of the birds of the heavens also, male and female, to keep their offspring alive on the face of all the earth. (4) For in seven days I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground.” (5) And Noah did all that the LORD had commanded him. (6) Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters came upon the earth. (7) And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives with him went into the ark to escape the waters of the flood. (8) Of clean animals, and of animals that are not clean, and of birds, and

of everything that creeps on the ground, (9) two and two, male and female, went into the ark with Noah, as God had commanded Noah.

Why the animals? For sacrifices after the Flood subsided? In part, but I believe there was more to it. Listen to Peter:

1Pe 3:18-22 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, (19) in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, (20) because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. (21) Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, (22) who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels,

authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.

The ark was a picture of God's salvation in Christ. Noah and his family were all saved from the judgment of the Flood. *But so were the animals.* What does this tell us?

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That God's redemption in Christ is a redemption of the entire creation from the curse. Christ does what Paul spoke of in Romans 8 – He sets the entire creation freed from its corruption and brings it into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

That is to say, in Christ, God takes the creation back to Eden, and that includes taking the animals back to their pre-fall condition where there was no death, nor decay, no pain or suffering.

Understand? God had a reason for creating ALL of creation – including the animals. And that reason had to do with man, with us. God created a blessed creation for man to rule over and enjoy. The

animals and all the rest were created to show the glory of God and for man to enjoy.

This is why this kind of imagery is used in scripture to speak of the full redemption of the creation accomplished in Jesus Christ:

Isa 11:1-9 There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. (2) And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. (3) And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, (4) but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. (5) Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins. (6) The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the

leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. (7) The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. (8) The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. (9) They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

What is this language? What are these pictures meant to tell us? *That in Jesus Christ the curse which spread over all creation, the curse under which even the animals are groaning to this day, is turned to blessing.* Things will be as they were supposed to be.

And though this is just my opinion, I do believe that we will see Sadie again. That is to say, death will be no more – and the God who created Sadie in the first place is certainly capable of restoring her to life in

the New Creation. The Bible does not directly and clearly declare this, but why could it not be true? We do know with certainty of course that we WILL see our loved ones there who have died in Christ.

Death Should Cause us to Ponder

Many people love their animal companions. Domesticated animals, particularly those of a higher mentality, are a kind of picture of what the first Eden must have been like. That is, what must Adam and Eve experience before the Fall as they walked through the garden?

- No poisonous snakes or spiders
- No stinging insects
- No fearsome bears or wolves or lions

They would have been able to walk right up to any creature (and those creatures may very well have included dinosaurs!), walk right up to them and pat them on the head! No fear. No death. This would have been a great blessing for Adam and

Eve. It was a world we have never known.

Therefore, when today we enjoy the companionship of a dog or cat or other pet, we should be reminded of Eden. We should be reminded of how it was *and we should be reminded of why it is so different now!* It is because of sin. Our sin.

And when these animals we enjoy, who even evidence their love toward us, when they die, *we should be reminded of why they die. It is because of sin. Our sin.*

You might say that God preaches the need of Christ to us through the animals. That all is not right and that we are in desperate need of a Savior to come and fix this horrible mess we are in. To lift the curse.

You know, we see evidences of man being aware of these things, though he tries his best to suppress them. Think, for example of the many movies and novels in which some evil being comes on the scene, takes over the land, and as a result the land itself languishes

under a kind of curse. If you have watched the Jumanji movies, you will see this. Or the Frozen movies. A life-giving jewel of some sort is stolen, and darkness covers the land – that kind of thing. But man in his sin keeps these things in the realm of fiction.

God and the Animals Today

The Bible tells us that God still loves and cares for His creatures, even in a fallen world. For example:

Psa 104:24-28 O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. (25) Here is the sea, great and wide, which teems with creatures innumerable, living things both small and great. (26) There go the ships, and Leviathan, which you formed to play in it. (27) These all look to you, to give them their food in due season. (28) When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.

Psa 147:7-9 Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving; make melody to our God on the lyre! (8) He covers the heavens with clouds; he prepares rain for the earth; he makes grass grow on the hills. (9) He gives to the beasts their food, and to the young ravens that cry.

Psa 145:15-16 The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. (16) You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing.

Mat 6:25-26 “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? (26) Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

The whole creation declares the glory of God and this is one evident and plain aspect of His glory. Look at the animals. See how the Lord

feeds and cares for them. And see also how, when animals are starving from famine, it is man's sin that has corrupted the earth and brought this suffering.

Cruelty to Animals

Still another plain evidence of the wickedness of man in his sin is the very opposite of God's provision and care for the animals. Namely, man's cruelty to animals.

If you study the characteristics of people that we call abusers (I have begun to use the acronym RASNs – revilers, abusers, sociopaths, narcissists) you will find that quite commonly such wicked people are cruel to animals. They take a perverted joy in causing animals to suffer. We see this all around us.

Just to the south of where we live there is probably the trashiest house in the county. The garbage dump looks cleaner. But in the yard of that house there is a dog, living there in the middle of that trash. He used to be chained up but an animal organization built a fence for the owner so the dog at least would not

have to be chained up. But I feel sorry for that dog every time we go by.

Man's inhumanity to man fills the history books, but so does his inhumanity to the animals. You read regularly in the news how some person's horses, for instance, were seized and the person arrested because the horses were starving. There are sadistic people who enjoy abusing animals as well as their families. Such people should be chained out in the yard!!

This is all evidence of the curse due to man's sin. All of this pain and suffering and death which extends to even the animals.

Hunting and Animals as Food

Have you ever wondered about these verses we read earlier?

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
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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.

I have enjoyed hunting for many years – deer and elk primarily. We like venison for food and especially when we lived in Montana we were able to fill the freezer every fall and lay in a good food supply when we didn't have much money.

But I have noticed as I have grown older that my compassion for animals has increased and I do feel a bit of sadness for animals that we take for food. I think I am going to really enjoy this aspect of the new creation – man will not need to kill animals for food. I don't know exactly what the menu at the Lord's banquet table will be, but I now that in the New Earth, in the New Eden – death will be no more. We can still hunt for a big buck, but when we find him, we will be able to walk up and pet him.

These subjects then are what I suppose we might call *a biblical theology of animals*. We don't make animals out to be human – something that you see some people doing today. Only man is created in the image of God, animals are not. It is man who is to be God's regent in the world. But still, the animals were part of God's original creation and as such, they have a purpose assigned by Him.

That glorious Day is coming quickly when Christ will come, and you remember this passage from last week –

Eph 1:7-10 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, (8) which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight (9) making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ (10) as a plan for the fullness of time, **to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.**

To unite all things in heaven and earth in Christ. That means, Christ's redemption is a redemption of all creation and all creatures. He is coming to put things right once again, and to judge the wicked so we never see them again.