

GOD CREATED YOU

Overview

Speaker: Spiritual Leader or Assistant Spiritual Leader

Talk #2

Length: 20 minutes

The Aim of the Talk

This talk introduces a core element of Chrysalis: embracing that God created us in God's image and calls us "very good." This talk starts by having the speaker read the story of how God created the earth and the cosmos, declared all of creation "very good," and made each of us in God's image, desiring relationship with us. Our focus can then move in later talks to how God loves us and invites us into relationship.

Your assignment is not to give a sermon or lecture but to bear witness. Share what you've seen, heard, and experienced of God's love through creation in your own life. What does it mean for you to be made in God's image and to be called "very good"? What does being made in the image of God mean to you, and what difference has it made in your life? How do you relate to God as creator—through scripture, nature, relationships with other people, your own identity as a person made in God's image, the church? What you discover will be the richest content for your talk.

Before Writing Your Talk

The following pages offer resources to help you connect your story and experiences with the theme of the talk.

- Begin with reading through "Exploring the Theme." As you read, highlight points that stick out to you, points you really want to emphasize in your talk.
- Then move to the "Engaging Your Spirit" section. This section is to guide your reflection as you prepare for the talk. You do not need to include them in your talk, but you may include what reflection came up for you, if you would like. The participants will engage with some of these exercises during their table discussions following your talk.
- Spend time in prayer over the "Exploring the Theme" and "Engaging Your Spirit" sections. Pay attention to personal stories that come to mind, making notes on the specific thoughts and words.

- Open yourself to God’s love, pay attention, and see what happens. Do not feel like you have to make every point of the “Exploring the Theme” section; rather, use it as a guide for your writing.

Exploring the Theme/Talk Outline

“Will you join me in the ‘Prayer to the Holy Spirit’ found on page 7 of the *Worship Booklet*?”

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in us the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and we shall be created. And you shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy your consolations; through Christ our Lord. Amen. You may be seated.”

Introduction

- Choose a brief, simple way to introduce the talk that gives participants an idea about your topic.
 - Share a “Chrysalis Moment,” a time of transformation from your own time in high school. How did you see yourself then? How did you see others? How might this awakening to blessing and belovedness have made a difference to you?
 - How does the world know you? At his baptism, God publicly called Jesus ‘my beloved.’ How do you think that felt to Jesus? How would that feel to you? Imagine yourself hearing God call you blessed, God’s beloved child. Put yourself in the Jordan River, or another situation where you could imagine hearing God speak thus. How does that make you feel?

“My name is _____, and the title of this talk is GOD CREATED YOU.”

Read Genesis 1:1–2:2 or a shortened version with emphasis on creating humans in the image of God.

1. Who am I really? What am I here for? Where am I going?

- a. These questions are common for all humans, and the answers we find for them are vital.
- b. They shape how we love and relate with each other as well as how we interact with the world. Popularity, personality inventories, achievements, other people—do those define me? The great discovery of the Christian faith is that our value is not based on what other people think of us but on something much deeper and more lasting than any of those—even our own feelings. We find this truth in scripture.

2. Scripture tells us that God created us and that we are created for relationship with God.

- a. Genesis 1:1–2:2 tells the story of how God created the earth and the cosmos, made each of us in God’s image, and declared all of creation “very good.” Genesis 1:27 makes it crystal clear that we bear the image of God.
 - i. What is something that is unique about how God created you?
 - ii. Who you are is a special and unrepeatable gift of God to this world. Do you believe that? Even if someone were to show up with the same physical characteristics as you, that person would not be you.
 - iii. Who you are has never lived before and will never be created again.
- b. Based on the creation story, we know that we come from God. Our existence is not an accident but each person has been made in divine love and on purpose.
 - i. Sometimes the world makes it seem like we are less than, that we are not enough. Yet God says something else. We are made in God’s image to reflect God’s nature, like Christ did.
 - ii. There are times when we believe scripture and times when we doubt it.
 - iii. There are times when we have to hear something repeatedly, and we have to hear it from those we trust before we believe it.
 - iv. Scripture says that God delights over us! (See Zephaniah 3:17.)
- c. Share a “Chrysalis Moment” about being created in the image of God, such as a time when you embraced yourself as created in the image of God and a time that you rejected it. How did those two experiences shape you? What did you learn about yourself and about God in those moments?

3. The good news is that God loves us so much that God persists in seeking us out.

- a. God offers us a life-giving relationship just as we are. God wants us to be connected with the source of life and true happiness.
 - i. This offer of a relationship is called grace. Grace is God’s unconditional love for each and every one of us, a divine love that will never let us go.
 - ii. God’s grace pursues us throughout our lives to bring us into friendship with God.

- iii. This seeking grace is called *prevenient grace*, grace that goes (“-enient”) before (“pre-”) us to draw us toward God and true life. Grace prepares us for openness to God and prevents us from straying so far that we cannot respond to God’s invitation.
- iv. Consider sharing a story of God’s prevenient grace in your life, how God sought you out.
- b. Jesus’ baptism (see Mark 1:9-11) forms a template for this.
 - i. When Jesus came to John at the Jordan, he was reminded of who he was and to what he was called. John was a part of that, but mainly Jesus listened to the voice of God—and awakened to his belovedness, which led to knowing his path.

4. God created us as God’s beloved.

- a. Remember back to the creation story. God calls each of us “very good:”
 - i. Before we do anything to earn that title.
 - ii. Before we really even know who God is or who we are.
- b. Consider sharing your “Belovedness Charter” with the participants.
 - i. Reflect with them on what it was like to write this.
 - ii. Invite them to think about what their charter would say.
- c. What would it look like for us to celebrate who we are and who God has created us to be?
 - i. In what ways is it easy to celebrate? What do you have a harder time believing?
 - ii. Where is God inviting you into this story?

5. Fly with Christ!

Engaging Your Spirit

You Are Blessed

*God saw everything that [God] had made,
and indeed, it was very good.*

—Genesis 1:31

This verse is God’s original blessing upon all of creation, all things great and small. This may seem silly, but look at yourself in the mirror and recite this verse. Write your thoughts and feelings. Now look at photos of family and friends, including some people you don’t like so much. As you do so, recite this

verse. How does it feel to remember that these people also are created by God? Think back to your own time in high school—how did you see yourself then? How did you see others? How might this awakening to blessing and belovedness have made a difference to you?

Who Do You Think You Are?

“You are my Son, my beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”

—Mark 1:9-11

The world knew Jesus as “Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.” How does the world know you? At his baptism, God publicly called Jesus God’s beloved Son. How do you think that felt to Jesus? How would that feel to you? Imagine yourself hearing God call you blessed, God’s beloved child. Put yourself in the Jordan River or another situation where you could imagine hearing God speak thus. How does that make you feel?

Create Your Own “Belovedness Charter”

- Using scripture, meaningful words and phrases, and so on, write a couple of sentences from God to you, reminding you of your belovedness and creation in God’s very good image.
- Ex. “Trevor, you are my beloved in whom I delight. You did not choose me, but I chose you. You are my friend. I formed your inward parts and knitted you together in your mother’s womb. You are fearfully and wonderfully made, made a little lower than the angels, and crowned with glory and honor. You have been created in Christ Jesus for good works which I have already prepared to be your way of life. You are precious in my sight, and honored, and I love you. I know all your longing; your sighing is not hidden from me. Nothing will ever be able to separate you from My love in Christ Jesus, your Lord. Abide in my love.”

Writing Your Talk

- Use the “Exploring the Theme” section as your main guide as you write.
- Allow what you have learned and the experiences you have remembered to point to ideas and stories that will help you outline your talk and begin writing.
- You will want to speak from the heart, **to be honest and real**. As you share personal stories, make sure to do so in a way that does not pretend to have

all the answers or everything figured out. Share authentically about the joys and the challenges of living out the topic of your talk.

- As you write, continue to remain open to God’s love and presence in your life. Let writing your talk become a spiritual practice, a creative exercise that engages both mind and spirit to help you express your own thoughts, understanding, and experience. By doing so, you will be helping others experience God’s love.

Be Sure to Include

- Genesis 1:1–2:2 or a shortened version with emphasis on creating humans in the image of God.
- One or two “Chrysalis Moments” that illustrate the parts of this talk that are most meaningful to you. See the *Chrysalis Team Manual* for a discussion of what “Chrysalis Moments” are (p. 37).
- The difference it makes to know that God created you.
- Remind the participants that each of us is created by God, that God considers us very good, that God loves us—each and every one of us—and that God wants to be in relationship with us.

For details and tips about how to write, rehearse, and present your talk, see the “Preparing Your Talk” section in the *Chrysalis Team Manual* (pp. 35-38).

Table Discussion Guide

1. What part of God's creation is your favorite?
2. What is one thing I like about the way God created me? What is one thing I would change if I could?
3. When have I been most aware of God or sure God is real?
4. What do you think about the term "God's beloved"?