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# GENESIS 1:20-31

Series: Understanding Your Roots

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, we often feel down, discouraged, inadequate to meet the challenges that we face every day and we need you to strengthen us. Lord, there's pain that exists in many of the folks here in their lives, struggles that they're facing that are just overwhelming. So Lord, I want to ask that today in the midst of those struggles you would break through with your light and you would share some hope and some encouragement from your word to people today. We ask, Lord, that you would speak and encourage us all as we look at your word. In Jesus' name, amen.

As we look at the book of Genesis, we start Genesis, we see that we have three different statements that are coming out of creation. I just want to remind you because we've looked at these over the last three weeks. The first statement that we have when we see creation is "worship me." Now whenever we see the statements, we know only this general statement and in order to get specifics we have to go to God's word. So creation should drive us to the Bible so that we can understand what God really is saying. So when you hear that "worship me" it's not just about worshipping a tree or the sun or even life itself. It's worshipping God. We learn about that as we go to God's word.

In the second statement that's being broadcast is this broadcast statement that God makes that says I can hold it all together and I want to hold you together. So "hold it together" becomes this message that you hear. But it's not something we do ourselves. The Bible tells us that Jesus holds it all together. So we can come to Him and ask Him to hold not just the molecules in our body, but even all the things that are inside of us. He's the one who holds things together. He wants to hold relationships together. You know we can separate and cause damage in relationship. God wants to bring them together. He wants to hold them together. And really the only thing that's going to hold them together is Jesus Christ. So we give ourselves to Him and totally submit ourselves to Him then those relationships can be empowered and can be so strong.

The third message that we're going to hear is that "you are somebody important." You are somebody important. We're going to get that from this idea that we are created in the image of God. You are different than the animals. This is a message you're not going to hear in school, kids, most of the time. You're not going to hear this message out in the world. The world is going to have this message that says you're just like all the other parts of creation and God's going to say no, you are different, you are somebody special.

In order to understand what that looks like, we're going to go into Genesis 1 and we're going to pick up the days. Now we started with the first day when God said – *Let there be light*. And then

the second day He created the atmosphere. The third day He separated the seas from the land. On the fourth day He created the sun, moon, and stars. And now we're going into the day five. So let's look at day five and see what God does on day five.

In Genesis 1:20 it says this: *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." 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 in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.*

God on day five created the birds and the fish. The birds that fly in the air. It's just really amazing that God would do that so we can see birds that are flying around. We can know that there are all these things in the ocean.

You know one of my scariest moments (this is true confession time here) was when I was scuba diving in Hawaii in the dark. So what you do if you're going to go night diving then you get all your gear and you go out about a quarter mile off shore swimming and then you drop down thirty to forty feet. You're asking why would you do this in the dark? The reason you do this in the dark is because all of the life down below in the ocean is sleeping and all of the shellfish come out of the rocks where they're hiding, they're just right down there on the sand for you to reach down and grab. But our main purpose was to get lobster. Because you can reach down, you have to use your hands with gloves on. You can't use any kind of tools. You can just grab them because they're just sleeping right there on the sand. You can grab them, stick them in your net bag and get some more and then you take them up on shore and the hot water is just boiling there ready for you and the melted butter. And that is really fresh lobster, I just want you to know. Really good stuff.

But it's fascinating to be under the water when it's dark. Because unlike in air where light just dissipates, in water light stays in a column. So if you're looking at something here, you can see there. But if you sense there's something behind you, you have to turn your light around and shine it around. It's quite a scary experience. But the most intriguing thing is that the fish are asleep. So if you're out there in the dark and you're swimming and you see a fish, they're just sitting there. They're not swimming away from you. You can go up to a fish and touch him and he'll just [sound effect]. They're just sleeping in the dark. Fascinating experience to go scuba diving in the dark and see what God has done in all of creation. It's just a fascinating experience to be out there.

He created all of these fish for us. You know the largest living animal is the blue whale. Three hundred thousand pounds. Eighty feet long. In fact they don't know that it's 300,000 pounds because they don't have a scale that can weigh it. They only know that it's 300,000 pounds because they've cut one up into several pieces to know how much it weighs to be able to weigh it. It's just huge.

Each week I've told you about some of my apps. I told you about the one I hold up so I can see what the stars are and it tells me what they are. I told you last week about that one PictureThis so

I can see the plants and how I can avoid poison ivy. I told you it was free, but I was told this week it isn't free, so I must have paid for that one. I'm going to tell you about another app that I have. It's my Audobon app that allows me to know what kind of birds that I'm seeing.

I love birds. I have nine bird feeders in my backyard. So the birds come to my backyard to feed and sometimes I have a bird there that I don't recognize and am able to look it up. But the most interesting way that I use the app is that I can play the song of the animal, of the bird. If I play the cardinal song, the cardinals will answer back. Or if I play the cardinal song on my phone sometimes the cardinals will even come to my backyard. I can see them, there they are. So it's really fun to use the apps to be able to interact with creation. That's just another one that I have enjoyed. The Audobon app to call the cardinals to my backyard. I love creation.

God created on day five these beautiful things for us. The fish. He created all of the birds. Just an enjoyable part of creation. Which prepares us then for day six on creation. So let's go there.

Day six has two parts. Part one is about creation of the animals and part two is creation of people. Let's look at part one. Genesis 1:24-25 says this: *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. 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.*

I hope you're hearing the word bringing about reproducing *according to its kind* over and over and over again. It's as if God knew in advance there would be ideas about things about evolution and things not reproducing after their kind, but mutating into something else. After its kind. All of those things God created.

Well rather recently we've discovered DNA. DNA is this fingerprint that all living things have on them. One interesting thing about DNA and if you're comparing different animals is that there's a lot of similarity between a mouse and a person. So a mouse has a DNA that's similar to a person, 97% similar. A monkey or a chimpanzee has DNA that's 99% similar to a person. Which leads an evolutionist to say, "See, look at that! They're just evolving into greater forms of mammals, greater forms to be a man." So what an evolutionist does is he says, "Look how change has taken place and that's how we got there. That's why we have DNA that's so similar." A creationist looks at the facts and says, "Wow, science confirms that they're all created by the same person. That's why you have similarities. God created the mouse and He created a man and He created a chimpanzee, and you would expect there to be similarities among them." The suppositions that a person holds often lead them to different conclusions. As creationists, we recognize that God is the Creator of all living things.

It talks about here all of the things that He created and they are both the livestock and He said the creeping things. I think this is where the insects and the things that crawl on the ground. I don't know if you can see it now, but I saw a little while ago there's a spider web right here. There was one when I came today right in the entryway there. There's one right outside. Maybe you can see it still, right on the side there. These spiderwebs that are intricate. Amazing spiderwebs. God created all of those things. He made them on day six and He saw that it was good.

Preparing us for the second part of day six. I know this is the anticipation. It's like the climax of all creation is when we get here. So you should be excited right now, anticipating what God is about to do. Because it says in day six that God created people completely different than the way He created all the other things. He has a whole different method for creating them.

Notice what He does when He creates people differently than everything else. It says – *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." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

So God created people in His own image. That's going to be very important. You have to ask yourself, what is the image of God? What does it mean that we were created in God's image? Because He doesn't say I'm going to create the animals in my image, I'm going to create the oceans in my image. I'm creating people in my image. And this image that God creates us in is going to make us different than animal life.

When you ask the question what is the image of God, you just have to think an image is the representation of the real thing. In the same way that God has all these attributes, He has given us some of them or some of them to a certain extent. God is infinitely loving, but He allows us to experience love together. God is infinitely wise, but we can experience wisdom in our own lives. God is infinitely gracious and we can experience grace. God is infinitely creative as He's creating everything and we can create.

God has stamped us with the image of God that makes us different than the animals. A dolphin is very intelligent, but you will not experience a dolphin writing a book. It just can't do it. He's not creative enough to do that. That's part of the image of God that God has given to us. God has given us the ability to solve problems, but you will never see a chimpanzee in a business suit. It just doesn't work. Because God has created people in the image of God. He's created us different and it gives us a sense of value.

This is where we get this statement that God is throwing out to you, every one of us. You are somebody important. Because God has stamped on you the image of God. That is so important because what that does is it gives us this sense of value, especially when we feel like we're inadequate, we can't handle the situations. I don't know about you, but there are times in life when I feel inadequate. I just can't handle what's going on. And then I feel overwhelmed and even discouraged. If you are feeling overwhelmed, you're feeling discouraged, you need to know that God has stamped on you an identity, that self-concept that you have in part is represented in the image of God. That's only a piece of it. I want to share with you some other pieces of it in a moment.

The image of God. That's where it starts. You are created special. You are somebody important. We're going to find in a couple chapters later in the book of Genesis that sin entered the world, and when it did it corrupted the image of God. It created some problems for us. So now we live in this broken world with broken people. So now not only do we create and solve problems for

good, we create art and science and solve people's problems, but we can create bombs and people even plan evil because the image of God is confused, it is broken.

I know that some of you have experienced the brokenness of life. It is just so hard. It's so hard to live with yourself and deal with yourself let alone deal with the other people how are broken around you. It's just we all are broken people because of the fall of man.

But it doesn't stop there. And that's the beautiful thing here. It goes further. Because when Jesus Christ died on the cross for us, He redeemed us. This is another part of your identity. Not only you're created in the image of God, but because God has redeemed you that's another part of this identity that you have. I am special. I am somebody important because God died for me. He's offering me a new life, a new life that's so special and abundant. It's just an amazing life that He gives me. I trust Him. And so I invest my life in God and I say, "God, I want you to run my life." Then God does that and He redeems me from my brokenness. We all need that in our lives.

That's not the end. Because after He redeems us, He restores us. And we're in this restorative process where He's moving us closer and closer to be like Christ. We're moving closer and closer to the healing that He wants. You see the person who's a Christian, the person who's given himself to the Lord is the person who can grow in their ability to love. They'll grow in their ability to give. They'll grow in their ability to trust. They'll grow in their ability to be healed of their brokenness because God is restoring us and moving us in a direction. That is another part of your identity. God is doing something inside of you. You are somebody important. That is big.

If we take this idea of the image of God and we take it through scripture, we have to stop for a moment because we know in the Ten Commandments there's this command about creating images. Right? We better go and look at that verse and see what it's talking about because God does not want images created. He says in Exodus 24 – *You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.* This is in that passage where it's talking do not have any other gods before me. You're not going to create an image that you're going to worship. Do not do that. I do not want any other images out there that you're going to worship. God wants us worshipping the Creator, not the creation. And He's already created an image of Himself and that image is you and me. He wants us to have that value and He wants us to enjoy that. Not to be worshiped, but so that we'll worship the Father. So we'll come to God and worship Him, but God has created you in the image of God. Wow. That's amazing.

I want to show you a couple other verses that help us see that we're growing in this image. Because the image is tainted because of the sin that came into the world. That's why you experience brokenness in your own heart. That's why you can't recover from things on your own. That's why you have a hard time just dealing with life every day sometimes is because of the brokenness. So Colossians 3:9-10 says that when you become a Christian, things radically change in your life. That's so important. So you don't have to carry around the baggage. You don't have to be lugging that stuff around. It says – *You have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.* See, God is moving us in this direction toward himself. This is so important.

When you find yourself in despair or discouraged or upset or when you find yourself hurting, you must realize that God wants to do something powerful inside of your heart. He wants to move you toward restoration. He's moving you more and more toward the image of God. Because you see when you put off the old self and you take on the new self, now problems are being solved with God's love and His grace and His forgiveness.

All of those things are so powerful. We need those in our lives. And that's what moving toward the image of God is all about. God wants you to be healed. He wants you to experience the wholeness in your heart from the damage that may have existed in wherever you are, wherever you've come from. He says in 2 Corinthians 3:18 – *We are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.* We are being transformed in our lives.

Let me add one more piece to your identity. As you're thinking about who you are, you don't want to base your identity on your good looks. I know some of you are really tempted to do that. You don't want to be basing your identity on your intelligence. You don't want to be basing your identity on your accomplishments. You want to base your identity on the things that God has laid out for you so that you have this identity that's strong and firm. It starts with being created in the image of God. Because of the fall then we need the redemption of Jesus Christ. He loves us, so we are redeemed. We're loved by God and He wants to do something inside of our lives. So then we're on this restorative process. He's restoring us and moving toward the image of the Creator now. We're becoming more like Christ, so He's restoring every one of us.

And then one more thing about this image or this identity that you want to understand is that God allows grace to pass through you to change you and to bless other people. We live in a broken world and everywhere around us are broken people. God wants to extend grace to them and He uses you and me. You are someone important. Because God wants to pass grace through you so that other people can experience it. You might say, "I can't do that. I'm a mess right now. I can't really pass grace on." Do you know that the light shines brightest in the darkest places? If you will allow God to work in your heart, you will allow Him to work in your life to bring about change inside of you, you know what He'll do? He'll allow you to be a vehicle through which grace passes. Other people are going to say, "That person would not change except for God's grace. That person was really gone. That person was really far out of there. But look at them. They're moving forward. God must be doing something in their lives." You then become this encouragement to other people. You are someone important. Because God is taking His grace, He's transmitting that to you and through you so that others can experience that grace. And they need it. We live in a broken world where a lot of people are despairing right now. They're struggling. They need to see God's grace in your life.

Well when you come to this idea of creation and God creating us, you want to make it personal. This is not just something God did many, many years ago. This is something that's very important for you right now. That's what David did in the psalms. In Psalm 139 he says these words: *For you created my inmost being.* See he's making it very personal. Take creation and make it personal because this is where you realize you're valuable before God and before others. *For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you*

*because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.* Wow. He makes it personal. I just love what David does there and I think that's the message we need for our own lives. We need to make it personal. We need to grab hold of that. We need to understand what God is saying for us. Because God wants you to recognize you are somebody important. Get that. Because if you're starting to put yourself down, you're putting down God's creation. God has made you special.

Well God has given us a mission. So let's go back to our passage in Genesis 1 and the last three, four verses there, 28-31. It says – *And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.* I think we've done that part of the job. We continue to fill the earth, but that part of filling the earth is an important part.

And then He says – *and subdue it, and have dominion.* Dominion is this idea of ruling over. That's part of our job is to rule over the creation. Not just to suppress it and use it up. But ruling means to not only be over it in the sense of being able to use it, but also to be able to protect it. I would suggest that Christians should be the greatest environmentalists that are out there. We value God's creation. We want to protect this planet that we're on. We know that God has created it and we have a responsibility in that regard.

*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." 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. 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.*

Do you see how God is intricately creating our world and He puts it all together in a way that just makes sense. God did that for us. God created this planet, He created all the things on it, so it all works together in a beautiful way, and we are the apex of that creation to enjoy it.

Verse 31 ends our chapter today. It says this: *And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.* Very good. If you have your little notebooks there that you're writing in, you can underline *very good* and you can write down the Hebrew word is *meod tov*. *Meod* is the word *very*. It will be used in Genesis 4 when it says that Cain was *very angry*. You'll see the same word being used there. When it talks about how beautiful Sarah was when they go before the king and that whole story we'll see later it says she was *very beautiful*. When God looks out at creation He says it was *meod tov*. It was very good. It's good because it's this completeness that God has created everything to work together and it holds all things together that we can come before this creation, hear that voice of God saying "worship me." It's a beautiful thing.

It says – *And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.*

God made this creation before us so we can enjoy it. But He doesn't just leave it here for us to have fun. Our primary goal in life is not to have fun, although we can enjoy creation. We are on a mission. I want you to see what that mission is because Paul describes that in Ephesians 2:10 when he says these words – *For we are God's handiwork.* That word has got to take you back to

creation. God is so handy. He creates the sun and the moon and the stars. He carves out what a monkey looks like and what a bear looks like. He creates all of these things. He's so handy. And He created you, you and I. We are His *handiwork*, *created in Christ Jesus to do great works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

You see God offers us a life, a life that is full of His blessing, a life that is full of His grace. God wants to take us from the challenging place we are in now to the great place where He wants to do a work in us. God wants to heal your heart. If your heart is broken today, God wants to heal that heart. If you've got relationships that are broken, God wants to do a work inside of you in the midst of those relationships. God is at work in our lives. We are His handiwork.

So don't ever get to that place where you say, "I am worthless. I am nothing." Those kinds of statements are not appropriate for you because you are somebody important. God created you. He designed you. He wants to redeem you. He wants to restore you. He wants to give you His grace in the midst of the challenges that you are experiencing in your life right now. You are somebody important and other people around you need to see that, and you need it and it starts with that personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

If you haven't accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and your Savior, I would invite you to do that today. What you're doing is saying, "Lord, I'm broken. I've got sin in my life. Not just the sin I've committed, but other people have committed against me. I've got sin. I need you as a Savior." We need a Savior to rescue us from the sin, and He does that. He wants to come into your heart and your life today and He wants to save you from sin, the brokenness of this world. And then He wants to do something deeper inside of you. It's a choice you make. When you make that choice "Lord, I want to serve you, I want to move toward you," good things happen. God is able to work in your life.

Does that mean that we don't experience problems? No. Being a Christian doesn't prevent problems from coming to you. But it allows you the grace to deal with the challenges as they do. You will experience trials and problems and difficulties as a Christian, but you'll have the strength of relying on God and the grace that He gives you in order to deal with those challenges on a daily basis. It's all about knowing God and moving toward Him and other things start to fit into place in each one of our lives.

You are somebody important. Remember that. That's the message that you're hearing. So when you're out in creation and you're looking around at the things that God has made, you want to hear those words – "worship me," "hold it together," "you are somebody important." As you do, it's going to drive you into the scriptures. Because when you get into the scriptures you'll learn about the specifics of what that means and what it looks like and you'll understand more what God has for you now and on into the future.

Would you pray with me? Let's pray together.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, we thank you for your love for us. We thank you that you've designed this world in such a beautiful way that we can enjoy it and appreciate it. We thank you for the messages that you've hidden in creation so we can be called to know you better and to

recognize who we are. So Lord, we ask that you would do that work in our lives now. Heal us. Grow us. Lord, we want to choose you. We want to move in that direction in our lives. In Jesus' name, amen.