

Theological Equipping Class – How to Delight in our Creator through His Creation “Delight. Display. Declare: The Mission of The Parkway Church”

The Parkway Church exists to Glorify God by making disciples of Jesus Christ who: Delight in Him, Display His Love to one another, and Declare Him to the World

Our Speaking God

“He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel. ⁸ The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.” – Psalm 103:7-8

- **God speaks through His Word (Special Revelation) and His World (General Revelation)**

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. ¹⁹ For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. ²⁰ For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.” - Romans 1:18-20

- **We have closed our eyes and ears to Creation.**

“He who wrote the Bible, the second and clearest revelation of His Divine mind, wrote also the first Book, the book of nature; There is no quarrel between nature and revelation, fools only think so; to wise men the one illustrates and establishes the other. Surveying the midnight skies, I remember Him who, while He calls the stars by their names, also bindeth up the broken in heart. Who will neglect the volume of creation, or the volume of revelation: I shall delight in them both as long as I live. To despise the creating work of God—what is it but, in a measure, to despise God Himself? ” –Charles Spurgeon

God’s “Speech” in Creation

Psalm 19:1-4 – “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. ² Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. ³ There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. ⁴ Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.”

Skies: Sun, Moon, Stars, Clouds, Day, Night, etc.

- **Sun:**
 - Psalm 113:3 – *“From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the LORD is to be praised!”*
 - Revelation 22:5 – *“And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.”*
- **Clouds:**
 - Psalm 57:10 – *“For your steadfast love is great to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds.”*
 - Revelation 1:7 – *“Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.”*
 - 1 Thessalonians 4:17 – *“Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.”*
- **Stars:**

- Isaiah 40:26 - *“Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name; by the greatness of his might and because he is strong in power, not one is missing.”*
- Psalm 8:1-4 - *“O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. ²Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger. ³When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, ⁴what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?”*

Earth: Grass, Flowers, Trees, Oceans, Mountains, Rocks, Leaves, Fields, Seeds, etc.

- **Grass/Flowers:**

- Psalm 103:15-18 - *“As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field; for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more. But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children, to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments.”*
- Isaiah 40:6-8 - *“A voice says, “Cry!” And I said, “What shall I cry?” All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. ⁷The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the LORD blows on it; surely the people are grass. ⁸The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.”*
- Matthew 6:28-31 - *“And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹Therefore do not be anxious...your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.”*

- **Trees:**

- Psalm 1:1-4 - *“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; ²but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. ³He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. ⁴The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.”*
- Genesis 2:9 - *“And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”*
- Revelation 22:14 - *“Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.”*
- Proverbs 3:18 - *“She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her; those who hold her fast are called blessed.”*
- Galatians 3:13 - *“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”*

- **Ocean:**

- Psalm 139:17-18 - *“How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! ¹⁸If I would count them, they are more than the sand.”*
- Micah 7:19 - *“He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.”*

- Psalm 107:29 – *“He made the storm be still, and the waves of the sea were hushed.”*
- Revelation 21:1 – *“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.”*
- **Mountains:**
 - Isaiah 54:10 *“For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed,” says the LORD, who has compassion on you.”*
 - Psalm 97:5 – *“The mountains melt like wax before the LORD, before the Lord of all the earth.”*
 - Isaiah 52:7 – *“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.”*

Animals and Insects:

- Isaiah 40:22 – *“It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in”*
- Psalm 50:10-11 – *“For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. ¹¹ I know all the birds of the hills, and all that moves in the field is mine.”*
- Matthew 10:29-31 – *“Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰ But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.”*
- Job 38:41 – *“Who provides for the raven its prey, when its young ones cry to God for help, and wander about for lack of food?”*
- Proverbs 6:6 – *“Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise.”*
- Isaiah 65:25 – *“The wolf and the lamb shall graze together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain,” says the LORD.”*

Food:

- Psalm 104:14-15 – *“You cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine and bread to strengthen man's heart.”*
- Matthew 4:4 – *“But he answered, “It is written, “‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”*
- Psalm 119:103 – *“How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!”*
- John 6:35 – *“Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.”*

What is this “speech” meant to do?

- Teach us about God
- Teach us about ourselves
 - “What is this fear of God? I answer, first, it is a sense of awe of His greatness. Have you never felt this sacred awe stealing insensibly over your spirit, hushing, and calming you, and bowing you down before the Lord? It will come, sometimes, in the consideration of the great works of nature. Gazing upon the vast expanse of waters,—looking up to the innumerable stars, examining

the wing of an insect, and seeing there the matchless skill of God displayed in the minute; or standing in a thunderstorm, watching, as best you can, the flashes of lightning, and listening to the thunder of Jehovah's voice, have you not often shrunk into yourself, and said, "Great God, how terrible art Thou!"—*not afraid, but full of delight*, like a child who rejoices to see his father's wealth, his father's wisdom, his father's power,—happy, and at home, but feeling oh, so little!" – Charles Spurgeon

- Stir wonder and worship in our hearts
 - "I always open my eyes as wide as ever I can, because I think I can see God in all the works of his hands, and what God has taken the trouble to make I think I ought to take the trouble to look at. Does not all nature around me praise God? If I were silent, I should be an exception to the universe. Does not the thunder praise Him as it rolls like drums in the march of the God of armies? Do not the mountains praise Him when the woods upon their summits wave in adoration? Does not the lightning write His name in letters of fire? Has not the whole earth a voice? And shall I, can I, silent be?" – Charles Spurgeon
- Show us the beauty of the Gospel
- Gives us confidence and hope in our Creator
 - Psalm 121:2 - "*My help comes from the LORD, Who made heaven and earth.*"

How to Hear through His Creation

- **Study Scripture to open your eyes to the created world**
- **Study the created world**
 - "We ought to 'study' the world: Among the many acts of gratitude we owe to God, it may be accounted one to study and contemplate the perfections and beauties of His work of creation. Every new discovery must necessarily raise in us a fresh sense of the greatness, wisdom, and power of God." – Jonathan Edwards
 - "As soon as you begin to read the great and loving God out of all forms of existence He has created, both animate and inanimate, then you will be able to converse with Him, anywhere, everywhere, and at all times. Oh, what a fullness of joy will come to you...God is speaking...We get closer to God as we get more intimately and understandingly acquainted with the things he has created...More and more as we come closer and closer in touch with nature and its teachings are we able to see the Divine and are therefore fitted to interpret correctly the various languages spoken by all forms of nature about us...First,...nature in its varied forms are the little windows through which God permits me to commune with Him, and to see much of His glory, majesty, and power by simply lifting the curtain and looking in. Second, I love to think of nature as unlimited broadcasting stations, through which God speaks to us every day, every hour and every moment of our lives, if we will only tune in and remain so. Third, I am more and more convinced, as I search for truth, that no student of nature can "Behold the lilies of the field," or "Look unto the hills," or study even the microscopic wonders of a stagnant pool of water, and honestly declare himself to be an Infidel...To those who have as yet not learned the secret of true happiness, which is the joy of coming into the closest relationship with the Maker and Preserver of all things: begin now to study the little things in your own door yard, going from the known to the nearest related unknown, for indeed each new truth brings one nearer to God." - George Washington Carver
- **Study your daily routine:**

- Intentionally think about your daily routine and the creation you encounter during the day.
- Practice the discipline of “opening your eyes” to creation.
 - Ask: What am I seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, tasting?
- **Create a “Daily Liturgy” for seeing God’s creation:**
 - Morning: Take in the Day
 - Go outside. Ask: What do I see, hear, smell, touch?
 - Breathe in deeply and pray, thanking God for the new day that He has made.
 - Breaks: Go for a walk (2x a day)
 - Look for details in small things (veins in a leaf, etc.)
 - Look for big things (Clouds, etc.)
 - Think of God’s artist Hand
 - Think of a passage of Scripture that speaks to what you’re looking at
 - Meditate and Marvel
 - Meals:
 - Think of God’s provision for you as a Good Shepherd (Psalm 23)
 - Think of all the things that had to happen to get the food on your plate
 - Think of the detailed “Chef” that your God is (Flavors, Smells, Texture, etc.)
 - Evening: Take in the Night
 - Go outside. Ask: What do I see, hear, smell, touch?
 - Read or Quote Psalm 8. Pray
 - Rest well knowing He will continue to uphold the universe while you sleep.
- **Go outside often:**
 - Go on walks. Take a hike. Go to the park. Go Camping. Go to the zoo. Etc.
 - “To sit long in one posture, pouring over a book, or driving a quill, is in itself a taxing of nature; but add to this a badly ventilated chamber, a body which has long been without muscular exercise, and a heart burdened with many cares, and we have all the elements for preparing a seething cauldron of despair, especially in the dim months of fog . . . Nature outside his window is calling him to health and beckoning him to joy. He who forgets the humming of the bees among the heather, the cooing of the wood-pigeons in the forest, the song of the birds in the woods, the rippling of rills among the rushes, and the sighing of the wind among the pines, needs not wonder if his heart forgets to sing and his soul grows heavy.” – Charles Spurgeon
- **Cultivate Creation:**
 - Garden, make sourdough, plant vegetables, etc.

Appendix:

Psalm 104 – “Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, you are very great! You are clothed with splendor and majesty, ² covering yourself with light as with a garment, stretching out the heavens like a tent. ³ He lays the beams of his chambers on the waters; he makes the clouds his chariot; he rides on the wings of the wind; ⁴ he makes his messengers winds, his ministers a flaming fire. ⁵ He set the earth on its foundations, so that it should never be moved. ⁶ You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. ⁷ At your rebuke they fled; at the sound of your thunder they took to flight. ⁸ The mountains rose, the valleys sank down to the place that you appointed for them. ⁹ You set a boundary that they may not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth. ¹⁰ You make springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills; ¹¹ they give drink to every beast of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst. ¹² Beside them the birds of the heavens dwell; they sing among the branches. ¹³ From your lofty abode you water the mountains; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work. ¹⁴ You cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth ¹⁵ and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine and bread to strengthen man's heart. ¹⁶ The trees of the LORD are watered abundantly, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted. ¹⁷ In them the birds build their nests; the stork has her home in the fir trees. ¹⁸ The high mountains are for the wild goats; the rocks are a refuge for the rock badgers. ¹⁹ He made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows its time for setting. ²⁰ You make darkness, and it is night, when all the beasts of the forest creep about. ²¹ The young lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God. ²² When the sun rises, they steal away and lie down in their dens. ²³ Man goes out to his work and to his labor until the evening. ²⁴ 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. ²⁹ When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. ³⁰ When you send forth your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground. ³¹ May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in his works, ³² who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke! ³³ I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being. ³⁴ May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the LORD. ³⁵ Let sinners be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked be no more! Bless the LORD, O my soul! Praise the LORD!”

Job 38-39 – “**38** Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said: ² “Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? ³ Dress for action like a man; I will question you, and you make it known to me. ⁴ “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. ⁵ Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? ⁶ On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, ⁷ when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? ⁸ “Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb, ⁹ when I made clouds its garment and thick darkness its swaddling band, ¹⁰ and prescribed limits for it and set bars and doors, ¹¹ and said, ‘Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stayed’? ¹² “Have you commanded the morning since your days began, and caused the dawn to know its place, ¹³ that it might take hold of the skirts of the earth, and the wicked be shaken out of it? ¹⁴ It is changed like clay under the seal, and its features stand out like a garment. ¹⁵ From the wicked their light is withheld, and their uplifted arm is broken. ¹⁶ “Have you entered into the springs of the sea, or walked in the recesses of the deep? ¹⁷ Have the gates of death been revealed to you, or have you seen the gates of deep darkness? ¹⁸ Have you comprehended the expanse of the earth? Declare, if you know all this. ¹⁹ “Where is the way to the dwelling of light, and where is the place of darkness, ²⁰ that you may take it to its territory and that you may discern the paths to its home? ²¹ You know, for you were born then, and the number of your days is great! ²² “Have you entered the storehouses of the snow, or have you

seen the storehouses of the hail, ²³ which I have reserved for the time of trouble, for the day of battle and war? ²⁴ What is the way to the place where the light is distributed, or where the east wind is scattered upon the earth? ²⁵ “Who has cleft a channel for the torrents of rain and a way for the thunderbolt, ²⁶ to bring rain on a land where no man is, on the desert in which there is no man, ²⁷ to satisfy the waste and desolate land, and to make the ground sprout with grass? ²⁸ “Has the rain a father, or who has begotten the drops of dew? ²⁹ From whose womb did the ice come forth, and who has given birth to the frost of heaven? ³⁰ The waters become hard like stone, and the face of the deep is frozen. ³¹ “Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades or loose the cords of Orion? ³² Can you lead forth the Mazzaroth in their season, or can you guide the Bear with its children? ³³ Do you know the ordinances of the heavens? Can you establish their rule on the earth? ³⁴ “Can you lift up your voice to the clouds, that a flood of waters may cover you? ³⁵ Can you send forth lightnings, that they may go and say to you, ‘Here we are’? ³⁶ Who has put wisdom in the inward parts or given understanding to the mind? ³⁷ Who can number the clouds by wisdom? Or who can tilt the waterskins of the heavens, ³⁸ when the dust runs into a mass and the clods stick fast together? ³⁹ “Can you hunt the prey for the lion, or satisfy the appetite of the young lions, ⁴⁰ when they crouch in their dens or lie in wait in their thicket? ⁴¹ Who provides for the raven its prey, when its young ones cry to God for help, and wander about for lack of food? **39** “Do you know when the mountain goats give birth? Do you observe the calving of the does? ² Can you number the months that they fulfill, and do you know the time when they give birth, ³ when they crouch, bring forth their offspring, and are delivered of their young? ⁴ Their young ones become strong; they grow up in the open; they go out and do not return to them. ⁵ “Who has let the wild donkey go free? Who has loosed the bonds of the swift donkey, ⁶ to whom I have given the arid plain for his home and the salt land for his dwelling place? ⁷ He scorns the tumult of the city; he hears not the shouts of the driver. ⁸ He ranges the mountains as his pasture, and he searches after every green thing. ⁹ “Is the wild ox willing to serve you? Will he spend the night at your manger? ¹⁰ Can you bind him in the furrow with ropes, or will he harrow the valleys after you? ¹¹ Will you depend on him because his strength is great, and will you leave to him your labor? ¹² Do you have faith in him that he will return your grain and gather it to your threshing floor? ¹³ “The wings of the ostrich wave proudly, but are they the pinions and plumage of love? ¹⁴ For she leaves her eggs to the earth and lets them be warmed on the ground, ¹⁵ forgetting that a foot may crush them and that the wild beast may trample them. ¹⁶ She deals cruelly with her young, as if they were not hers; though her labor be in vain, yet she has no fear, ¹⁷ because God has made her forget wisdom and given her no share in understanding. ¹⁸ When she rouses herself to flee, she laughs at the horse and his rider. ¹⁹ “Do you give the horse his might? Do you clothe his neck with a mane? ²⁰ Do you make him leap like the locust? His majestic snorting is terrifying. ²¹ He paws in the valley and exults in his strength; he goes out to meet the weapons. ²² He laughs at fear and is not dismayed; he does not turn back from the sword. ²³ Upon him rattle the quiver, the flashing spear, and the javelin. ²⁴ With fierceness and rage he swallows the ground; he cannot stand still at the sound of the trumpet. ²⁵ When the trumpet sounds, he says ‘Aha!’ He smells the battle from afar, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting. ²⁶ “Is it by your understanding that the hawk soars and spreads his wings toward the south? ²⁷ Is it at your command that the eagle mounts up and makes his nest on high? ²⁸ On the rock he dwells and makes his home, on the rocky crag and stronghold. ²⁹ From there he spies out the prey; his eyes behold it from far away. ³⁰ His young ones suck up blood, and where the slain are, there is he.”