



6-18-17 Sermon Discussion Guide

"How did God create the universe?"



Context

Throughout this summer we are talking about words and ideas that we often hear in church but rarely define. This summer provides a chance to hit "pause" and reflect upon these ideas, their importance, and their impact upon life. This series began by asking the question, "What is theology?" After talking about God as the Trinity, we examined how is revealed to us. In the coming weeks we look at various theological topics, using Scripture as our guide.

Checking In

Since the last time your group has met, how have each of you experienced God at work? What have you celebrated? What have you mourned?

Introduction

How the universe was created has been a topic of heated conversation since the 19th century. With Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species*, people have struggled to reconcile seemingly disparate disciplines – theology and science. This week we'll dig into some of the questions and perspectives that frame this controversy and consider how it impacts life.

Discussing the Text

1. Genesis 1:1 says that in beginning, God created the heavens the earth. The phrase "heavens and the earth" is roughly equivalent to "universe." So God created everything. The universe had a beginning point. What can we infer about God if Scripture says that God created everything?
2. Read Genesis 1:1 thru 2:3, and then 2:4 thru 2:25. What differences do you notice between the content and the style of these two creation accounts? What might these differences tell us about creation, about our approach to Scripture in general, about God and our relationship with God?
3. The order of events in Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 seems to be contradictory. Additionally, Genesis 1 uses Do we need to reconcile these differences? Why or why not?
4. What does God say about his creation at the end of each day in Genesis 1. What subtle difference do you see at the end of day 6 in Genesis 1:31? What does this imply?
5. Genesis 1:2 has been translated differently over time. It has said "now the earth was formless and void," "and the earth was formless..." "then the earth became formless..." What significance could there be in these various translations?
6. Some people say that because Genesis 1 describes 6 days of creation, there's no way the world could be billions of years old. How do you respond to this?
7. Genesis 1:26-27 says that people are created in the image of God. What does that mean?

So what?

1. Does Genesis have to be read literally? Why or why not? What difference does it make? If not, how can we trust the Bible?
2. How has God brought about order from chaos in your life?
3. How does this account of creation impact our theology of stewardship? How does Genesis 1 describe our responsibilities to care for the earth?
4. Is it possible to believe in evolution while also trusting the authenticity of Genesis 1 and 2?

Prayer

Share something you for which you are thankful and/or something for which you need support. In addition, invite people to take some time to be outside this week, in God's creation. Breathe the air, watch the clouds, feel the warmth of the sun. Thank God for this creation.