Congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ,

If you were looking through one of my books, you would soon see the parts of the books that I think are most important or meaningful, because I use highlighters and underlining and sticky notes. Maybe you do that too? Well, we are going to see that God has used several things to help us see the significance of this day of creation. One of them is how the day is referred to in verse 31. If we were to translate the Hebrew words literally, the earlier days are day one, day second, day third, day fourth, and day fifth. But this day is day THE sixth. So, for the first time, the word ‘THE’ is included. And that is a standard way of emphasizing something in Hebrew. And we will see that God ‘highlighted’ this day in many other ways too. So, strap yourself in as we dive into the account of what God created on day THE sixth, because this passage has many important implications for doctrine and life and salvation.

And we will use the same approach that has served us well with the other days. We will begin with a **creation explanation**, then see some **creation implications**, and conclude with some **gospel implications**.

1. So, let’s begin with a **Creation Explanation**. And for those of you who have not been here for the previous days of creation, each day of creation is described using the same elements. So, here we are just listing these elements with one or two explanatory comments.
	1. Verses 24-25 are the account of the creation of the animals. And they begin with the **Announcement** element, which is the words, “*And God said*.” And they a repeated reminder that God simply spoke all things into existence. And that alone is reason to praise Him! But then we get the content of the announcement, which is the **Command** element: “*Let the earth bring forth living creatures,” etc.* And this is followed by the **Result** element: “*And it was so*.” And what was so is then described in the **Activity** element, where we are told what God made. And finally, we get the **Approval** element: “*And God saw that it was good*.”
		1. Now, just as we saw last week, with the water creatures and flying creatures, the animals are described here as “***living creatures***.” And that puts them in a different category than plants and trees, which are not considered, by God, to be living creatures. So, that is why animals ate plants and fruit, as we read in verse 30, and not each other before the Fall. Eating each other would have meant the death of living creatures, but eating plants was not death.
		2. The **three categories of animal** are “*livestock*,” “*creeping things*,” and “*beasts of the earth*.”
			1. So, we are talking here about animals like sheep, cows, pigs, horses, and camels as livestock, and beasts of the earth would include animals like dogs and cats and elephants and gorillas.
				1. And for those who were not here last week, those animals that we call ‘**dinosaurs’** were created on the fifth and sixth days. So, here on the sixth day, beasts of the earth would also include tyranosaurids and sauropods. And you can read about a sauropod in Job 40. It is called “*Behemoth*,’ and it perfectly describes something like a Brontosaurus.
			2. And we also noted last week that “*creeping things*” probably means land-based reptiles and amphibians and mammals, like crocodiles and frogs and mice and rabbits and lizards.
			3. But it is worth noting here that when we read about the beasts of the earth, we typically think of carnivores, with their sharp teeth. But again, there were no carnivores before the Fall. So, it may be that the Fall drastically affected the teeth and digestion systems of animals, to make them appear as we see them today.
		3. But note also that in relation to the creation of the animals, three times it is stated that they were created “***according to their kinds****.*” And the best way to think about kinds is not species but family. So, you have, for example, the dog family, the cat family, the Crocodylidae family, and the tyrannosaurid family. And then, within the kind, you get the different species. So, Labradors, Wolves, and Hyenas, with all their sub-varieties, are all of the dog kind. And this will be important when we get to Genesis 6 and the Flood.
		4. But the major point here is that God created the astonishing variety that we see in animals **on the sixth day**! From the smallest mouse to the lion to the Triceratops, God spoke each of them into existence on that day.
			1. One of the early church fathers was a man named **Augustine**. And Augustine really struggled with the idea that God created all things in six 24-hour days. But unlike the vast majority of people today, including, sadly, many who profess to be Christians, who argue that six 24-hour days is not long enough to account for evolution, Augustine argued that six 24-hour days was too long! He said that the God of the Bible is so powerful and glorious that He created everything in an instant and just described it as taking six normal days for the sake of our understanding and to provide us with a pattern for our work week. Now, Augustine was wrong, because if God tells us that He created everything over six days then He created everything over six days. But I kind of like Augustine’s error more than the evolutionary error of most people today!
		5. But having been created, mice and lions and triceratops, **lived together, peacefully**, on the land!
			1. Earlier we read those two passages in Isaiah. And while those passages are about the new heavens and new earth that Christ will bring at the end of time, they want us to see that life in the new heavens and new earth will be like *but even better than* how it was on the wonderful, harmonious, and peaceful pre-Fall world.
			2. And this is another exciting reason to pray, regularly, for Christ to return!
	2. Well, that brings us to verses 26-31 and the account of the creation of human beings. And verse 26 begins with the next **Announcement** element: “*Then God said*.” And then we get what God said in the **Command** element: “*Let us make man in our image …”* etc, whichisfollowedby the **Activity** element in verse 27, which describes God creating man, male and female.
		1. Now, the Hebrew word that is translated as “***man***” is ‘*adam*.’ ‘Adam’ means man. It will also be the name of the first man, but here it means mankind or humanity. And humanity is made up of males and females. And all we are going to say about this truth for now is that we are intentionally created by God as either male or female. The 23rd pair of the 46 chromosomes in our DNA will either be XX or XY. And that *cannot* be changed.
		2. But notice also here that God is explicit about **Him being the Creator of man**. In the creation work of previous days, we have seen God say things like “*let the earth produce*” and “*let the earth bring forth,*” which presents us with a picture of God making or fashioning or forming land and plants and fish and animals from out of the stuff of creation. And while God does make the first man from the dust of the ground, and the first woman from one of his ribs, as we will see in chapter 2, here He says, “*Let us make man*.” We are meant to note that God made human beings.
		3. But how God phrases this statement is also noteworthy. He says, “*Let us make man in our image.*”
			1. You must have your head buried in the sand if you have not heard how important **pronouns** are, all of a sudden. According to the world, if you don’t introduce yourself with your pronouns, well, you are a transphobe or a TERF or a Queerphobe. Well, we will come back to that topic soon, but the pronouns that God uses here *are* incredibly important. He doesn’t say, “me” and “my,” He says, “us” and “our,” which are plural pronouns.
			2. And some explain this as God and the angels, so the court of heaven, if you like. Others describe this as like the Royal ‘we.’ If you listened to the speeches of Queen Elizabeth, you may have noticed that she never referred to herself with ‘me’ or ‘my’ or ‘mine’; it was always ‘we’ or ‘us’ or ‘our.’ And this has to with placing her office and what she represents above her individual person. And that is called the ‘royal we.’ But these options are typically preferred by those who say that Moses, as the author of Genesis, couldn’t possibly have known about the doctrine of the Trinity, which is the third explanation of these pronouns. But Moses did not have to know about Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to choose these pronouns. For a start, God is the ultimate author of Scripture. And we saw in verse 1 that the name of God used there is in the plural form. And in verse 2 there is reference to the Spirit of God. And so, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Moses used pronouns that we know, with the benefit of the rest of Scripture, have the three persons of the Trinity in view – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Human beings are created in the image of the God who is one God in three persons.
		4. And this has significance for our next question, which is, **What does being created in the image and likeness of God mean**?
			1. Well, a few chapters on we will read that Adam “*fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth*.” And so, Seth was like Adam – he looked like him, thought like him, acted like him, talked like him, etc. And in essence, this is what is in view with our being created in the image and likeness of God.
			2. Now, **God is a spirit**, which means that He does not have a body. But many of God’s Old Testament appearances were as a human being, and of course the very heart of our salvation is the Son of God taking to Himself a human nature, and becoming like us, in every way, except for sin. And so, we can say that our being made in the image of God means that our body is the best vessel for our spirit/soul.
			3. But our being in the image and likeness of God also means that, like God, we have a will, and we can reason, and we can love, and we can know right from wrong, and truth from falsehood. And, like God, who is one God in three persons, we were created to live in relationship with others. And, like God, we can create and exercise dominion over creation.
			4. And so, in contrast to the fish and birds and animals, it is human beings, as His image bearers, who are God’s representatives on earth.
	3. And that brings us to verse 28 and the words of **Blessing/Command**: “*And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and 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*."*”* Andthen we read about God giving humans and animals the plants and fruit for food. And then we have the **Result** element: “*And it was so*,” followed by the **Approval** statement, where God declared that everything He had made was “*very good*,” and the **Numbering** **Formula**, which, as we said at the beginning of the sermon, emphasizes this day as special because it refers to day THE sixth.
		1. Now, there are **similarities between verses 22 and 28**. With the water and flying creatures, we are told that “*God blessed them, saying, ‘Be fruitful and multiply,’*” etc. But it is significant that with humans, God blessed them and said *to* them that they were to be fruitful, etc. So, with the water and flying creatures, it was God simply commanding what would be. But with humans, He gave them instructions that they were to obey.
		2. And He **tied His blessing to** **or connected it with their obedience to these commands**. And this has enormous implications for us today, as we will see in the second part of this sermon.
2. And that is where we turn our attention now as we consider some **Creation Implications** that arise out of the activity of the sixth day.
	1. I mentioned in the sermon introduction that **God highlights** **the significance of the sixth day** in a number of ways. One of them was how this day is numbered differently than the previous days. But the account of the sixth day is also bigger than each of the earlier days. And the creation of mankind comes last, which is another way to emphasize something’s importance. And we have also noted that it is humans, as God’s image-bearers, who are commanded to exercise dominion over all that God had already created. And there are twice as many speeches of God in this section than in previous sections – the one commanding the man and woman to be fruitful, etc, and then the one explaining to them what they and the animals were to eat. And lastly, it is only after mankind was created that the approval formula is that “*everything* *was* *very* *good*.” Not just good, but VERY good! And what all this ‘highlighting’ or ‘underlining’ adds up to, congregation, is that **mankind is the pinnacle or crowning glory of creation**.
		1. And this is what we saw, earlier, in **Psalm 8**, where the Psalmist says, “*When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honour. You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.*”
		2. And so, last week we noted an **error of pagan and new age religions**, which is that they ascribe personhood to plants and trees and rivers and mountains. And there are many today who view humans as just one type of animal. It is the philosophy behind the anti-farming movement. Killing animals for meat is viewed as murder, which is one reason why veganism and vegetarianism are on the rise. Zoos and aquariums are viewed as inhumane. And using animals for testing to benefit humans is viewed as wrong. And we need to understand the thinking behind these views. It stems from a failure to understand and accept the place or value that God has assigned to humans and animals and insects and plants and land.
		3. And given what we said earlier about plants and fruit being the diet of humans before the Fall, let me point out here that **after the Flood, God permitted humans to eat animals**. He said, “*Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything*.” So, while people are perfectly free to choose a vegetarian diet, to say that eating meat is wrong is contrary to Scripture.
	2. But the next sixth day implication for us to consider is that **God made you**.
		1. William Steig has written a picture book for children called ‘*Yellow and Pink*.’ It is about two wooden figures who wake up to find themselves lying on an old newspaper in the hot sun. One figure is painted yellow, the other pink. Suddenly Yellow sits up and asks, "Do you know what we are doing here?" No, replies Pink, "I don't even remember getting here." Then these two figures begin to debate where they came from. Pink looks over their wooden shapes and says, "Someone must have made us." Yellow disagrees. "No, I say we are an accident. A branch may have broken off a tree and fallen on a sharp rock, splitting one end of the branch into our two legs. The wind may have sent it tumbling down the hill and as it rolled it was chipped and shaped. Perhaps it was struck by lightning to splinter the wood into the shape of arms and fingers. Eyes may have formed by woodpeckers boring into the wood. With enough time - a 1000, a million, maybe even two million years - a lot of unusual things could happen. Why not us?" So they argue back and forth. In the end their discussion is cut short by a man who comes out of a house nearby. He walks over to the two figures lying on the newspaper in the sun and picks them up to check their paint. "Hmm, nice and dry", he says, and tucks them under his arm and wanders back to the house. Yellow peers out from under the man's arm and whispers in Pinks ear, "Who is this guy?"
		2. Well, **Genesis 1:26** is God’s answer to anyone who wonders where they came from or who made them. It tells us that "this Guy" is the God of the Bible. He made you. **Psalm 139:13-14** says, “*For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.*”
			1. So, whenever you are tempted to see yourself as ugly or useless, or you have been made to feel ugly or useless, remind yourself that God made you, and you are beautiful, and He has a purpose for you!
	3. And not only did He make you, He made you **in His image**.
		1. And this is why **murder** is so wicked. In **Genesis 9:5-6**, God said to Noah, “*And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man. "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man*."” And because this is a fundamental, creation principle, nowhere in Scripture is this life for life expectation of God undone. And so, in a just society, there should be capital punishment.
		2. But our being created in the image of God is also why slavery and racism and abortion and euthanasia and human embryonic stem cell research and human cloning are all evil.
		3. But this principle has implications even for how we speak about others, including, boys and girls, that brother or sister of yours, who is sooo annoying! **James** said that the tongue “*is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so*.”
		4. And as a subset of this point, you were made in God’s image, **either as a male or a female**.
			1. And the answer to anyone struggling with what today is called **gender confusion**, is not wearing different clothes and/or puberty blockers and/or hormone treatment and/or surgery, and having others affirm whatever gender identity they choose, but understanding and accepting God’s intentional and beautiful design of who they are as male or female.
				1. And brothers and sisters, though this will likely cost you, one way or another, do not submit to any demand, whether it be from the person themselves or employers or the government, that you call someone male who is female or female who is male. For that is not speaking the truth, and it is a denial of God’s good design.
			2. But this point has relevance also for **marriage**. In verse 31, God described everything He made as “*very good*.” But did you know that there was something in creation, before the Fall, that was *not* good? We see it in **chapter 2:18**; it is that the man, Adam, was alone. And so, God made a helper that was fit or suited to or corresponding to Adam. And that person was a woman. It was she who was ‘fit’ to be Adam’s companion, and to complement the calling to be fruitful and multiply, and to provide Him with the perfect helper for the work of exercising dominion. So, God’s design for marriage *requires* male and female.
				1. So, a man with a man or a woman with a woman is not a marriage, regardless of what they might think or what government legislation says. Indeed, it is because of His design for marriage that God calls all same-sex activity unnatural and an abomination in Scripture.
			3. And while we are talking about **multiplying**, we saw last week that the Hebrew word for create is *bara* and the Hebrew word for bless is *barak*. They are very closely related words. So, as a husband and wife procreate, they are imitating their Creator. And not only are a husband and wife *commanded* to have children, if they are able to, we see here that God places the command to be fruitful and multiply at the very front of His blessing to them. **Psalm 127:3-5** says the same thing: “*Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them*!” And we must hear this because the world is screaming in our other ear that the planet is over-populated and that having children is selfish and uncaring.
				1. I don’t know if you saw this news item but one person who received a New year’s honour was Dame Jan Wright. And she received the honour because of services to the environment. And in her newspaper interview, she said that overpopulation is putting too much pressure on the planet. She said of humans, and I quote, “We’re like a bacterium that has overrun the Petrie dish.” Just think about that for a moment. New Zealand is a nation with the highest youth suicide rate in the whole world. And all our young people are hearing is that we are killing the planet and it will soon die. And now our government as honoured someone who views human being as bacteria on the planet and who wants young people to forego what God has called a blessing. What a terrible and without hope ideology. Don’t buy into it, young people. Don’t let what God blesses be called wrong or selfish
		5. Well, we simply do not have time today to explore this in any detail, but the fact that **Adam was created first and the woman second** has implications for roles in marriage and in the church and even in society. And this has nothing at all to do with greater or lesser. In fact, **1 Corinthians 11:8** describes man as the image and glory of God and the woman as the glory of man. And one commentator observed that that makes women the glory of glories, or to use a biblical synonym, the holy of holies! And I think that is a wonderful and worthwhile observation! But these important topics, about which there is so much confusion in the world, and in the church, have their Genesis, if you will pardon the pun, in Genesis 1! And God willing, we will have opportunity to speak about them on other occasions.
	4. But as our last creation implication, **God made us to subdue the earth and to have dominion over all He has made**.
		1. We are not a plague or like leeches or bacteria on the planet. We are called to work and explore and tame and harness and unleash potential and discover and build and to study and invent and experiment. We are to be the caretakers or stewards of the animals and resources and chemicals and minerals that God has created.
		2. And we have already stated in regards to the plants and trees that this is a calling to be *careful* stewards of all these things. God explicitly forbids pollution and needless destruction of trees and animal cruelty. But neither are we to worship the environment and animals, as so many do today, to the point that what benefits humans is placed alongside or even below the ‘rights’ of animals or rivers or hillsides.
		3. And so, young people, do not see education as what you need to get a job, which is how you get a pay packet, so you can buy new clothes or a new phone or car parts or a video game. No no no! God calls you to something much more wonderful and noble and lofty – subduing the earth and exercising dominion over it. And you do that as a stay-at-home Mother, as a plumber or builder, as a scientist or teacher, or in whatever other ‘occupation’ the Lord calls you to. And you do this as you pull out weeds in your garden, or fold the laundry, or submit a uni paper on time, or design something, or tidy your room, or complete another batch of product, or put a food order together at Maccas, or invent a new medicine, or practice the piano or violin. You must see every task of each day, as mundane and ordinary as it might be, as exercising dominion in God’s creation.
		4. And if you understand this about yourself and your calling, then you will be like the person described in **Psalm 128**: “*Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD, who walks in His ways! You shall eat the fruit of the labour of your hands; you shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you. Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD. The LORD bless you from Zion! May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life! May you see your children's children! Peace be upon Israel!*”
3. Well, I know this is a long sermon already. But I simply couldn’t leave anything out in what has already been said, and I felt that to divide the sermon into two parts could mean some of us missing important points. So, we end now with a **Gospel implication**.
	1. We have spoken today about human beings being created in the image of God. But in the same way that a rock thrown into a pool of still water makes the water muddy and unable to offer a perfect reflection anymore, so the Fall radically ruined the image of God in human beings. So yes, we remain image-bearers in the narrow sense of being a rational, volitional, and moral, body and soul humans, but the Bible explains that we begin life as enemies of God, who are dead in trespasses and sin. **Romans 8:7** says that we are “*hostile to God, for [we do] not submit to God's law; indeed, [we] cannot*.” And that is why the Bible describes being saved as being born again or becoming a new creation. For now we become image-bearers also in the *wider* sense of the word. Now we *know* God and *love* God and *want to obey His commands* and to *glorify Him* in every area of life.
		1. And this is possible only because of Jesus Christ. You see, **Hebrews 1:3** describes Jesus as the exact image and likeness of God. And this refers to Him having come down to earth and taken a human nature and adding it to His divine nature. So, as a true human being, Jesus perfectly *obeyed* God and *worshiped* God and *loved* God, and then He went to the cross to pay the price for our sins.
		2. And it is through faith in Him that the image of God is restored in us. **Ephesians 4:24** and **Colossians 3:10** describe the Christian life in this way: God is at work in us, through His Spirit, so that we are being renewed to be like God in righteousness and holiness, and with a true knowledge of our Creator.
		3. And it is as we apply ourselves to the study of God’s Word that we grow in our calling to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and exercise dominion over it, for His glory!

And the fact that Jesus came to earth and took our nature to Himself is the most important ‘highlighter’ on day THE sixth. For it reveals the reason why God created the heavens and the earth. It is the place where humans will live, those whom the Second Person of the Trinity will become like in order to save. And the end of the plan will involve a new heavens and new earth, yes, and maybe even animals, as we saw in Isaiah, but the grand climax will be when the Father presents the Son with all the humans who the Son has redeemed, and who the Spirit has made to be like the Son. Will you be among that number? Have you repented of your sins and believed in Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins? This is the Gospel of day THE sixth. Amen.