

God's Rescue Plan for His Groaning Creation

Creation Care All Aged Worship

Hope Presbyterian Church, Christchurch, 16 Aug 2020

Creation narrative (BYRON) (with lighting and images to give effect)

In the beginning there was nothing.

Nothing to hear. Nothing to feel. Nothing to see.

Only emptiness. And darkness. And.... Nothing but nothing.

But God was there. And God had a wonderful plan.

"I'll take the emptiness," God said, "and I'll fill it up! Out of nothing, I'm going to make EVERYTHING!"

Like a mummy bird flutters her wings over her eggs to help her babies hatch, God hovered over the deep, silent darkness. He was making life happen.

God spoke. That's all. And whatever he said, it happened.

Light shone into the darkness. A great space opened up, it was wide and deep and high.

Splashing up through the oceans came cliffs, mountains, and sandy beaches. Everything green and colourful burst into life. Fluttering and chirping and darting and wriggling. Everyone came out to play. God looked and said "You are good!"

God had a shining dream in his heart. He would make people to share his Forever, so God breathed life into Adam and Eve. They were lovely because he loved them. God looked at everything he had made, "Perfect!" he said. And it was.

God took another look and he saw a beautiful land covered with a long, white cloud.

He smiled as he said, "the people living there will be "livin' the dream!"

And God gave the care of his perfect world into the hands of His children. Whatever happened, whatever it cost him, he would always love his children with a never stopping, never giving up, unbreaking, always and forever love.

Reading

Psalm 8 (in English, te Reo Maori and Chinese – verse by verse)

9am – Amy Woermann; James Cameron; Caesar Zia - TBC

10am – Sophie Peter; James Cameron; Faye Zhou - TBC

¹ O LORD, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth!

Your glory is higher than the heavens.

² You have taught children and infants

to tell of your strength,

silencing your enemies

and all who oppose you.

- ³ When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers—
the moon and the stars you set in place—
⁴ what are mere mortals that you should think about them,
human beings that you should care for them?
⁵ Yet you made them only a little lower than God
and crowned them with glory and honor.
⁶ You gave them charge of everything you made,
putting all things under their authority—
⁷ the flocks and the herds
and all the wild animals,
⁸ the birds in the sky, the fish in the sea,
and everything that swims the ocean currents.
- ⁹ O LORD, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth!

Worship bracket of songs - God of Wonders, How great is our God, How great thou art

Creation Reflects God's Glory Rob

Today we give each of you a piece of this creation, just one item made by the word of God.
Fingerprint image on screen. Hand out baskets with leaves, flowers, stones and bark etc.

When you touch something, you leave something of yourself on whatever you touch – a fingerprint. The fingerprint is a sign that you have been there. In a very real sense, the items that you are holding are like the fingerprints of God. Leaf, stone, bark, twig. Common things we see, or touch everyday – these things are the fingerprints, the evidence of God. These things can open up to us and show us something of what God is like.

We are going to take a moment of quiet now. Hold this piece of God's fingerprint in your hand and allow the mystery of who God is to be opened to you. Listen for his voice and his heart speaking to you.

Words on screen. Leanne to read after the silence.

Psalm 19

- 1 The heavens proclaim the glory of God.
The skies display his craftsmanship.
2 Day after day they continue to speak;
night after night they make him known.
3 They speak without a sound or word;
their voice is never heard.
4 Yet their message has gone throughout the earth,
and their words to all the world.

Romans 1:20 The Message

But the basic reality of God is plain enough. Open your eyes and there it is! By taking a long and thoughtful look at what God has created, people have always been able to see what their eyes as such can't see: eternal power, for instance, and the mystery of his divine being. So nobody has a good excuse.

The Fall Narrative Rob

A terrible lie came into the world. It whispered to every one of God's children: "God doesn't love me." The lie would live on in every human heart and never leave. And a terrible pain came into God's heart. God's children had broken their wonderful relationship with Him. They had chosen to stop trusting Him, and now He knew everything else would break. His beautiful creation would start to unravel and go wrong. From now on everything would die - even though it was supposed to last forever.

Go to dark. Play a sound to illustrate the damage of sin breaking into the world. On screen scroll through some images of pollution, extinct animals, droughts, deforestation, broken relationships, war with sad music in the background like mourning.

Dramatic scene with actors showing their loss of connection with God and creation. They walk through the room throwing trash and being disrespectful to the environment.

Narrative continues Rob

God loved his children too much to let the story end there. Even though he knew he would suffer, God had a plan – a magnificent dream. One day, he would get his children back. One day, he would make the world their perfect home again. "I'll get rid of the sin and the dark and the sadness you let it in," God promised. "I'm coming back for you." One day, God himself would come. Not to punish his people – but to rescue them.

Everything was ready. The moment God had been waiting for was here at last! God was coming to help his people, just as he promised in the beginning. But how would he come? What would he be like? What would he do?

(We have a bunch pictures that tell the next part of the story. These will be handed out to each section and we would like volunteers to hold up each image so that those around you can see it, then dialogue together the part of the story that you think is represented in the picture. Ask: What is this story about? What happens after this?)

Hand out pictures (from Jesus story book Bible). Give 2 minutes. Invite the volunteers holding the pictures to come up.

Put yourselves into order with 1 starting here. (Child) is going to help me tell the whole story.

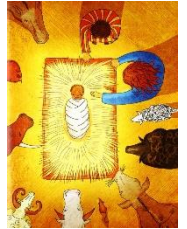
Rescue Narrative

Birth

God's people had been waiting for God to send his rescuer for a long, long time. But how would he come? What would he be like?

The mountains would have bowed down. The seas would have roared. Trees would have clapped their hands. But the earth held its breath and when no one was looking, in the darkness, he came.

In a stable, in a manger, God gave the world his Great Gift – His Son.



Baptism

Suddenly, it was as if someone had drawn back the curtains in a dark room, as if heaven itself had opened. A dove flew down and rested on Jesus. A voice came from heaven. Clear and strong and loud so everyone could hear. "This is my own Son. I love him. I am very pleased with him. Listen to Him." God said.

Heaven had broken through. The Great Rescue had begun

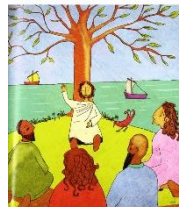


Disciples

Jesus needed to find some helpers, some friends. Some people who would be with him and learn from him.

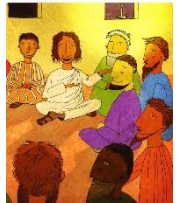
Would rich people, clever people, strong or important people make the best helpers for Jesus? Jesus chose people who needed him a lot.

Do you remember what he said to them? "Let's go!" "Follow me"



Teaching

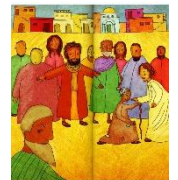
Wherever Jesus went, lots of people went too. Jesus felt for the people because they were like a flock of sheep that didn't have a shepherd to look after them. Often, he would sit down and talk to them... Often Jesus told stories – do you have a favourite?



Healing

Here is a lady who had been sick for many years. She thought Jesus was too busy and important to pay attention to her. He wasn't.

Jesus helped and healed many people like this lady. He made blind people see. He made deaf people hear. Lame people walk. Jesus was mending God's broken world.

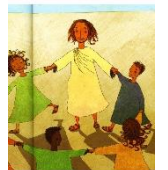


Children

One day some children came to Jesus. What did his friends say? "Jesus doesn't have time for you. He's too busy! He's too tired!"

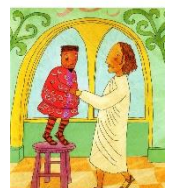
What did Jesus say? "Do n't send them away!"

Jesus loved children, and they knew they didn't need to be anything special for Jesus to love them.



Zacchaeus

Do you remember the man who didn't have many friends? The people didn't like him because he stole their money. Jesus knew that this little man was a Big sinner who needed to know God's love. He talked to lots of people that many thought didn't deserve God's love. Jesus showed Zacchaeus and everyone else that God's love was never stopping, never giving up, unbreaking, always and forever love, and it was for



everyone.

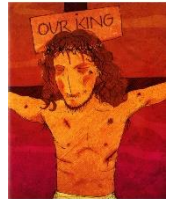
Washing Feet

One night, Jesus did the unexpected. Do you remember why nobody had washed the dirty feet of Jesus' friends? No one wanted the servant's job. Jesus did it. To show how much he loved. To show how we should treat each other.



Crucifixion

They nailed Jesus to a cross. Jesus said, "Father forgive them." They laughed at him. When Jesus cried out to his heavenly Father – heaven was quiet. Even though it was midday, a dreadful darkness covered the face of the world. The earth trembled. The mountains shook. Rocks split in two until it seemed the whole world would break and that creation itself would tear apart. Jesus body, like bread, was broken so that the world could mend. Just like the wine is poured out, so was his blood so our hearts could be healed and our sins washed away. God turned his face from His Son and with a great sigh he let himself die. It was done – Jesus had rescued the whole world.



After he was buried his friends wondered "What had gone wrong? What did it all mean?" They didn't know and their hearts were breaking.

Resurrection

Wasn't Jesus God's Rescuer – the King God had promised? Three days later sad and broken hearts were mended and were full of joy. Slowly his followers understood that he truly was the Saviour of the World. He had come to make all things new and there would be a real, happily ever after.



Ascension

One day Jesus told his friends that it was time for him to go to his Father. He told them that it was now their turn to tell people of God's never stopping, never giving up, unbreaking and always and forever love. He told them to go and tell people that they can live forever with their Father in heaven because He had rescued the world.



As they looked up to the departing Saviour, the angels told them that one day Jesus would come back. One day Heaven would come down and God would make the world our true and perfect home again.

Pentecost

Jesus friends waited in Jerusalem as they had been told to. They weren't really sure what they were waiting for, but they soon found out. Wind, fire and something more: inside each was changing: cold hearts became warm, hard hearts became soft – God was giving them brand new hearts - God's Spirit alive and powerful. Jesus had promised to never leave them – he was making his home in them.



Today

Many years have passed since those days. We still have the message to share of God's never stopping, never giving up, unbreaking, always and forever love. In our world today we are dealing with how we have broken, polluted, and messed up this world. God's Word says, "creation is groaning." Perhaps we are seeing this as never before. How should we – God's children – respond to the state of this world? What would God have us do. (Invite child to respond to the rubbish left). Invite Marty to share.

Creation Care

Marty Message – 10 min.

Marty to lead confession prayer – explain what confession means

Prayer

Lord, we have learned to throw things away
to drop in the bin anything we no longer want.

Lord, we confess we have not always care for this world.

A truck comes and takes it away,
so easy, so convenient, not my problem.

Lord, we confess that we haven't worried about our mess.

And the ruin that has caused your creation to groan.

Forgive us our sin.

Lord, we confess that all we have is yours
everything we hold has come from your creation
and returns to your earth.

In you, nothing is thrown away.

Each person is treasured, every living creature,
and everything made with human hands
from the wealth of the earth.

Lord, we commit ourselves to live well in your Creation,
our lives in your cycles of grace,
our choices inspiring others,
our actions revealing your generosity and justice.

Lord, in your mercy, forgive us.

In your power invigorate us.

In your loving kindness restore us
to harmony, to hope, to you,
that the whole earth may live to praise your name
through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour

Amen.

Lead a challenge to consider what God has been saying. What are your next steps as an individual? What change can you personally make in your habits? What are our next steps as a body of God's people? What change must we make in our habits, or attitudes? Speak to our values as a church. Invite people to connect with the Creation Care team as one action step.

Connect us back to God, his grace, his mercy, and his love for his children and his creation.
Invite people to worship Him in the final song.

Final song – 10,000 reasons

Benediction and close