

How Amazing is the World?

- What makes you go WOW!?!
 - I hope everyone does for something!
 - for me its partly the "Wow" of bigness of universe, smallness of the earth - I remember going out onto playing fields as a secondary school pupil and the earth would be this big and over there..., or light being waves and particles;
 - for other people it is in the way people are put together, the wonder of the natural world, the grace and speed of a cheetah, the delicate balance of eco-systems
 - for others its some of the amazing things humans have made, great buildings or stadia...
- We live in amazing world, rich and diverse in experiences and wonders!
- "Spectacular!" slides...
- Sometimes Christians are prone to losing sight of just how wonderful and amazing the world in which we live is:
 - we, rightly, look out on the world and see doom and gloom;
 - terrorist atrocities and military reprisals;
 - horrendous human cruelty - whatever the latest murder or rape or atrocity...
 - or even the horrors of natural disaster, earthquake or flood - who can forget the impact of the pictures of people being plucked from trees in Mozambique or from slums in New Orleans?
- We see sin writ large, and there are times when that's our only comment on the world - its a bad, dark place.
- What a contrast with what God says about creation in the passage we read earlier:

It is good!

- Did you notice the recurring themes or phrases is God's declaration of the goodness of creation.
- Stands back on reflects on each aspect as he makes it - and as he does so, declares:
 - "It is good!"
- He finishes the whole thing off, in Gen 1:31, with "God saw all that he had made, and it was VERY GOOD."
 - now this isn't just anyone declaring that what they've made is very good!
 - this is the most awesomely powerful, most wonderfully creative God, who made from nothing - by whatever process - this whole universe!
 - if he says its good, it must be pretty darned impressive!
- That has implications for the way we live in the world:
 - first, appreciation of the world;
 - second, care of the world - not just eco-loonies!! Recycling, environmental concerns are part of our concern to steward this wonderful world that God has placed in our care.
- Careful not to come to venerate the creation:
 - some environmentalists act as if the natural world was the definition of all things good;
 - as if, without argument, human intervention in the world is wrong.
- Not what God says!!
 - we are to care for and steward this world's resources, not run away from our responsibilities.

In His Image...

- It is in this context, that the world is a wonderful place, that the creation of humanity occurs (Gen 1:26-28)
- In fact, humanity is the pinnacle of creation - created last, the jewel in the most

beautiful and amazing of settings!

- What, then, is said about humanity in these verses?
– (put up slide of 2 people, with v.27 quoted)

"Let us make man in our image"

- In the image of God (Gen 1:26) - investment of Himself in a special way.
 - words used cover the following range of meanings: likeness - image - reflection
- This last uncovers something important:
 - if you stand in front of the mirror, your reflection appears; that reflection has no independent existence; if you were not standing there, your reflection certainly wouldn't - or if it was, you should be very worried!!
 - in a similar way, we are by our very nature creatures "in relation" - at the most basic level, we are in relation to God;
 - dissolve that relationship and we simply are not.
- Not only do we owe our existence to his creation of us:
 - like a car owes its creation to the car plant and workers who made it;
 - but, if the car plant is demolished, and all the workers die, it is possible for the car to carry on existing!
- However, without the relationship with God, we do not live:
 - its fundamental to our humanity.
- We are created in the image of God. And we are created relating - relating to God, and so also to each other...
- Simply speaking, that affirms the value & the worth that each of us have:
 - God made us!
 - that can't be taken away, ever, however we feel!
- And not only do we have worth, but others around us have that worth too:
 - they too are declared "very good" by this amazing creator God;
 - worth caring for, worth loving, worth befriending, worth trusting, worth learning from!

And all of that most especially within the church...

- For if God has made this world such an amazing place, to be celebrated and enjoyed, then we who are his people, renewed in Jesus Christ to be like him, should be the ones who most closely reflect the world as it was meant to be!
 - loving one another, seeking and seeing the image of God in those around us

And again, and again!

- Any parent or grandparent or aunt or uncle of small kids will know that they can have a boundless enthusiasm for life:
 - rough and tumble games... "again, again", with delight in their faces!!
- I think there is something of that in God's delight in creation and in this world that he made:
 - when God created daisies, did he say "daisies, be"?
- I don't think that captures the giving of himself that I believe went into the creation.
- Rather, he created each one.... and each time saw that it was good, and taking such delight in what he had made and the pleasure and beauty it would bring, God said:
 - "again, again.... and again and again!"
- Let's grow to love and celebrate this world that God has given us and placed us in
- And let's grow to reflect his assessment of people as "very good" and worth loving and getting to know!