

The Creating Spirit

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[0:00] So I love beginnings in the beginning. And this morning we are beginning a series on the Holy Spirit. We're going to be looking at it for the next four to five weeks.

And it's going to be good, right? But my prayer and my hope as we begin this is not that we get to the end of it and we just have more of a teaching on the Holy Spirit, more of a lecture kind of understanding.

Academic understanding of the Spirit. But rather we have an understanding of the Spirit in our lives. Because I don't know about you, but for me personally, I need to be led by the Spirit more.

I need more of the Spirit's work in my life, right? So does that sound good to you guys? Yes. Okay. Amen. Good. So, sorry.

For those of you who don't know who I am, I'm Graham. I'm one of the elders here. I'm married to Irina, my beautiful wife. And we have two kids.

[1:07] Yay. That's a... I love you, honey. And we have two kids. Elijah, who's seven. And Daniela, who's four.

And my son, Elijah, he's now in P2. And he's starting to pick up a lot of things that he's learning at school. And some from his friends. Some good stuff and some not so good stuff.

So we decided, and I thought we've got to begin tackling this whole idea of sex education. And rather, let's teach him from home rather than let him learn some of the stuff at school.

So believe it or not, I'm actually quite nervous to talk to my son about this subject, right? I've spoken to teenagers about it and adults about it. But my seven-year-old son, I can't find it a bit difficult to bring up the subject.

So what I did is I bought a book, right? That's a great way to copy out. I brought it with me today. It's called *Before I Was Born*. So our practice in our household is at night when we put him to bed, we'll say, you can choose one book that we read to you and then one Bible story.

[2:18] So anyway, I decided, all right, I'm going to do it. And we're getting to bed. And I said, what book do you want to read tonight? And he goes, *Star Wars*. We've read *Star Wars* about a million times, right? And I go, no, no, no.

I've got something much better. I've got *Before I Was Born*. Take that, Luke Skywalker. But it took a little bit of convincing because I really built it up that it's an awesome book.

And eventually he agrees, right? So we're sitting down and we're reading the book. And he's actually, it's very well written. It's from a Christian perspective. And there are lots of illustrations and stuff.

And he's asking questions. And he's quite involved in it. And the story develops. And I'm going to read you the page I got to. So here it is.

Okay. So just bear with me. Okay. So friends bring gifts to a wedding. God has a special gift for new husbands and wives too.

[3:14] It's called sex. So pause. Elijah says, what's sex? I said, it's coming. We'll get to it. Okay. God's rules say that only people who are married to each other should have sex.

It's God's way of making families strong. Because the man and the woman are married, their bodies belong to each other. They enjoy holding each other close.

When a husband and wife lie close together, he can fit his penis into her vagina. At this point, Elijah's face just drops.

And he turns to me and this is what he says. That's gross. He did. And at that point, I completely lost it.

I couldn't carry on. I just got the giggles. I don't know why, whether it was the answer and stuff. But I started laughing. And because I was laughing, he started laughing. Next five minutes, that's what

we did. We were just giggling.

[4 : 12] So my first attempt at sex education was an epic failure. But anyway, we persevered. We persevered. And we eventually got there.

And it was good discussion. He still thinks it's gross, by the way. So I just pray that that continues for a lot of time. I'm going to remind him when he's a teenager of what he said when he was seven. But he asked this question.

He said, eventually we read it through, and he says, who made me? Now, it's probably the question that most children come to ask. And we tend to brush it off as a childish question, right?

Oh, kids ask that question. How cute. And then as adults, we're far too sophisticated to ask that kind of a question. So I want to tackle that today.

And I'm going to do it. We're going to look at two hurdles. And you'll get where I'm going. But the first one is God is creator. And the second hurdle is Jesus is creator.

[5 : 15] Okay? In the beginning, what does that sound like to you? It's a story, right? Once upon a time, in the beginning.

It's not a scientific journal, right? If you read any science journal, it doesn't start off with in the beginning. Okay? The Bible is creation from God's perspective.

It's actually incredible how it's written. It's amazing. God has chosen to communicate this story from the beginning of time for all people, all cultures, till the end of time.

And he's done it in this format. It's actually a brilliant piece of work. But the Bible just, it never argues the existence of God.

It just takes for a fact that God exists, right? But the modern mind says, no, God must prove himself to me. God must prove himself to me.

[6 : 17] Whereas the Bible's focus is, God made the world. And he made it good. It was perfect. Relationships were good. He communicated with people.

And then it went horribly wrong by our own doing. And yet, then the rest of the story is about how God chooses, even in that horrible mess, he chooses to redeem the world and put it right again.

Again, that's the story and the narrative of the Bible. That's its focus. That's the message it wants you to take away. But in the midst of that, God has provided evidence for himself.

So how has he done it? I have with me a picture, okay? So I don't know if you guys can see it. Can I show it to you?

You're allowed to go, wow, okay? Ready? Here it is. Here it is. Ooh. Wow, okay. A little there.

[7 : 18] Okay, when I look at that picture, I know that there is an artist behind that picture. This picture didn't just, I didn't just leave the piece of paper in a room for a very, very, very long time and dust formed on it and all the colors came together.

And then, wow, it's a beautiful picture. I know. I know that there is an artist who drew this picture. Would you agree with me? Yes.

Okay. Now, if someone said to you, no, that's impossible. The picture drew itself. What would you say? Probably, the Bible's quite strong and it says, the fool says in his heart, there is no God.

The picture made itself. Or take another example, right? So, this book that I brought with you, lovely book, got great illustrations, it's words, makes good grammar, nice pictures.

Could this book create itself? If we just waited a really, really long time, the book could just kind of all come together, form words, pictures.

[8 : 30] Could it do that? Anyone think that that's possible? You're allowed to say so. Okay, we all agree. Okay, good. All right. If you don't, come chat to me afterwards.

All right. Do you know what deoxyribonic nucleic acid is? Somebody said it. DNA, right? I didn't know that.

I looked it up this week, so I learned a new word. DNA. Now, DNA is a molecule that carries all the genetic code and instructions for how tall you're going to be, the color of your eyes, the shape of your nose.

It's all there, right? And it's put together in this little bi-polymer molecule that's curled around in a double helix. Okay, now, I've lost you, right?

I knew that would happen, so I brought a picture. All right, can we show the picture? There it is. You guys are allowed to go, wow. Wow. Okay, that's you, right? So, in a cell, in your body, in the nucleus, there's this stuff called chromosomes and DNA.

[9 : 35] DNA. So, how DNA is formed. Thank you. We can turn that off. So, how DNA is structured is if you took a string and you just kind of coiled it and coiled it and coiled it and coiled it, it would just become coils of coils of coils.

And that's how it can fit. Three billion base pairs can fit in one cell six microns across.

Now, you ask me what is a micron? Micron is very, very, very small. Okay? So, if you had to take DNA in one cell in your body and stretch it out, it would be about, there it is, it would be about two meters long in one cell.

If you're Australian, probably half a meter. Okay. Okay, sorry. That's a terrible joke, right? At least a meter and a half. Okay. So, one cell in your body, two meters long, you have about 10 trillion cells in your body.

So, if you had to take all the DNA inside you this morning and you had to stretch it out, it would be about 745 million miles long.

[10 : 55] Okay, you guys are allowed to go, wow, that should blow your mind. That's incredible, right? In your body right now. So, you're thinking, my goodness, could that get to the moon? Well, the moon is about 250,000 miles away.

Okay. Your DNA could get there and back about 1,500 times. There and back, there and back, there and back, there and back. Wow. Okay.

What about the sun? Could it get to the sun? That's pretty impressive, right? The sun is about 93 million miles away. Probably a little bit further today.

It's a little bit cooler. So, your DNA could get to the sun and back about four times. Wow. Okay, that's pretty impressive.

If you ever are standing in front of the mirror and you think, I'm not that special, I want you to think, your DNA can go to the sun and back at least four times.

[11 : 59] Twice if you're Australian. But there it goes. There and back. Now, get this, right? But scientists call DNA the book of life.

Now, I find that a little bit ironic, what we call the book of life and what scientists. They say it's the foundation of life, the building blocks of life, or the book of life. DNA is far more complex than this little book.

Far more complex than this little book. And yet, you will have people who will say, well, it formed itself. It took a very, very, very long time.

But it formed itself. The creator has left his fingerprints on your human body. On creation outside, his fingerprints have been there for all to see.

This is how the Bible puts it. It comes from Romans 1. It says this, For since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities, his eternal power, and divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

[13 : 23] When you look at creation, you look at the mountains, the hills, you look at other people, you are seeing something of what God is like. No one is going to be able to stand before God one day and say, you know what, I wasn't really sure if you existed or not.

You didn't really give me enough evidence. The Bible doesn't allow for that. Okay, but you came to church this morning for theology, not for science.

So let's jump back straight into the theology. Understanding that God creates this world. How does he do it? It says his spirit is hovering over this unformed place.

And what God does is he breathes. He speaks. Now the Hebrew word for breath or spirit is ruach. Okay, I love Hebrew.

It always sounds much better if you've got flu, right? Ruach. Okay, this is what I want you to do. Take your hand, put it in front of your mouth, and I want you to blow. You feel that?

[14 : 31] That is ruach, your breath, your spirit. Now your breath is pretty powerful, especially if you've got bad breath, right? You can knock someone over three meters away.

They just fall down. Now imagine that is God's breath blowing onto creation. Things start to happen. God speaks.

His breath moves. His spirit moves. Boom, there's light. Boom, there's mountains. There's trees.

There's rivers. There's animals. Mind-blowing. Wow. You know, there's a lot of debate that goes on whether it took six days or 600 million years.

It's not the point. The point is God's spirit was behind it all. He was breathing onto creation. He was making creation. His spirit caused it to move.

And then he gets to man, right? Very last thing. He's made this world. He goes, it's good. It's perfect. But it's missing something. It's missing man. And he makes man special.
[15 : 35] And he makes, he forms this body. And he breathes into him. Now what's the difference between a dead body and a living body?

If you're out for a walk and you come across a body, how do you know it's dead or alive? Unless it hasn't got its head chopped off or anything, you would look if it's breathing.
Right? There is breath in the body. That gives its life. So Franklin, who's not here today, recently told me a story. He was a couple of weeks ago at somebody's bedside as they died.
And he said he was holding his hand when he took his final breath. And he said it was the most awesome moment as he saw him breathe out for the last time.
And it was as if he's no longer there. He's gone. The breath has gone out of him. The life has gone out of him. And here we see the reverse happening, right? It's not breath going out of him.
[16 : 39] It's God breathing life and his spirit into man. Right? And man comes. And he calls him Adam. Okay?

Now that's the example I thought was going to happen, right? People are going to respond that way. Footnotes. I love footnotes.
Okay? My love language is footnotes. If you buy a Bible, make sure that it has footnotes and that you read the footnotes. The footnotes are incredible. They teach us everything. So I put footnotes in today in the scripture.
And you'll see Adam is not just like a cute name God came up with. Like, oh, look at that. He's adorable. Let's call him Adam. You know? Or Peter or John. There was a reason there. The name in Hebrew, Adam, means Adam.
Means people. Mankind. God is creating the human race right there. And another meaning for Adam can be ground. From the ground.

[17 : 38] Right? So I hate to break this to you, but I know I told you it was special. But there's nothing special in my body from a material point of view that you cannot find in the ground.
Right? You've watched a movie where they say ashes to ashes, dust to dust. That's where we go.
Right? The material, your makeup of your body can be found in the ground.
So what's the difference between all the material coming together and forming something? It's God's breath, his spirit that he breathes into man.
That's the difference. Because, unfortunately, and it's good, right? God creates it. It's good. It's like he now has relationship with human beings.
He makes Eve and they have relationship with each other and everything's good and it's perfect. And then it goes horribly wrong. Right? But man disobeys.
[18 : 36] He shakes his fist at God and he says, you know what? I'll decide for myself what is good and evil. And it is the same problem today.

Man decides for himself what is good and evil. And when you've got 7 billion people living on the planet deciding for themselves what is good and evil, you end up with a mess.
Okay. So that's where we are. Now, fast forward. God has created this world. His spirit has breathed on creation. His spirit has breathed into man. And then we fast forward and we're at John 3.
Now, in your Bibles, if you read the chapter heading is Jesus teaches Nicodemus. Now, if you were a first century Jew and you saw that, you'd laugh.
This is the reason you'd laugh. Is because at that time, Jesus and Nicodemus are the two theological heavyweights in Israel.
[19 : 40] You see, Nicodemus, he's not just any Pharisee. He is the teacher. Jesus said to him, you are Israel's teacher.

And you have this conversation unfolding. Did any of you, I don't know if you missed this in the news, it kind of made big news. There was a fight between two boxers.
Floyd Mayweather and Conor McGregor. If you missed it, you actually didn't miss anything. But it's kind of like Conor McGregor sneaking up to Floyd Mayweather.
Before they've even had the fight, he goes, Floyd, actually, you're much better at this than I am. Could you teach me how to do it? Right? It just wouldn't happen.
And now you kind of get an idea of why Nicodemus comes to Jesus at night. Right? He was in the dark in more ways than one. But he comes to Jesus because he doesn't want anyone to see that

he's talking to Jesus.

[20 : 43] But at the same time, he recognizes Jesus has something that he doesn't have. And he needs to talk to him. So he goes and he opens the conversation and he says, Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God.

For no one can perform the signs you are doing. If God were not with him. So Nicodemus, he recognizes Jesus, you are a teacher. When you teach, things happen.

Things happen. Miracles happen. Something happens. And I just love Jesus' response. Right? If you look at this conversation, it's incredible. Like Jesus doesn't even respond to what Nicodemus has just said.

Right? He doesn't say you're wrong or anything like that or thanks for acknowledging that. I mean, Jesus just cuts straight to the chase. If you're the type of person who's offended by someone who's pretty straight talking, Jesus would probably offend you.

Right? Because he just cuts straight to the chase. Nicodemus, here's the deal. Right? This is what it's all about, Nicodemus. Very truly, honestly, 100%, I'm telling you, this is what it's about.

[21 : 54] No one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again. And footnotes, remember we love our footnotes, tells us that born again can also mean born from above.

So that's what Nicodemus hears. Okay? And Nicodemus, bless Nicodemus, right? He just doesn't get it. Huh? Like how can someone, wow, dude, that's weird, right?

That's weird. Like how can someone be born when they're old? Like, wow, weird. You want me to go back into my mother's womb? Like, I don't think Nicodemus is taking it that literally.

He might be. He might be. But he did hear you're born from above. I think what really bothers Nicodemus about what Jesus said is he's like, hang on.

I'm old and I'm Israel's teacher. I've been doing this for a very long time. And you're telling me I need to start again. I need to go back to the beginning.

[22 : 57] Everything I'm doing is wrong and I need to start again. Now, it's very difficult to tell someone, no matter how old they are, actually, you've got it wrong and you need to start again.

But it's very, very, very difficult to tell a middle-aged man who's been doing something. He's recognized by the whole of Israel as being the teacher in Israel and saying, no, actually, you got it wrong.

You need to start again. And then, I mean, Jesus just presses on, right? Just he goes for the throat. He says, very truly, Nicodemus, I'm telling you, this is the deal.

No one will enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Now, this would have really shaken Nicodemus, right?

Because he's, he said, like, Nicodemus, here's the truth, right? The kingdom of God, the very thing that you have been teaching Israel about, you've missed it, right?

[24 : 00] And you kind of, you know you've missed it and you want in. It's not going to happen unless you are born of water and of Spirit. Okay, water.

So, I brought some water with me today. So, today, all of us are going to use water for two things, hopefully. The one is to have a bath or a shower with, right?

We get dirty, smelly, stinky, and hopefully we're going to have a bath and we're going to use water to clean us. Okay, that's one thing. And the other thing that we're going to use water for, which we need water for, is to drink, right?

Water sustains life. It brings refreshing. And to me, it's this beautiful picture, right?

Because, in a very simple way, I just think how God's ordered creation is that it's a little reminder that we cannot live a self-contained life. We need something outside of ourselves to sustain us.

[25 : 05] It's a lovely little picture. Have you ever thought about it? Like, if you think you're such a tough guy and you can live on your own and you don't need anybody or anything, just try not drinking water for three days. And you'll realize you're not so tough and you need something outside of you to sustain you.

So, John the Baptist had been on the scene, right? And he had come in and he says, repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand. You need to get cleaned up because the king is coming.

And the guy's like, okay, what do we need to do? And he says, okay, take a bath, right? Let's dunk you, baptize you. And this would have been hugely unpopular. The Pharisees, they just did not like this at all because they thought they were pretty clean.

And here's some guy telling us, actually, you're pretty dirty on the outside. You need to get clean. Okay, now that could be one interpretation of this passage. I have to tell you that you read up about it.

The scholars have spilt a lot of ink over what that means. So, it could mean something else and I'm totally okay with that. But from my perspective, that's what I think the passage is teaching about.

[26 : 13] That's the conversation that they're having. That would have been Nicodemus' context. So, he gets this. All right, well, that's offensive. I didn't appreciate the whole John the Baptist coming along and telling us that we were dirty.

And now you're telling me, hey, that's not the end of the story. Nicodemus, you need something more than that. You need the spirit. You need water. And it comes from Jesus talking to the woman at the well.

He says, I will give you water that will well up inside you to eternal life. You need my spirit inside you to sustain you and give you life.

It's kind of like a baby in its mother's womb. All right, now that baby is being formed for a world that it cannot see yet.

Okay, in its mother's womb, it's been formed for this world. But it cannot see the world it's being created for. It cannot interact with the world it's being created for. It cannot smell the world it's being created for until it is born.

[27 : 20] And once it's born, my goodness, it begins to interact straight away, right? Any of you parents, the first thing you do is hear a big scream. And that screaming doesn't stop for the next 18 years.

Okay? But there is this thing happens when a baby is born. It suddenly sees the world it's created for. And when you are born of the spirit, suddenly you look and you see the world in which we were created for.

You see God's hand in it. You look at creation and you suddenly see, my goodness, he's amazing. That's his divine nature and his power displayed around me.

You suddenly look at people and you think, those are people made in the image of God. They are to be loved and valued and appreciated. But it only happens once you are born of the spirit.

Otherwise, you are like a baby in the womb that just doesn't see it. And Jesus goes on, right? He just says, Nicodemus, flesh gives birth to flesh, but the spirit gives birth to spirit.

[28 : 30] Now, when it talks about flesh there, it doesn't literally mean, you know, the flesh in your body. It's talking about your sinful nature. It took me a long time to realize this, to be honest with you.

We're born with a sinful nature. We inherited it from our parents. Our parents inherited it from their parents. Their parents inherited it from their parents. And it goes on and on and back and back. You know, someone said to me, you never need to teach your children to lie. Right? You know, they just do it naturally. You never need to teach your children to be selfish.

Only to be generous. Right? I'd love that if that were true. But, you know, I think of that with kids, but I think of myself. Took me a long time, right?

Because I thought I was a pretty okay kind of guy. At least amongst my friends, I was okay. So, if you want to feel good about yourself, you get yourself a really dodgy group of friends.

[29 : 32] And you think, okay, I'm not so bad. That's not the way to do it, right? I suddenly realized, I got to about my early 20s.

And I realized, flesh gives birth to flesh. The only thing I really have is a nature that's perpetually selfish.

Or a little bit self-seeking. Or there is lust inside me. There is jealousy inside me. There is envy inside me. And I cannot change it.

I cannot break free from it. I see it also in the people around me. And when we allow our sinful nature to go unchecked.

You know, society does a good job of restraining sin. But when we allow that to go unchecked and we think we can get away with what we can get away with, we become who we really are.

[30 : 29] And you see it. You just need to read the newspaper every day to see what's happened with people where they think they can get away with things. And their sin just takes over their lives.

And I think I'll read that and I go, but for the grace of God go I. This is how Galatian describes a life in the flesh.

The sinful nature is what it says. It says the acts of the flesh are obvious. Sexual immorality. Right? Do we see a problem with sexual immorality in the world today?

Yes. There's a huge problem. The world hasn't done a great job of showing us how this gift from God is meant to be used. Impurity. Debauchery. Idolatry.

Witchcraft. Hatred. Do we see hatred? Yes. Some guy this last week gets into a truck in New York and drives down the road and kills eight people.

[31 : 26] Because he hates. It's in there. But there's hatred in our hearts anyway. When we go to work amongst our own family members. Discord.

Jealousy. Fists of rage. Selfish ambition. Have you ever walked into your office and think, wow, this place is amazing. No one has their own agenda.

Right? No one's got any selfish ambition here. I have yet to discuss with anyone that that is their environment in their work. Dissensions.

Factions. Envy. Drunkenness. Orgies. And the like. I tell you and I warn you as I did before that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. Flesh gives birth to flesh.

And then Jesus paints this picture. He says, but. That's where you are. Now let's look at life of the spirit. If you have the spirit of God inside you.

[32 : 24] You are born of the spirit. This is what your life begins to be shaped like. And it grows. It only grows. It gets better and better. This is what it says. Same passage. But the fruit of the spirit is love.

Joy. Peace. Forbearance. Kindness. Goodness. Faithfulness. Gentleness. Self-control. Against such things there is no Lord.

No one's going to say that's terrible. Please stop being so kind. Please stop being so gentle with one another. Spirit gives birth to spirit.

But we need someone who is pure and holy that will give us that birth. Our parents are not pure, holy, and blameless. They carry the sinful nature.

We need a father who is pure, blameless, and holy to give us birth. And he says, Nicodemus, it's kind of like this, right? The spirit is like the wind.

[33 : 26] Okay. Now, you cannot actually see wind. Okay. Like, oh, look, there's a lovely little piece of wind. You don't see wind, but you see its effects.

About four weeks ago, we had the typhoon. You remember? No church. We had a typhoon. I went outside, and the trees are swaying and bending and stuff.

I cannot see the wind, but I see this effect on them. And that's what it's like with the spirit. You will see, my goodness, there is love and kindness happening there.

That's the spirit moving inside you. You see self-control happening in areas where you had no self-control? That's the spirit working inside you.

You can see its effect. And Jesus says to him, Nicodemus, actually, this really shouldn't surprise you. You know, you're sitting there with your mouth wide open looking at me.

[34 : 25] You, and by that footnotes, you is plural, meaning everybody must be born again, must be born from above, must be born of the spirit.

Like, Nicodemus, you need to look at your life, right? Like, religion isn't going to get you there.

Because you've tried, Nicodemus, and you know it hasn't got you there.

Your religious customs and your religious rules have not worked. Nicodemus, you by now should realize that the problem is with your heart.

The problem is on the inside, Nicodemus. I mean, Nicodemus, you've been teaching Israel all these years. You're the teacher in Israel.

And you still haven't got there. You're teaching others, but you still haven't got there. And here's the problem, Nicodemus. The more you keep up those religious rules and that religious thing that you have going there, the prouder you become on the inside.

[35 : 37] And you start to think of yourself, hey, I'm pretty good. I'm pretty good. And as soon as you start thinking that, you start thinking other people are not so good. And you begin to look down on them.

You get proud. Now, the Bible calls this self-righteousness. I'm pretty good. They're terrible. But, you know, the opposite is also true.

The opposite is, well, it doesn't matter how I live, right? It doesn't matter how I live. Right? God doesn't really care about that kind of thing. God is not really holy, and he doesn't really require me

to be holy.

The bottom line is, I'll decide for myself what is good and evil. I'll make the rules. Here's the thing, though, right? When we make the rules, and I know, the only reason I know this is because I do it myself.

When we make the rules, we'll make them very lenient towards us. But, you know, I do it.

[36 : 48] But you tend to be more strict for others. So, I'll give you an example. So, this is about two weeks ago in my office. Now, I just hope none of you are in my office here.

I'm telling office secrets. But it was discovered that one of the managers had taken fake sick leave. He called in on a Friday and said, I'm sick. And it actually turned out he was on holiday at a beach resort in another country. And when people found out, they were, oh, they were indignant.

And you know the word I heard all the time? It's wrong. It's wrong. But the thing is, those very people who said, wow, it's terrible that he could take fake sick leave.

But when you do it yourself, oh, no, that's different. I just need a rest. I know. I've been there. The Bible refers to this as no righteousness, right?

[37 : 51] A way of license. You just decide what you think is right. And it's hypocrisy. The Bible calls it hypocrisy. So, what is the answer?

And Jesus is giving him the answer right here. He says, the way that you are to live is the way of liberty. It's the way of the Spirit. It's the way of God's righteousness in you.

So, we have this prophet in the Old Testament called Jeremiah. Now, if you ask me who my favorite Bible character is, it's Jeremiah.

Not because I ever wish to live Jeremiah's life, but just something about this prophet that I resonate with and feel with. And I almost get emotional when I read Jeremiah.

Jeremiah. But here's Jeremiah. And he's dealing with exactly these two types of people. Those who are so self-righteous and look down on everyone else.

[38 : 49] And you've got those who just couldn't care. They're going to live exactly how they want to live. And this is Jeremiah in the midst of that mess and that pain and all that. Jeremiah says this.

It comes from Jeremiah 31. He said, this is my covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. And here it is. I will put my law in their minds.

And I will write it on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people. Because Jeremiah knew that the problem was with their hearts.

They needed God's spirit inside them in order to live God's way. We cannot expect people to live God's way unless they have the spirit of God inside of them, leading them to live that way.

Jesus is saying to Nicodemus, Nicodemus, I need to make you a new creation.

[39 : 55] The same way I stood before the beginning of time as my spirit hovered over this world and I breathed my ruach into it, my spirit into it, and it began to form and become beautiful.

I need to do the same with your life. See, Nicodemus, you don't just need a new start in life. You need a new life to start with.

Let's hear that again. Nicodemus, you don't need just a new start in life. You need a new life to start with. But here's the amazing difference, right?

So the first time God creates this world, he makes the earth, he makes the animals, the mountains. He's preparing it for man.

The final thing he makes is man to inhabit it. This time he's changing the order of things. He's making men new. He's making mankind new.

[40 : 57] And then he's preparing a new heaven and a new earth for us. Guys, I know this is church, but you are allowed to be excited. That's pretty awesome, right?

There's this verse. Because God is making all things new. There's this verse in 2 Corinthians 5. It says this.

Now, in the Greek, the article a new creation is not there.

So it should literally just read, he is new creation. You are part of the new creation. And when we realize that God's spirit breathes into us, we become part of his new creation, it should change the way we live.

Because the spirit of God's inside us. It changes our purpose. When we wake up tomorrow morning and we're prepared to go about our day, and we're going to go to work, and we're going to go to school, do you know that you are carrying part of you, if you believe in Christ, and you're born again of the spirit, you are carrying new creation with you into your workplace, into your family.

[42 : 20] You are showing people what the new creation would look like. In a world where there's no hope, you bear what the spirit is able to do. The same way it formed the heavens and the earth and created, it's creating something in me.

It's creating a life that is full of love and gentleness and self-control and forbearance. And when we mess up, it's full of forgiveness too and grace.

So I said to you right at the beginning, I said there are two hurdles. One is God is creator. And it's a battle that we have to engage in, right?

I think we have to engage in the battle that God is creator. He created. There is intelligence behind there. We have to engage in it graciously, intelligently, and scientifically.

But you can spend all your time, and you might be able to convince someone. And to be honest with you, I haven't met too many actual atheists who believe something was created out of nothing.

[43 : 29] It takes the hang of a lot of faith to believe that. But actually, there are very few genuine atheists that probably call themselves agnostic. Yeah, there's some being out there.

Yeah, there must be something. But a lot of people live as functional atheists, that there is no God. There's no accountability to God. They can't see His work in anything.

So rather, what we engage in, and where our focus should be, is that Jesus is creator. His spirit inside me changes my life.

It brings about a new creation. His spirit working in me. Far greater testimony to the world. It's like Jesus changed me.

He is changing me. And people will see its effect in your life. Okay, I said this at the beginning. I said, I showed you this picture.

[44 : 27] And I said to you that I know there's an artist behind it because I look at the picture, and it tells me there is an artist.

But more important than that is that I actually know the artist. It's my son. He drew this picture.

So when you guys went, wow, for me, it really is wow when I first saw that picture. It's beautiful. It's got Blu-Tac because we stick it on our fridge and our wall. This picture means so much more to me than it does to you because I know the artist.

And that's far more important. I want to know him. I want to be intimate with the artist. And then when I see his creation and his created work, wow, that's where our focus should be.

I want to know Christ. That's what Paul said. I want to know Christ. I see his handiwork. But more important than that, I want to see and know him.

[45 : 38] And that's what changes my life. I have a challenge for us, and I have a challenge for me, that we should read John 3 again.

And in that little conversation, who do we identify with? Are we more like Nicodemus and we're asking little questions that get us distracted?

Are we genuinely looking at what Jesus said and how he is speaking to us? So I want us to finish a little bit differently today.

Usually we finish and I stand up here and I pray and we all say amen. This time I want us to do it differently. I've asked Alfie very graciously to prepare Psalm 19.

And we are going to read it, but we are not just going to read it. We're going to pray it together. It's a psalm that declares the fact that God is creator, but it also declares that God is intimate.

[46 : 43] He knows you. He wants to know you. His way is true and just. So as we read it, we are going to read it, but as a prayer. And that's how the psalms were meant to be written.

They weren't meant to be thought about and dissected. They were meant to be a prayer language that is powerful. So I'm going to ask you to stand. And we're going to read this together.

And then if I can ask you to stay standing and we're going to worship the Lord. Okay, you ready? Let's go together.

The heavens declare the glory of God. The skies proclaim the work of His hands. Day after day, they pour forth speech.

Night after night, they reveal knowledge. They have no speech. They have no words. No sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth.

[47 : 43] Their words to the end of the world. In the heavens, God has pitched a tent for the sun. It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber.

Like a champion rejoicing to run his course. It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other.

Nothing is deprived of its warmth. The law of the Lord is perfect. The Lord is perfect. Refreshing the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy.

Making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right. Giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant.

Giving light to the eyes. The fear of the Lord is pure. Enduring forever. The decrees of the Lord are firm. And all of them are righteous.

[48 : 41] They are more precious than gold. Much more than pure gold. They are sweeter than honey. Than honey from the honeycomb. But then your servant is warned.

In keeping them, there is great reward. But who can discern their own errors? Forgive my hidden faults. Keep your servant also from willful sins.

May they not rule over me. Then I will be blameless. Innocent of great transgression. May these words of my mouth.

And this meditation of my heart. Be pleasing in your sight. Lord, my rock and my redeemer. Amen.