**The God who creates**

Imagine a child (friend, son/daughter/granddaughter…) gave you a picture that they’d spent a long time carefully drawing and colouring for you. They hand it over to you as an expression of their love for you. What do you do with it?

Most sane people would cherish it, put it up on the fridge… You’d treat it with respect and love. Over its time on display it may get slightly dog-eared, it might get the occasional scuff – the accidents of life.

What I hope you wouldn’t do is look at it and say “I don’t like that bit” and tear it off. You wouldn’t get a sharpie pen and draw across it. You wouldn’t use part of it as a shopping list or to clean the floor with….

The God who creates…

Genesis 1 isn’t a scientific text designed to explain how God made the world. Rather it is an ancient poem to tell us why God made the universe and what it means to him.

When you look at the six days of creation, we get it wrong if we concentrate on the six days, the order is there to show the care God takes. There are three matching pairs:

Day 1 God makes the idea of light Day 4 God makes the things that produce light

Day 2 God makes sea and sky Day 5 God fills the sea and sky with birds and fish

Day 3 God makes land and plants Day 6 God makes animals to fill the land

For the first readers it would have compared well with other ancient creation stories that spoke about how things came about by accident rather than through careful planning.

And throughout the text there is this beautiful refrain – “and God saw that bit was good” which, as he finishes on day six becomes “God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.” The world that God has created, the whole universe was very good in the eyes of the one who created it. It was perfect and so God could rest from his act of creation. And I’m sure that we would agree as we look at the beauty of creation, at its abundant provision, at its ability to adapt and change and grow and flourish, at the differing seasons, at the wonders that get discovered even to this day – I am sure that we would all agree that the creation that God made is not just very good but mind-blowing.

The whole of creation speaks of the love that God has for us. It should come as no surprise that the last act of creation was to make people – men and women in the image of God. We are the crowing act of God’s creation and with that honour goes responsibility.

God said, “I give you the earth. Rule over it and all that it contains. Care for it. It will care for you.” As the human race, we were gifted the rights to be tenants over God’s creation.

God loves his creation. In John 3:16 – “For God so loved the world…” The Greek word for world is Cosmos. It would be perfectly legitimate to translate that verse as, “For God so loved the whole Universe…” everything in it, all of his creation. God loves what he has made. Like a small child with a picture, it has been done with care and then lovingly handed over.

So, the big question is: are we showing care for God’s creation or are we wiping our feet with it?

We do need to be balanced. The world is there for our good and for us to use. There are legitimate ways we can use the creation that God has given us. Developing, building, using resources is not a bad thing in and of itself. The world is an amazing thing that has the ability to heal itself and balance out what we do to it.

But we’ve been warned for years that there will be a time when we reach a tipping point, where the actions of humans start to cause long lasting and severe damage to the planet. And those warnings have got more urgent recently. The climate of our planet is changing because of the acts of human beings. The overwhelming majority of scientists who study this agree. And if we open our eyes and look, we can see it as well. As someone once said, it is an inconvenient truth.

But if this planet is a creation gift from God, we should care for it – if for no other reason than our acts of destruction harm other people. If we are to love our neighbour, then that means we need to refrain from acts which harm them. But just as importantly, our acts of care for this world show what we feel about God and are therefore acts of worship towards the God who created and sustains this amazing planet, this mind-blowing universe that we have been gifted. To needlessly damage it is to turn our backs on the God of love who lovingly created.

I’m not going to give you a great long list of 100 ways to save the planet because we know what we should be doing. Caring for the planet is not rocket science, it’s common sense.

But today let’s pledge ourselves to worship God through how we treat his world. We’re going to listen to Katie sing “Who can know” now, and as we listen, as we here of our awesome God of creation, let’s use the time to say thank you to God for his creation, to say sorry for the ways we haven’t cared for God’s world, ask for his help in looking after it.