



All Creation Sings (Part 2)

David Nasser

Good morning. I hope you're doing well. I am so grateful for your church and Pastor Ted and Pastor Amy. So often when someone is thinking about this neck of the woods, this part of the country, this part of the world, you are just synonymously attached to insanely awesome dinner shows and people know this part of the world as just this incredible Table Rock... the ultimate fishing spot, vacation spot, incredible hotels, great restaurants.

People know this area for Big Cedar Lodge obviously. We ate dinner there last night and it blew our minds. It was so good. But when I think about this part of the world, I actually think about this ministry hub that has just impacted the world. I think about our good friends at Kanakuk, I think about our good friends at Convoy of Hope, and just the way they shape the world.

I don't know if you know this, but Convoy of Hope fees 650,000 children around the world every single day. So, what God began here, he's just changing the world in. And I also honestly think about Pastor Ted and just the ministry that he's had, the marriages that God has used him to save through his ministry. Dads being better dads. Wives being better wives because of the way that he's shaped him. So, when God gave the world, not just this city. When God gave the world the Cunninghams, it was such a good day for the kingdom of God. I'm so grateful and I just want to honor your pastor and say God gets the glory, but man, what a gift Pastor Cunningham has been. So, thank you for all that you're doing and thank you guys for sharing him with the world. I know you're disappointed when I come out and you're like *Ted's out of town today*. Stay that way. Keep your expectations low.

We are in week three of a series called All Creation Sings. And this is going to be the kiddy end of the pool. Last week, Pastor Ted did an incredible job of kicking this off of the deep end.

Next week will be deep end as well. But I'm going to be the shallow end of the pool alright. I'm going to be the kiddie pool in this three-part series as we look at scripture today. Again, we are talking about this idea that all of our life should be a life song. We should be a note in the great symphony that God is crafting for his renown. To do that, I want us to look at scripture together. If you have your bibles and you want to go with me, we're going to be in Colossians 1: 15 – 17 together today.

As you're going there to Colossians 1, let me give you a little context before we get into the text. The apostle Paul actually didn't plant the church in Colosse. Today that is modern day Turkey, but he is here, sitting in a prison cell in Rome about a church that he is endeared to, even though he didn't plant it, that has come off the rails in misinformation and misunderstandings about who Christ is. And so much of this letter is him patiently and lovingly and pastorally bringing clarity to who Christ is. So that's what we are dropping in on as we are reading what we are reading.

Colossians 1 : 15 – He's talking about Jesus here when he says he. He is... Jesus is the **the image of the invisible God, So**, in the trinity, who is God, we can't physically... It's like we can't see like the wind. The wind is one of those things where you can't see it, but you can see the power of the wind, you can feel the wind. If there's a leaf moving around, you know it's the wind. But that's true about God the Father and God the spirit. But in Jesus, 2,000 years ago, coming down to earth, Emanuel, God with us, he becomes the visible of the invisible God. So, he is the image of the invisible God. And the first-born over all creation. Now, what that means is not that he is the eldest, but he is the most important. He is supreme, he is preeminent.

So, Verse 15 says he is the image of the invisible God. The first-born over all creation and **16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.**

Tim Keller, the Pastor who passed away a few years ago, said this about these three verses. This is a commentary that he makes about these three verses. *He says, "In these three verses... I like to call them Altoid verses. They are curiously strong. They pack a punch.* In these three verses, these powerful, short, atomically powerful verses. In these

three verses he said, *"In them, we see the emphasis of Christ's authority in surpassing all others in rank, in glory and influence and how all of creation declares the glory of God in showing his intentional design in vastness and variety."*

So, if you are taking notes today, I've got two points for you.

Point 1 – everything, when it comes to "Christ, everything is by him.

What's interesting about that is that you're not going to get any pushback, people aren't going to like get their stuff together and get up and walk out when you say everything is made by him, but the truth of the matter is that most of the church actually doesn't think about Jesus Christ as the by him guy.

When I tell my story... I became a Christian when I was 18 and two months old. God saved me from a Muslim family. When I tell my story, I want to tell my story correctly and say that I was 18 and 2 months old when I met Jesus for the first time, he saved me. So, when you tell your story... I don't know what your story is and what the timeline on it is when you had an encounter with God, the hour you first believed, when everything shifted. You went from death to life, you went from lost to found, you went from blind to see. You went from an enemy of the gospel to becoming a child of the gospel. You went from orphan to heir. When all of that happened... like when you tell your story, we tell it and we always bring Jesus in at the moment of conversion. I do that. It's not that I'm wrong that I do that, but that's kind of what I do.

Think about what your number would be if I pointed you out right now right now for that number.

What's interesting is we always think that is the moment when Jesus enters the story, but this passage just reminded us no. Like Penny becomes a Christian at 16, but that's not when Jesus entered penny's story. Jesus created Penny long before she knew Jesus, long before 40, he was the one who was the one who made you. So, in the beginning of David Nassar, in the beginning of Penny, in the beginning, before there was a beginning, there was a beginner who began the beginning. In the beginning... In the book of John, it says, ***In the beginning was the Word. That means before there was a beginning, before there was a creation, there was the uncreated one who was creating all of creation.***

So, in the beginning, before there was a beginning, there was a beginner who began all the beginning. And it wasn't that that's God the Father's assignment and then Jesus goes "Let me know when you're ready to get saved and that's when I enter your story."

Here's the thing. When we think about Jesus, we need to think about Jesus as before I was even in my mother's womb he was designing me, he was making me.

Why is that important? It's important because when you are 18 or sixty or forty and you're looking at Jesus and there's that moment when he's like I want to be your everything. And you're just kind of thinking to yourself, *Well who do you think you are?* He's like, I'm the one who made you. The reason I get to own you is because I made you. So, Jesus isn't sitting by going, "I got my role and God the father has his role. In the beginning, before there was anything, the uncreated one, Jesus, creates us.

Jesus has no beginning. By the way, there's good news in that because the reason we know there is no end to Jesus is because there was no beginning to Jesus. The reason we can say he created us is because he is the uncreated one. So, in the beginning, Jesus makes us. And so, we are his because he made us. And what Tim Keller said is he didn't just make us; he made us vastly different. The variety of who we are. I know that I'm here in this part of the world where it's like fishing capitol of the United States of America, so I'll just throw out some fishing stuff for you to localize the illustration.

I googled it the other day and I don't know if you know this but there are 33,000 different kinds of fish. 33,000 different species of fish. There are not 33,000 fish, there are 33,000 different species of fish.

God is appropriately a showoff when it comes to fish. Have you ever seen the different kinds of fish? Not the kind that you catch around here with your overpriced lure or whatever. Have you ever seen the fish that are like you have to dig deep in to even try to grab... By the way, when I say 33,000, I was talking to my assistant about this yesterday. Last year, if you would have looked this up, it was 31,000. We continue to discover not just new fish but new species of fish.

One time, I took my daughter to the Gatlinburg Aquarium... You know, Gatlinburg is the wanna be Branson. I took my daughter to the Gatlinburg Aquarium. She was two. We walk in and the entrance of the in the Gatlinburg aquarium is this massive wall. It's like

this 50 feet by 20 feet wall, which is aquarium glass. And I remember... She is two years old. We walk in I come in and their tunnel kind of gets you through the area to go see all the other stuff like the jelly fish and the sharks and the dolphins but we just kind of paused. We were waiting on my wife to catch up with us, so I took my two year old and I put her on the stand thing, and she's got her hand on the glass and she's looking at all the fish She's like "Look, Daddy, and I'm like yeah. She's like he looks like Nemo." We're looking all these fish and then all of the sudden, I'll never forget... She was two-years old. All of the sudden, she took this deep breath. Something took her breath away. I look at her because I'm trying to catch where her eyes are. She's watching up there. And the fish got close to her and then she looked at me and then she looked at that fish and she goes, "I didn't know God made that color." And I thought *God loves showing off. He loves saying, I've got more colors than you know what to do with.*

There might be 30,000 species of fish, but that one fish is fearfully and wonderfully made. There is not another fish out there... By the way, the same thing is true about you. There might be different species of humans... ,All you white people all look the same to me, but you're not. You're one of a kind. Did you know that if you live in Missouri, if you are a local here today, there are 6.26 million people that live in Missouri. If somebody ever gives you a compliment and says, "You are a one in a million, that means just in Missouri there are 6.25 people just like you. But you're not a one in a million, you're one of a kind. So, you can be white or black or in between. You can be tall or short or in between. You can be rich or broke or in between. You can be dumb or smart or even dumber, like me. It doesn't matter. Something about you makes you different than everything else.

Here's the thing... When God made you, he didn't make anyone else like you. And who is that God we're talking about? Jesus. So, when we go, "Jesus take the wheel," He's like "I made the wheel." Its my wheel. So, thank you for waking up to the reality that you were fashioned by me, and there is no one else like you. Think about it. There is no one else like you. You think snowflakes are weird? There's no one like your daughter, there's no one like your husband, there's not one like your best friend. Every single one of us has been made by God and when God made us, he decided no to carbon copy anyone else. When God made you, he said, "I made you different than anyone else.

Here's the second part. You were made by him, but you are made for him, and all life really becomes is like you discovering the why. Now you know who made you and now it's like why did he make me the way that he made me?

For some people in the room, it's like "Why did he make me musical?" I'm not musical. If I sing in the shower, you are going to be like, "Wow, I'm so glad he's not leading worship today. I don't know anything about music. Musicians will go, Man the drumbeat was off. The rest of us don't know. Musicians do."

Some of you are vocally gifted by God. Some of you are musically like an instrument gifted by God. Some of you are academic. I am not academic. I had a 1.9 GPA and that was when I was trying. I am not academic. I have always struggled.

We adopted my son from Guatemala when he was seven years old, so he was struggling in school, so we had him tested. My son is seven years old and he's learning English. We hired this lady to test him and find out if he is dyslexic. And I'm sitting beside him to help him take the test. She's asking questions and we took the three-hour test about dyslexia we walked out and my wife was like well, what do you think? I was like, we know one thing for sure. I am dyslexic. I was like we'll get his results later, but right now, I can tell you I am dyslexic.

Some of you are the opposite. My wife reads like three books a week. It would take me three years to try to weather through it. But I am made different. There are things where I am strong and things where she is strong. Some of you are good at cooking. You can make stuff that is so different than everybody else. Some of you are not good at cooking but you're good at selling something.

My daughter, Grace... I remember when there was an earthquake in Haiti, and she was four or five years old and she wanted to do something. She talked her mom into helping her make brownies. She made brownies to raise money for Haiti. My wife made them, and she helped her momma and then we had this basket, and she walked around the neighborhood. She sold a brownie for \$1,000.00 to this dude.

She rings the doorbell and she's got the brownie. The guy comes out and he's actually kind of a jerk. Nobody liked this guy. He is kind of a curmudgeon. He's always mad at me... like "put your trash can back in the..." That's all he ever said to me.

My daughter shows up with her curly hair with a cute little basket. Somehow, she milked this dude for \$1,000 for a brownie. She has what I call pretty persuasion. That's why she's in law school. She's figured it out.

Some of you know what I mean. God has made you medical. God has made you academic. God has made you musical. Some of you know every line to Hamilton. You are just prone to that. Some cultures don't know what to do with you. That's not our fault. God has made you the way he made you But this isn't like me buffing you up and going, " There's no one like you and you are amazing. This is like there's no one like you and God made you for his renown.

You are made by him, for him. And so much of life just becomes ultimately you figuring out like God made me for something bigger than me and if you discover why he made you the way he made you, then it's lock and load. Let's go.

I was 18 and 2 months until I figured out why God made me the weird that he made me. I'm weird. I was 18 and 2 months old once I finally figured out some of it. I remember when I was in high school... I wasn't a Christian in high school. When I was in high school, me and my football coach... I wasn't on the football team, but me and my football coach did not get along. Coach Buddy Anderson and I could not get along. He did not like me and it was appropriately so.

One time, we had a pep rally and in the middle of the pep rally... The football coach's big word *unity*. He loved that word *unity*. So, we had the whole school there on a Friday afternoon for a pep rally and he'd come out and be like "Y'all need to come out tonight and support the whole team. And we need to be united. If we're not united, we're divided."

So, I made signs. I got posters and one said U, one said N, one said, I, one said T and passed them out to all these other kids. I had the U. He came out to do his speech and normally the whole school was kind of eye-rolling at our coach, but then I helped my buddies hold up the sign that said unity and we had the entire school, 2,500 people chanting, Unity, Unity. I saw my coach. He lit up. He didn't say it from the mic, but I could feel it. He was like, "*It's catching on.*" *They love it. This is the most united we've ever felt.* He was looking around while everybody was chanting Unity, Unity... And then me and my buddy, the N beside me, we switched posters, and I held it up and the whole school was chanting Nudity, Nudity. I know that's not how you spell nudity, but this is Alabama... Nobody knew. So, 2,500 people were chanting Nudity. The man did not like me.

I was dating this girl who was a cheerleader. We were supposed to break up but then I found out she was in charge of the spirit stick so I kept dating her just so I could get hold of the spirit stick. I got hold of the spirit stick. It was this Lifesize spirit stick, red, white, and blue. We were rebels before everything went to woke. I got the spirit stick and I remember I made a replica of the spirit stick. I took a spirit stick that I made and I filled it with baking flour. Do you know how much flower it takes to fill a spirit stick that's the size of a human being? In my mind, it was going to be really funny when a cheer leader brings out a spirit stick and it breaks on our cheerleader, but our coach grabbed it and it broke flour all over our football coach. The man did not like me.

We bought 10,000 crickets, had them delivered to the school at 5:30 in the morning. Me and my friends, snuck into his office. There was a drop ceiling. We moved the drop tiles, and we released 10,000 crickets. When you walked into his office... Those last two weeks, all you heard was the sounds of the crickets. The man did not like me.

And then two months after high school, I get saved. I wasn't even a good Muslim. I was pothead. Seven days, six days after I'm a Christian. I get saved on a Sunday night. My youth pastor tells me, "You need to come in front of the whole church and make your decision public." He puts his arm around me and says, This is David Nasser. He a Shiite Muslim who just became a Christian. His parents have decided to kick him out of the house for becoming a Christian and he needs some spiritual parents." All these people lust lined up after church just to come up and say hi. Some of these dudes were slipping me a 20. They are like, 'Here's 30 ramen noodles brother. Some of these guys are coming to pray over me. I knew some of the decans because they smelled like cigarettes. They were just praying over me. It was awesome. I'm standing there and I'm six days in my walk, a brand-new Christian. I'm green, Fuzz on my antlers.

I'm just standing there, and I see the line and I look there and about 9 to 10 people away standing in line to come see me was Coach Buddy Anderson. I'm like uh oh. And then it was five people away and then four and then 3 and then there's buddy Anderson. Coach buddy walks over to me, and he looks at me and goes, "I remember you." That was exactly what I was afraid of. He goes, "Son, I'm so proud of you for giving your life to Christ. I just want to pray for you." He goes, "Let me ask you something. Have you ever wanted to share the gospel?" The first guy to see something in me.... he looked over at me and he goes, "Have you ever heard of the FCA?" I had not. Fellowship of Christian

athletes. He goes, "Every Tuesday we meet in the gym. And he said, "If you want to come before school...

Everybody in school knew me as a weirdo, partier. He goes, "if you want to come next Tuesday and share the gospel and tell people what God's done, and you'll testify to God's power.

I didn't know what to do. I walked out there and all these kids that I knew from high school that hadn't graduated yet. I'm just shaking. He prays for me. I took my bible and went up to the front. I didn't know... I just opened up my Bible and I just read John 3: 16. I was like, ***God so loved the world that he gave his only son that if you believe in him, you will not perish but have eternal life.*** Then I just closed my bible, and I was like, pointing at people and going you need Jesus. And then I gave an invitation and then my friends start coming down and getting saved. The football coach is like, "We're in a public school and you're giving an invitation... high five. I remember walking out of there going, "This is why I was made the way I was made. You do not want me to be in charge of an excel sheet because I will bankrupt an organization if I'm in admin. But you want to have me wave a flag and point to someone bigger. And all of the sudden, I realize that God had made me the way he made me for something so much bigger than me. All of a sudden, I'm not persuading people to hold up a poster I got bigger things to persuade towards.

So, what does it look like for you and I to walk into this moment and go, there's a reason God made me the way he made me. And honestly, there's a reason God put me around the people he has put me around. And I'm fearfully and wonderfully made, not so that I'll get a big head, but so that I can be an arrow that points to him. Jesus is the one who made me for him. To tell his story. And the story you're going to tell is going to be very different than the story that I'm going to tell.

Some of you are going to tell it through cooking. Some of you are going to tell it to through the arts. Some of you are going to tell it... Some of you are just going to do something I could never do. I was talking backstage to Dr. Brawner. He's an ear, nose, and throat Doctor. I don't even know how to spell ear, nose, and throat without putting improper vowels in where they don't belong. But this man has gotten the education. He and I were just talking and in a very natural way he said, "You know, there are just days where somebody will come in and they've got six minutes. In a world where you wait an hour to get five minutes of a doctor's attention, he's just like listening to you, to what's going on. His bedside manner is just... God has given this man the power of hang. And he

values people. He doesn't care about the insurance... anybody know what I mean. That's not the norm. He's weird. He actually wants to slow down instead of billable hours... He just wants to care about people. He's on mission just being a really good ear, nose and throat doctor, but what he does as a Christian is he takes time with his patients. His Lifesong is just humanity.

I look people in the eye and go, "How you doing? What's going on? He's doctoring what no one else could ever doctor.

Some of you are plumbers. Some of you are electricians. Some of you are in the entertainment business. Some of you know how to cook. What does it look like for you to realize God made me the way he made me. He made me for more than my gain, but his fame. Amen. Something bigger is going on. And that's when you join the symphony of God. You become a note in a beautiful song.

Can I just say the timing on this... We didn't plan it. The timing on this is so awesome by the Lord. That even today, like later on today, they are going to offer a class called Sweet Spot. This church is so good at helping people discover what makes them unique. Not just spiritual gifts, but just nature and nurture. Even as Katie was talking maybe today, you just need to go to that Sweet Spot class and just say, how do I find out how I can serve in a unique way, but it's so much bigger than that. It's you bringing your life at the altar of God and saying, "I'm just simply rendering back to you what always was made by you for you. So, Lord, thank you for this. Thank you for the reminder that you just don't want to come in and take over what didn't always belong to you in the first place anyway.

So, we bring our lives to you now, we bring our talents to you, and we bring our gifts to you now. We bring our affinities to you now. We bring all of these things to you. Lord, I pray that you forgive us of the times when the blessings and the unique things that you made us for, we used for our own gain, or we somehow broke it. Sin got in and we used the giftings you gave to us to make something really ugly out of it instead of making something beautiful out of it.

For the brother or sister here, who needs to repent that their gifts have actually become a curse. They've used their power of persuasion for something that's actually harming others. I pray that there be repentance today but for those who are just like "man my heart is beating fast today because I know *God made me the way he made me. I didn't*

know God made me that color.” That kind of humor, that kind of personality, that kind of patience. That kind of gift.

I pray God that you would unlock in them the desire to be used for your renown, to be a missionary unlike any other you've ever had. We pray this in your name. Amen