

I am excited to kick off the 4 week series we are calling **Origins**.

Next week we will have **Garden to City** journals in the café for you to purchase. We'll be using them in journey groups, and they are a resource for all of us. We can use them to take notes during the messages here at Harbor. They will also be great for your quiet time as you're praying and looking at Scripture at home

My family came to Harbor in the middle of the 2012 **Garden to City** series. A favorite memory from the summer is when one of my friends showed a friend I had invited to Harbor for the first time her **Garden to City** journal. She talked about how she used it every day as a resource, had pages filled with notes and prayers. It was so beautiful. I encourage all of you to get one and to find a way this year to have Sabbath rest be part of your week.

I am excited for this year... I want to grow closer to Christ.

We grow closer to Christ as we grow closer to anyone. We need to spend time together. I hope this year prayer, Scripture and community become habits we build into our lives.

Today we will briefly look at Genesis 1 and 2 and see the Origin of the world and the origin of humanity.

My goal today is for us to leave knowing that God made us on purpose for a purpose.

God was intentional when He created people...and we are made in the image God –The father, son and Spirit.

We sit together today at the end of the Christmas season we continue to celebrate this truth; God and man are reconciled!

This is the second time we will walk from Garden to City at Harbor. All the messages at Harbor are available on our website, so when I started to prepare- I looked back at 2012.

I listened to our former Senior Pastor, Jed Mullenix, describe why we felt it important to walk through scripture back in 2012 and the reason today is the same.

He said-“God’s word leads to our joy. If we will allow our heart to be open to God and His word- it will lead to our joy....because joy is not dependent on our feelings about life and how things are going... God is for our deepest joy”.

We were created to know God, to love him and enjoy Him”.

We are starting in Genesis and we will spend the next year looking at the One story, inspired by God and written by over 39 authors over 1,500 years ...

For many of us Genesis 1:1 is a verse we have memorized. I have looked at Genesis in January for most of my adult life. But it wasn't until I did a study with a small group of friends that the words came to life. As I prepared for today many things from Genesis 1 and 2 jumped out at me.

The Bible begins with the words-In the beginning God created..
Scripture tells us that all of life began when God the father, the son and the Holy Spirit created.

The Hebrew word for God is Elohim. The Old Testament words are Hebrew words we have translated into English.

Elohim is a Hebrew word that is plural. We see God not just one person, but in unity of three persons. ...by the time we get to Deuteronomy God will be known as Yahweh...our Elohim..our God is one.

As we look at Genesis 1 and 2 – If we were to read it in Hebrew we would see the word **TOV**. We translate TOV as good.

It is used seven times in Genesis 1, it is a word that indicates that there was no sin or death or pain.

I read an article by a man named Skip Moen who said
“It is good” is a Western understanding of the Hebrew -There is no verb here, particularly no “is.”

The Hebrew words are run together to make one expression, not two distinct thoughts like “it” and “good.”

Skip Moen says-What does it mean for God to *see* “Good!”? Perhaps it is much more than just a news report of some already-completed event.

God sees what has been done in terms of what will be done.

So very hard to understand and the only example I can think of is someone came to learn English in New England and we tried to explain “wicked good” to them.

I was excited to speak on this little word “TOV”

My family came to Harbor in 2012....the middle of Garden to City series ...In summer 2102-My oldest daughter had gone to an event in TN with her former youth group. She came back and told me about this Hebrew word...

She had learned that “TOV” meant things were made the way they were meant to be.

Psalm 19:1...The heavens tell the glory of God.....a beautiful sunset or a snowy morning declare the glory of God don't they? We can see the “Tov”...the way things were created to be...

Next week, Jeff will speak to us about Genesis 3...sin entering the world and how now nothing is “Ttov”...a glorious sky produces storms that kill and destroy. Glistening icy snow makes it treacherous to walk or drive. If you lived here during the ice storms of the past decade- you understand this- the icy trees were so beautiful, but so dangerous.

But sin is not how God made the world.

As He created heavens, earth, sun, stars, animals and man...each was “tov”...not just good... but working as it was created to do work.

A Tov world did not have sin, death, pain or loss
How Great is our God who creates all things!

The origin of humanity starts with God....Elohim...a plural noun with a singular verb..
God created ...three in one –yet as one creating...first the heavens and earth...

The Creation of the World

1 In the ^abeginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ² The earth was ^bwithout form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

³ And God said, ^c“Let there be light,” and there was light. ⁴ And God saw that the light was good.

And God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

That first day – time is created....morning and evening a day...which becomes weeks, months, years and decades.

The joy that we celebrate at Christmas is that the Amazing happened! We celebrate today because God and man are reconciled. One day God would step into time as a baby. He would grow, live a sinless life, die on the cross for our sins and rise again to reconcile us to him.

As I started to prepare for today- I came across the you tube video and thought how amazing- Christmas 1968- and these astronauts were seeing earth in a way most of us will never see it. They saw it as God saw it.... They came around the dark side of the moon and saw what God created when He spoke.

A song I loved as a teen said-

You spoke the words and all the worlds came into order
planets filled the empty skies

Oh Lord I stand amazed at the wonder of your deeds
And yet a greater wonder brings me to my knees

Lord I praise you, because of who you are
Not just for all the mighty things that you have done

The song we sang earlier allows us to worship God for who He is, not just what he has done.

The amazing God we worship is eternal, Creator-

In Genesis 1: 1-25

The first days

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>1. Let there be light</i> | <i>4. Sun Moon and Stars</i> |
| <i>2. Sky</i> | <i>5. Fish and Birds</i> |
| <i>3. Plants, land Sea</i> | <i>6. Animals and Man</i> |
| <i>7. Sabbath Rest</i> | |

He spoke and created- And God saw that it was good. Starting on day 2

I think we could spend weeks looking at each day of creation...so I encourage you to read this at home, slowly-with others and think about what it means that all God created was not juts good...but TOV....

If you were here during the Share Christmas- our Christmas series,
You might remember Jeff saying that Jesus belonged to God, so God named him and Joseph did not.

God created day and night- so he named them day and night that. He created the sky- then named it sky.

Genesis 1 ends with the pinnacle of God's Creation- the origin of humanity.

Genesis 1:26

Then God said, ^o“Let us make man⁸ in our image, ^pafter our likeness. And ^qlet them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; ^rmale and female he created them.

²⁸ And God blessed them. He gave to the people, made in His image all authority over everything and it was so.

He showed us that from the very beginning – we have been the image bearers of God- He gave us the authority He has.

What does that mean? To be made in His image. You know when a baby is born, people love to say who the baby looks like. What about God do I have in me? Where do you see His image in you?

I like how relevant magazine summarized a few qualities we share with God- Our spirit and our love come as gifts from God.

You are spiritual because God is Spirit: "The Spirit of God was hovering over the waters" (Genesis 1:2). Our spiritual nature, though unseen, is as real as our physical nature. Nurturing our spirit is as important as eating, drinking and exercising are to our physical body. “

Genesis 2 begins with the gift God gives- Sabbath- rest...do you honor this gift? It is so hard, but just as we know our physical bodies would die without food- our spirit will not survive without rest.

We are not meant to be alone. Relevant magazine continues..

“The very essence of God is relational, and that quality has been imprinted on humans. God created Eve for Adam because "it is not good for man to be alone."

A third point is that “we communicate because God communicates: "God said, 'Let there be light'" (Genesis 1:3). Anthropologists agree that the emergence language—first spoken, then written—represents the sharpest break between animals and humans.

The human ability to think and reason capacities to their fullest.”

All people are made in His image to show the world who he is.

Last week Emma Liddle told us, We are made in the image of God. We bear his image the same way a coin bears the image of a political figure. We are the currency of the King. When Jesus tells the Pharisees to give to God what's His, he is telling them, (and us), YOU BEAR GOD'S IMAGE: YOU BELONG TO HIM.

In Genesis- God commands light to be, and it is. God did not command Adam to exist.

When God created light, and birds and the sun- He spoke and they were.... And they were Tov.

But Adam was different. He was handmade from the dust of the earth.

Genesis 1:27

*So God created human beings[a] in his own image.
In the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.*

Then God breathed the breath of life into him.

Genesis 2 summarizes Day one. Its focus is on the Origin of humanity. Genesis 2:7 says

“God shaped man from the soil of the ground and blew the breath of life into his nostrils, and man became a living being.” Genesis 2:7 (NJB)

From the first moments Adam and God were in an intimate relationship. Humanity was created without sin or shame or death. Like all God has created, Humanity was tov.

Created and working as they were meant to be.

Today, All of creation mourns and longs to be restored.

In the garden there was no death... just life.

Pain and suffering and death are not intended to be part of our universe

God created all things and they were good.

For many of us it is hard to believe that God created us for a purpose and on purpose. If one thing stay with you today- let it be this. You're not an accident.

Whether we were planned or unplanned by our parents, God has a plan. His desire is for us to know who we are.

I am a child of God- so are you. We were created to live bold lives...taking the steps each day that He has planned.

Eph 2:10-For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

Today –do you believe God made you on purpose for a purpose?

He breathed life into Adam and gives life to all of us. We were not given a spirit of fear- in fact, what command is repeated all through scripture- DO NOT BE AFRAID.

This year- ask God to show you a Big dream. Allow Him to show you the ggod things He planned for you to do!

Harbor- God has given us as a community a Big dream.

A desire to go to the City of Lowell to help more people find their way back to Him!!!

The City is full of people who need to hear the truth we know.
God made us and He Loves us.

When we look at one another do we see the image of God in each other.

I love how Emma said last week...

“people are made in God’s image, we must live in light of that, reaching out to others, giving them dignity, giving them help and hope.”

Genesis 1:31 v And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Each day ends with a reminder – that all was Tov-

Before there was time, God was.

He is with us today- Immanuel- God is with us.

He longs to be with us for all eternity- that is what Christ came.

To live a perfect life, die the death we deserve- for the Wages- what we have earned from our sin, is death.

And the good news- the gospel- is that his blood has paid for all our sin..

II Cor 5:17 says

If anyone is in Christ

The old has gone, The new has come

And one day-

Tov will be once again-

... 2016 will end with us looking into the book of Revelation and we will see the lion will lay with the Lamb

This is the gospel....the good news we Celebrate and share.

Casting crowns has a song called One day-

It summarizes all that gives us hope...

Living he loves me , dying he saved me

Buried he carried my sin far away

Rising he justified – freed me for ever

And one day- He is coming- what a glorious day.

How do we put the Origin of Humanity into action?

Know that God is who He says He is

God is personal
Eternal Spirit
Creator of the Universe
Father of Jesus
And our Father

He is for us, He is with us
He is good

He calls us His child- we can call Him Abba Father and say
I am a Child of God

This year as we move from Garden to City, use the tools we have created for this year... Read scripture, study it with friends, memorize it.

Psalm 119:11 I have hidden your word in my heart...

Know that Jesus came to show us who God is.

We see him speak throughout the gospels. He walked for 3 years with the disciples. One of them was John. He wrote the gospel of John and in chapter 1 John clearly let's us know who Jesus is

John 1:Prologue: Christ, the Eternal Word

1

*In the beginning the Word already existed.
The Word was with God,
and the Word was God.*

2

He existed in the beginning with God.

3

*God created everything through him,
and nothing was created except through him.*

4

*The Word gave life to everything that was created,
and his life brought light to everyone.*

5

*The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness can never extinguish it*

God showed us from the beginning that all of creation was good; the physical and spiritual... what we see and what we don't see.

All creation was *Tov*- there was no evil or pain.

The light of God brings life to everyone.

Humanity was Created by God – we are made In His image...Made on purpose for a purpose.

Ps. 139:13-16 (NCV)

“You made my whole being; You formed me in my mother's body. I praise You because You made me in an amazing and wonderful way. You saw my bones being formed as I took shape in my mother's body. When I was put together there, You saw my body as it was formed. All the days planned for me were written in Your book before I was one day old.”

Genesis says

Then the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground.

He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils, and the man became a living person.

We are meant to have a relationship with God and with others. Life is not meant to be lived alone.

Genesis 2:22 *Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib, and he brought her to the man.*

23 *“At last!” the man exclaimed.*

*“This one is bone from my bone,
and flesh from my flesh!*

*She will be called ‘woman,’
because she was taken from ‘man.’”*

24 *This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. Now the man and his wife were both naked, but they felt no shame.*

God has designed us to know him and be known by him.

And to feel no shame. He knows everything about us, and yet He loves us!

Today we sit here with the truth of who we are hidden from one another...but not hidden from God.

As I prepared for this week. I thought about many of you in our community. What value does Genesis 1 and the Origin of humanity bring to your life?

The same value it brings to the children of Kid's Harbor and my life.

We must start with the truth- It is called a worldview.

If we think we have one or not, we have one.

Our worldview impacts all of our life...how we see things and interpret them.

God is who He says He is and can do what He says He can do.

Spending time walking slowly through scripture this year will allow us to hear from God the truth we need to not just know, but believe and live.

We must believe the truth- our identity is this...we are the loved children of God.

We were Created, on purpose for a purpose.

Allow this year to be a year when we take the brave step to believe God...not just believe in Him...but to take Him at His word.

Do not be a slave to the fear that says you are not enough, not good enough, not wanted.

The beauty of Genesis 1 is that God made us – He loves us- He is with us and He is for us.

I want to close today with some words from our Garden to City Journal...

“Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes.

God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ.

This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.”
Ephesians 1:4-5

So, before God spoke anything into existence; before heavens and earth, before light and liquid and living creatures, He had already considered us- you and me- and deemed that a worthwhile rationale for bringing it all into reality.

The thought of a relationship with us brought Him joy, even before He had the satisfaction of speaking light and life into being.

Before we were created, God loved us...

I John 3:1

See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are!

As we step into 2016....Let us boldly claim that we are the loved Children on the Most High God....

Will you pray with Me?

God I thank you for the reminders from The Book Of Genesis.

First- we praise you because you are Holy and Mighty.

In you and through you all things have made.

We have been created to be known by you and to know you.

Help us this year to grow in your love.