

## Saturday – God Provides

Read Matthew 6:31-34. In light of all that we've been talking about from Sunday morning worship through this week of devotions, we've been honing in on God's creation and all that God provides for us. As you read these verses from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, how do Jesus' words amplify what we know He provides for us in creation? What is hard for you when you hear these words of Jesus? For me, it's hard sometimes not to worry, or at the very least, to wonder about what's coming up, what needs to be done, what am I forgetting, who am I letting down, and on and on it goes. But our Lord's encouragement is to not worry. He expounds on this earlier in Matthew 6:25-30, talking about sparrows and wild flowers and how they don't worry but our Father in heaven takes care of them, provides for them. And as Jesus said, if our Father takes care of these relatively minor parts of His creation, how much more is He going to be watching out for you, the pinnacle of His creation? The answer? A LOT more! Consider for a moment now the things that are causing you to worry. Write them down, if that is helpful. Then take some time to pray to your heavenly Father about these matters and ask for His help, His perspective, His peace over them. As you do, hear in your ears the promises your Father has made to you, the love He has for you, and the gifts He is giving you.

*If you would like to receive daily Bring It Home devotions by email, please contact the church office: [churchoffice@immanuelloveland.org](mailto:churchoffice@immanuelloveland.org)*

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### What Now?

1. Take time all week long to bask in God's creation. Make it a point each day to look at the mountains, sunrises, sunsets, clouds, stars, trees, birds, flowers. Go for a couple of walks with family or friends. Take note of the vast creative array of different shapes and colors and people. And as you do, give thanks to your loving, creative heavenly Father.
2. Consider memorizing (or re-memorizing) Luther's explanation to the 1st Article of the Apostles' Creed: "I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them. He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, spouse and children, land, animals, and all I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life. He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil. All this He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve, and obey Him. This is most certainly true."
3. If you would like a *Luther's Small Catechism*, they are available on a table in the atrium. You do not need to but if you would like to contribute to the cost of the catechisms, you can leave a donation in the box on the table in the atrium or drop off your gift in the church office.

## Monday — I Believe in God the Father, Creator of Heaven and Earth

As we continue our *I Believe* summer series, what we state as a basic of our faith with regard to our God is that He is the Creator, the Maker of Heaven and Earth. To get your mind refreshed on the creation story, read Genesis 1:1-5 which covers the first day of creation. We're going to take a few days around the stories of creation, so be patient as we simply bask in the wonder and awe of it. In the beginning God created humanity to be in perfect relationship with Him. His desire was to have a loving relationship with us in which God and humankind worked in harmony to care for creation together. Have you ever thought of God's creation story in this way before? Why? If not, what has gotten in the way? What do you see as your part of both being and being in God's creation? I showed the following video clip on Sunday which I absolutely love as it gives a stunning portrayal of the beauty and wonder of God's creation. If you have the opportunity and would like to watch it again, here's the link: <http://vimeo.com/17507512>. Today give thanks for this created world and the part you are blessed to be in it, to enjoy it and to care for it.

## Tuesday — The Beauty of Creation

The accounts we have in Genesis of creation are mind-boggling, awe-inspiring, and just plain cool! So I invite you to take some time in them. Today I'm going to have you read the entire first account of creation. As you read this first account, I want you to think about what sense you have of God? Of the world He's created? Of the order in which He chose to create? What insights do you pick up or nuances that you hadn't noticed before? In what ways have you grown in appreciation for God and for His creation as you read this? If you're so inclined, I'd love to hear some of your ponderings... email me at [gschlecht@immanuelloveland.org](mailto:gschlecht@immanuelloveland.org). With that, enjoy your time today in Genesis 1:1-2:3.

## Wednesday — Another Angle on Creation

As we look at the world in which we live, there is certainly a lot for which we can be thankful! Today I invite you to take a look at the second account of creation, which has a very different flavor and approach than the first account has. As you did yesterday, I invite you today to explore this second creation account and as you do, ask yourself some of these same questions, contrasting this second account of creation with the first: What sense do you have of God? Of the world He's created? Of the order in which He chose to create? What insights do you pick up or nuances that you hadn't noticed before? How is this second account different from the first? Are you drawn to one more than the other? Why? In what ways have you

grown in appreciation for God and for His creation as you read this? Once again, if you're so inclined, I'd love to hear some of your ponderings... email me at [gschlecht@immanuelloveland.org](mailto:gschlecht@immanuelloveland.org). With that, enjoy your time today in Genesis 2:4-25.

## Thursday — More of Creation

Several different Psalms reflect the wonders of creation – accounts of creation set not in narrative but in poetry. Today I'm inviting you to read through one of these Psalms and to not only enjoy wandering and reflecting on creation but also seeing what flows out of the gratitude we are invited to have and express for our giving, creating, and abundant God. As you read the Psalm for today, try to let the words form pictures and images in your mind. Let the poetic form nudge you back to the Genesis accounts of creation. As you read, think about how differently reading about creation in this form is from reading it in Genesis which is more like a story. What new windows of thought and appreciation do today's reading open up for you when it comes to how you think about God and the creation He formed? And take note of where our gratitude leads – to praise! So let this reading also be a prayer to God – of thanks and praise for all that He's given to you. With that, step into Psalm 148 with a sense of wonder, praise, and thanks.

## Friday — ...and it was good...

Throughout the week we've been looking at and thinking about creation. Today I want to hone in on one recurring phrase in the first creation account. If you have time to read and take in Genesis 1:1-2:3, do so, or if your time is short, just skim it quickly, pausing at all the times you encounter the phrase, "...and it was good." Where did you see that phrase? What was good? Light was good, land and sea was good, vegetation and trees of all kinds were good, the sun, moon, and stars were good, all the animals in the water and in the air were good, wild animals, domestic animals, and creepy crawly things were good, and that great summary verse in Genesis 1:31 wraps it all up, just in case He overlooked something – "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good!" What does that say about this world in which we live? It is good! As followers of Jesus we know that one day we will be with the Lord in heaven and we long for that day. And yet the tension exists that while we long to be with the Lord, we can (and must) enjoy the life we've been given and the world in which we live. It's a gift of God that is good – no, it's VERY good! As you look around, see all that is part of this world and give thanks to God for all the goodness that He has put into our lives. See the people in your life and give thanks for the goodness that they are. Look in the mirror and know, without a doubt, that "it is good," YOU are good!