

An Introduction to a Theology of Worship - Week 4

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Creation

review:

Transcendence and Immanence

transcendence and God's control/power
immanence and God's presence

complex theology in song = transcendence
more accessible theology in song = immanence

folk art/kitsch vs. high art

Garden gnome and Rembrandt self portrait

Examples through Architecture
from the Faith and Form Architecture Awards
(<http://faithandform.com/awards/index.php>)

what's being communicated? primarily transcendence?
immanence? both? a proper communication depending on culture
(these are contextual-less examples)

The incarnation has a lot to do with informing our view and theology of creation, but we'll have to hold off on that for a few weeks.

And though we will cover much information and (hopefully) uncover answers, my hope is that this class will not just be answers, but will inspire more questions, more searching, and hopefully more wonder about God, ourselves and our world.

Lumière Brothers - The Serpentine Dance (c.1899)
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auguste_and_Louis_Lumi%C3%A8re)
(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UkT54BetFBI>)
hand painted short

hand-painted! Why would Auguste and Louis Lumière go to these lengths? Why spend time on this, a vocation on this, a life on this act of "creating"?

Squire Broel interview ~1:20 (<http://www.broelstudio.com/video.html>)
Lanterns from comment magazine: <http://www.cardus.ca/comment/article/1024/>

Broel is interested in the “historical notions of beauty” and feels he “needs to create.”
Where is the passion and longing coming from? From thin air?

The beginnings of an answer start in creation.

the words of God’s word tell of this, but so does the structure of God’s word.
symmetrical parallelism overview

A-B-C-C-B-A

John went to the store.
To the store went he.

A	B	C
John	went	to the store.
C'	B'	A'
To the store	went	he.

A-B-C-B-A

John studied for the test.
And study he did.

A	B	C
John	studied	for the test.
A'	B'	
And study	he did.	

A-B-C-A-B-C-D

Christina adores her cat.
She loves her cat so much.

A	B	C	
Christina	adores	her cat.	
A'	B'	C'	D
She	loves	her cat	so much.

Typically, the middle or the addition draws the most attention

Structure and words matter in the Word of God:

Ex: Psalm 8 (and why structure itself has meaning)

A How (יָדָבַר) majestic (v. 1a)

B The heavens (vv. 1b-3)

C What (אֱלֹהִים) is humanity (v. 4)

B' The earth (vv. 5-8)

A' How (אֱלֹהִים) majestic (v. 9)

just looking at the structure, is Psalm 8 about God or man? Why draw the line? It is about both: one cannot know oneself apart from knowing God, one cannot know God apart from knowing oneself (cf. The first three paragraphs of Calvin's *Institutes*: Is God or man the starting point of knowledge? Yes.)

And this is just looking at the structure: the structure has meaning. the media through which the message is delivered is part of the message.
Marshall McLuhan: "The medium is the message" (1965)

So now, let's look at creation. The two "in the beginning"s (Gen 1:1 and Jn 1:1) and how they speak of transcendence and immanence.

Where is this found? Where do transcendence and immanence come in to play?

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without 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." (Gen 1:1-2 ESV)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." (John 1:1-5 ESV)

Susan Bowden - Light
Susan Bowden - In the Beginning
(<http://www.sandrabowden.com>)

Transcendence and Immanence in creation found in Genesis and John

Creation and Glory:

sometimes we think these two are diametrically opposed. But that has more to do with our fear than it does with the glory of God. Let's not put a spiritual spin on our unrighteous fear and say we're concerned about the glory of God: **how self-righteous!**

Creation displays God's transcendence and immanence. It is a theatre in which to encounter God. It is not a veil to God (that's gnosticism).

In fact, God's glory *is* his handiwork:

Psa 19:1 NIV:

The heavens declare the glory of God
the skies proclaim the work of his hands

this is textbook symmetrical Hebrew poetry:

A-B-C

A-B-C

The heavens	declare	the glory of God
the skies	proclaim	the work of his hands

the glory of God *is* the work of his hands, to see God's glory we don't have to have some weird out of body experience, we just need to look at God's creation

One aspect of rejoicing in the Lord is rejoicing in His creation

Psalm 104

vv. 1-30:

The Lord's work in creation

v.31:

"Let the LORD be glad in His works": The Lord rejoices in creation

v. 34:

"Let my meditation be pleasing to Him": what is the meditation? vv.1-30-creation

"As for me, I shall be glad in the Lord":

If the psalmist is rejoicing in the Lord, and the Lord is rejoicing in creation, what is one way the psalmist is rejoicing in the Lord?

by rejoicing in God's creation

"If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen." (1 John 4:20 NIV)

if we don't love those we see everyday, how can we love God whom we don't see?

that principle applied:

if we don't rejoice in the glory of God that we *can* see, how can we rejoice in the glory of God that we don't see?

video of Kuroshio Sea - 2nd largest aquarium tank in the world
(<http://vimeo.com/5606758>)

Creation's majesty isn't just an artistic device with no meaning- there is meaning in the beauty. Beauty itself carries meaning.

From what the church at large focuses attention on, spends money on, involves themselves with, does it seem that we rejoice in creation? Care about beauty? The church should have the most robust ecology, but for whatever reason (politics? apathy shrouded in politics?) we don't.

Col 1: "all things" and our bodies as instruments, also "eating and drinking" in 1 Cor 10:31

Structure of Gen 1

Day 1: light and darkness

Day 2: water and sky

Day 3: land and plants

Day 4: sun, moon and stars

Day 5: fish and birds

Day 6: animals and people

Day 7: Sabbath rest

A-B-C

A'-B'-C'-D

first 3 days creating spheres, next 3 days filling those spheres

the last day, Sabbath rest, pointing to the whole purpose of creation: our hope. *Sabbath rest will be another topic in the future.*

Creation, at least in one aspect, is about us (told in our terms, using seasons, day and night, etc.)

About us and God: covenantal. A covenant requires two parties, just like this telling of creation.

God is creative, so we are: being a human being, we cannot *not* create. We are always creating something: remember Mark 14- we are either creating life or creating death.

not some gallery artspeak: this is life. Creating life is what?

creativity is included in the imago Dei

Gen 2:19: "Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them."

God bestows authority to the man to name the creatures. But what about “to see what he would call them”? God was asking Adam to create, giving him free reign to make something out of creation. Eden was somehow incomplete. And why is gold (a material used in the new heavens and earth) present? There’s a reason why the author mentions this: from garden to city.

And God doesn’t tell, he asks- God creates a context where the answer can be discovered.

God creates ex nihilo, we do not (ex materia?). We use what is already found in God’s wonderful creation of which to create beauty.

Andy Goldsworthy: using parts of creation to create. Focus on place being something in itself (very contrary to our fleeting view of place)

(http://www.rwc.uc.edu/artcomm/web/w2005_2006/maria_Goldsworthy/TEST/index.html)

Rivers and Tides - a documentary on Andy Goldsworthy (currently available on Netflix Watch Instantly)

12 tone music: you can make something sound like disorder, it just takes a lot of order to do so. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twelve-tone_technique)
no key, time, length of note, etc.

Anton Webern (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anton_Webern) Sample of "Sehr langsam"

John Cage: One 11 with 103 (ironic that the film begins with 5 minutes of credits, the film is just as unwatchable as the philosophy is to live. and his whole vocation undercuts his own philosophy.

Ironically, Cage is utilizing the creativity given to him in the imago Dei to say there is no imago Dei. In fact, any artist that does not embrace the image that God has imparted to man does not have any reason to create: they do not have a leg to stand on! Only Christians, those who, by the grace of God,

“For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.” (Rom 1:19-23 ESV)

from Sir Ken Robinson (TED talk):

kids are okay with being wrong.

Girl drawing a picture of God.

now, wrong doesn't equal creativity but if you're not prepared to be wrong, you will never do anything creative

ask a room full of 4 or 5 year olds who's an artist- they'll probably all raise their hands. But by the time we get older, we're so afraid of being wrong, of making mistakes, we've "educated" ourselves out of that aspect of our being.

growing out of creativity

example of dance:

the body is more than a transport for your head

dance as a reflection of creation and humanity:

physical bodies, time based, reflects the unnecessary aspect of our being here- the grace, beauty and fragility in humanity

method - excerpts from "manifesto"

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-poEavzp5wY>) (www.methoddance.com)

God has created a context for us individually, and us a church, to discover His goodness and grace.

For our life, like dance, how do we move our bodies in this space that God has created for us?

We cannot help but be creative- how will we create? How does this affect your view of doing things that might seem "a waste of time"? Actively embracing our creativity and rejoicing in creation a way to rejoice in God- a way to worship Him.