

## Stardust and the Wow-ness of God

**Living Faith Chapter 2.1-2.2:** God, Creator and Ruler

**Key Texts:** Isaiah 43:1-21; Acts 17:24-28; Ephesians 2:4-10

My kids have always loved to make things: towers out of blocks, (often indiscernible) pictures of trees and birds, play-doh ice cream sundaes, clay creatures, a Lego city or zoo or construction zone. William pays particular attention to detail and will create the most intricate designs with amazing features. Alice is more interested in the big picture. But you know how it goes when a child makes something they are proud of. Their pleasure is contagious, and they holler out, “mommy, mommy, look what I made”, and then proceed to explain all the parts and how they work, and do you like the colour I put there, and see that spot right there, that’s the secret trap door that goes into the nether world. Do you know what happens to all of these created things and pictures? Each one is so special, so important, so much a part of the kid who made it, that the thought of throwing something out is pretty close to blasphemy. We have bins full of created things that call out, “mommy, mommy, look what he/she made!” And each item speaks to the wonder of the child who made it.

When it comes to thinking about God as the creator of all that is, it might be helpful to remember the joy, pride, creativity, and excitement that bursts out of children in the act of making something.

Let’s take a minute to consider what we know about what God has made. We have come a long way from the flat-earth or geocentric perspective our ancestors held. Today, scientists estimate that there are up to 400 billion stars in the Milky Way – up to a trillion if you count proto-stars. The Milky Way is so big it is at least 100 000 light years across. There are probably more than 100 billion planets in our galaxy. And that’s just our galaxy. Scientists estimate that there are 100-200 billion galaxies out there that we can observe, and the observable universe is at least 92 billion light years across and it is still expanding. And that’s just what we can see with the limited instruments that we have.

On top of those sheer numbers of vastness, there is the fact of dark matter and dark energy. It’s dark because it doesn’t interact with photons, which means it doesn’t light up, so we really don’t know what’s in dark matter because we can’t see into it. Dark matter and energy accounts for about 95% of the stuff of the universe. So all those billions of stars and planets that we can see are just 5% of what is actually out there. The light from the furthest objects we can see took almost 14 billion years to get here. Every time we look at those stars and planets, we are looking back in time billions of years.

In fact, we could be looking back as far as what scientists have been calling the Big Bang. Even scientists today believe that very early on, in the beginning God created out of nothing one very small dense super-particle which exploded to become this big universe. Hydrogen and helium formed and gravity pulled together massive stars that exploded and sent stardust out across the universe. Some of that dust contained carbon,

upon which all life as we know it is built. Other parts of the dust formed into planets and more stars. We are a part of this incredible creation – we were formed out of it – out of dust.

Now, think about King David, around 3000 years ago, standing out on his front porch contemplating the skies. His view of the universe was significantly smaller than ours is today, but even David could see that when compared with the vastness of space and stars and the moon and sun, human beings appeared pretty insignificant. What are human beings that you are mindful of them, how important people must be that you care for us (Psalm 8).

When David was looking out at the sky, and when we look out at the sky, we are looking out of eyes that have over 250 million photoreceptor cells between the two of them. In just one of those 250 million cells are over 100 trillion atoms – way more atoms than there are stars in the Milky Way. We stare out into the sky, looking back billions of years, with eyes that have been made of the same stardust that created the solar system. How is that for wow? David was right when he said that we were fearfully and wonderfully made.

But here is the best part. Not even all that stardust and trillions of atoms define who we are. Because who we are is defined by whose we are. God created all of this incredible creation, and each one of us, to bear witness to his God-ness. He made us and everything to give him praise and glory, to bring him pleasure. God created us to love him and know him and give voice to the praise that the creation offers to its maker. Everywhere, from the biggest galaxy to the smallest particle, from the birds in the air to the starfish in the sea, all creation proclaims “hey everybody, look what He made! If you think all this is wonderful, consider the One who made me.”

Scripture tells us that not only did God create all that is for the sake of his own glory, but he sustains all that is for the sake of his glory. He is deeply and intricately involved in helping us and the cosmos we live in to fulfill the purposes for which we have been made. Paul tells the church in Corinth that we are not our own, we don't belong to ourselves, we belong to God who made us (1 Cor 10:26). It's when we forget this that we fail to properly reflect the glory of God. When we forget that we are not our own, that we were bought with a price, we begin to treat the creation as dispensable, to be used for our glory instead of His. We begin to undermine the image of God in others. And pretty soon, once we have forgotten that we belong to God we begin to look more like a virus in the cosmos instead of God's intricately woven and deeply beloved creatures created for the sole purpose of God's glory.

The prophet Isaiah writes of God's promise to restore his people to their rightful purpose and place in the universe. God promised to draw all his image-bearers from the farthest corners of the world, back into belonging to God (Isa 43:3-7). And this promise has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit, God in Christ is transforming humans all over his good creation to look less like a virus and more like himself. This is evident in the love we share – the love he demonstrated in Jesus giving his life for us and

pouring himself out into our hearts. Jesus, God the Son who became human, his death, resurrection and outpouring of the Holy Spirit was a new “big bang”. It’s the beginning of the new creation, and a new way of being in the world. We, each of us are a part of this New Creation.

In the most important ways, ways that go down to the very atoms of our being, out of all the glorious things God has made, he set us apart to be special: made in His image, bearing His likeness into the world, and capable of joining all of our voices with the praise of the mountains and rivers and crickets and amoebas and supernovas. Our only job on this planet is to fulfill God’s purposes for us – which are primarily to reflect his glory and proclaim his praise. That’s it. Not too complicated.

So think about that when you are next contemplating the purpose of your life, or wondering what the point is, or looking in the mirror. The God of the universe calls us each his beloved child. The God of the universe is remaking us to bear his image, so that when we look at ourselves and others look at us we will all say, “wow, look what God made!” If you think the stars and supernovas and eyeballs and elephants are pretty amazing, take a look at yourself in Christ Jesus and consider the awesomeness of that. And then go out into the world and reflect God’s wowness to your neighbours and family and friends. Consider the beauty in your closest friend and in your worst enemy. Consider God’s majesty in the earth the next time you fill up with gas. Consider the wowness in the other as we learn how to love one another and to love our neighbours. We are not our own. We have been created for God’s good purposes for us in Christ Jesus. All praise and glory be to his name, forever and ever and ever, Amen.