**God’s strength in weakness**

discussion guide

A picture containing text, colorful, bedclothes, decorated

Description automatically generated

based on **Genesis 1-3** (Linked to sermon of 09/05/21)

which can be accessed at www.stjamesbythepark.org/talks

*This was part of a series: God’s strength in weakness*

Intro: In world where humankind often seems to have lost its way, it is timely to look back at the Biblical account of creation and discover God’s provision and plans for us and the whole of creation to see what we can learn about God’s will for us, how we can grow in wholeness and fulfilment.

*How does this passage speak to our desire to be a God-dependent, grace-filled, Bible-based, mission-focused, authentic community?*

***Up (Go deeper with God):***

Use Psalm 104 as a starting point for a time of praise and worship by thanking God for his creation and provision (this is quite a long psalm but you could read a section, then pray, then read a section and so on. If you have time you could use some pictures of creations to add a visual dimension to your worship).

Genesis 1 and 2 essentially give two accounts of the creation story. There is debate among Christians about how literally to take the creation story but on the whole Christians agree that it was God’s intention to create a world in which human beings, made in His likeness, would be rulers and stewards of this earth. We are going to look primarily at God’s creation of and intention for human beings.

Read through Genesis 1 and discuss these questions:

1. What phrases and words seem to be repeated throughout the passage? Why do you think this is?
2. On what day is humankind created? Why do you think God waits until then?
3. In verse 26 God says “Let us…” Who do you think the “us” refers to? (worth noting that the word for God used in the Hebrew “Elohim” is also plural)
4. We are created in God’s “image” and “likeness” in verse 26. What do you think this means? How does it make you feel? (you might like to read Psalm 8 at this point)
5. According to verse 26 and 28, what was our primary purpose to be as human beings? To what extent have we fulfilled or failed this? (Big question, I know, but worth pondering)
6. According to verse 29 how has God provided for us?

Now read chapter 2. This gives us additional details about human creation and purpose. Discuss the following questions:

Use both chapters to think about how God provided for humankind’s:

Physical needs (1:29, 2:2-3, 2:7a, 2:9, 2:10-14)

Spiritual needs (1:26-27, 2:7b)

Social needs (2:18-25)

Finally, look at Gen 1:26-27 and Gen 2:7. The concept that we are both fragile (made of dust links to the idea of us being clay and God as the potter Isaiah 45:9) and made in God’s image (Psalm 8:5-6) can seem contradictory but remind us that while we may be physically frail, God’s spirit strengthens our inner being (2 Corinthians 4:7-12).

***In (Grow closer to each other):***

In these chapters we have been looking at how God has provided humans with physical, spiritual and social nourishment but in our fallen world we know that often these needs go unmet.

In your group think about how you can help to meet one another’s needs – there may be practical physical things like cooking a meal or mowing a lawn or more social - like phoning up or going for a walk together or spiritual needs – prayer support and sharing Bible verses. This might be difficult for some of us who don’t like to admit our needs or appear “needy” but the Bible tells us that we need one another (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12). We tend to focus on giving one another spiritual support but all three areas are important for us to flourish.

***Out (Reach further with the good news):***

Finally, spend some time in prayer both for one another and for your wider community, family and friends. You might like to think of one particular person who God puts on your heart and ask God how He might use you to meet a need in that person.

“And God will satisfy every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen” (Philippians 4:19-20)