

**KAILUA CHRISTIAN CHURCH**  
**SUNDAY, AUGUST 24, 2025**  
**SERMON SERIES PART 1: BACK TO THE BASICS**  
**SERMON: ORIGINAL JOY**  
**SCRIPTURE: GENESIS 1:1-10**  
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**GENESIS 1:1-10**

**1** In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. **2** Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

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

**6** And God said, “Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water.” **7** So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. **8** God called the vault “sky.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.

**9** And God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.” And it was so. **10** God called the dry ground “land,” and the gathered waters he called “seas.” And God saw that it was good.

**Sermon: Original Joy**

For the next 8 weeks we'll be talking about the Biblical birth of the world, as we embark on a series on Genesis called “*Back to the Basics.*” Simultaneously during this sermon series on Genesis, we're also doing a Bible Study on Genesis at the Plaza. The difference between what we're talking about on Sunday and what we're talking about on Thursday boils down essentially to methodology – Sundays will be spiritual messaging about the book, and Thursdays will be more of the nuts and bolts about how, why, and to whom it was originally written.

I'm doing this series for a number of reasons. Firstly, we found during our last Alpha session this summer that a lot of folks from the church think of Genesis as their favorite biblical book. That was fascinating to me because it's not usually the book people point to first—it's often the Gospels, or

maybe Psalms, or Romans. But for our church, Genesis seems to hold a deep resonance. That got me wondering why.

Number two: doing a series provides you a countdown for me leaving you with Pastor Dale and Pastor Chris for 12 weeks (although I promise I'll come in to introduce baby Jumana at least once in that timeframe!). I thought a clear, structured series would be helpful for us all as we prepare for that transition.

And most importantly, number three: I thought it would be a fitting way to wrap up a very busy season and go into a slower one that involves not having a pastor for a little while—to think about the time before there was busy-ness, before there were people or churches or schedules or airplanes, when it was just God and the void, and He saw it was Good.

It's good to sometimes think about the time before expectation, disappointment, and history happened—not just for the beginning of time, but for our own circumstances in our lives. Stripping away those layers can lead us to the original “why” of God putting us here and for what purpose.

We've been working with Pastor Noelani Jai once a month to talk about the “why” of our church and the reasons we do what we do, and how, and with/to whom. Essentially, Pastor Noelani is asking us to do exactly this—to strip away all the layers of memory and tradition from the last 80 years and get back to the basics without those filters of our experiences coloring God's original intentions. It's not that the memories don't matter—they do—but we're not called to live inside them. We're called to ask: what is at the foundation? What is the heartbeat beneath the history?

So then, what were God's original intentions with the creation of the world, and how does that impact our relationship with Him now?

As someone who is currently 8 months pregnant, I can tell you creating stuff from scratch is no small task. It's difficult, painful, and tiring. My daughter has been thinking a lot about what it's going to be like having a new baby in our house, and she recently asked me why babies cry when they're born. I explained to her that being born is probably really hard—one day you're warm and comfortable and the next you're violently pushed into a cold, loud world. Babies have every right to cry about such an experience!

And it's true—most creation stories written by people long ago reflect exactly that kind of violence and discomfort. Genesis wasn't the only story from the ancient world that described God (or, more appropriately, gods) creating the world. There was also the Mesopotamian creation story, the Egyptian creation story, the Greek creation story, and others, that either preceded the Hebrew story from Genesis or were prevalent simultaneously to Genesis' original circulation into culture thousands of years ago.

Most of these other creation stories involve the gods getting into fights and killing or overpowering each other in struggles to dominate the new creation. In many of these stories, humankind is created as slave labor to enhance these godly power struggles, so that they have someone to “work on the ground” for them while they negotiate sovereignty with each other over things like the oceans, the sun, and the weather.

Anyone who has given birth or become a new parent might sympathize with these ancient gods trying to work out who’s going to do the laundry or cook meals or control the thunder and lightning storms when the new baby arrives—all the while the new baby is constantly crying and unhappy with a colic belly. I imagine the folks of the ancient world who imagined these creation stories into being reflected on their experiences as new parents when they considered what the gods had to account for in creating the world.

These polytheistic creation stories are united in describing the creation of the world as Chaos. The first god of Greek mythology, in fact, was named exactly that—Chaos, which is where the word comes from. It was violent, messy, involved power struggles, and defined the origin of pain and suffering as a product from the very beginning.

However, the Genesis story is markedly different from all these other creation stories that were generated around the same time. Instead of God creating the world from chaos and splitting Himself into a cacophony of conflict, the story from Genesis 1 conveys a God quietly composing a new melody that harmoniously strings together the Universe, and God saw it was Good.

Genesis is written like a poetic love song to a new world and His delight in it, rather than the dysfunctional chaos of tired, overworked parents flinging insults at each other while a baby cries in the background that we see in other creation stories.

Our God in Genesis also creates humans not as slaves for His own use, but instead as beloved beings made in His image to enjoy alongside Him this beautiful thing that He’s made. Before there was ever conflict, or sin, or suffering, there was simply the joy of God making the greatest art and joyfully sharing it with the children whom He loved. And He saw that it was good.

Genesis 1 is countercultural in that it refuses to focus on the pain, violence, and struggling of creation. Instead, it focuses on the wonder, beauty, and joy, and turns it into a gift presented to humankind rather than the primary reason for our suffering.

The chapter ends with God observing all that He has made, feeling satisfied, and resting. In this season of our church moving out of an intense summer of creation and art, let us follow God’s wisdom and move into a season of rest.

We know that resting isn’t the end of the story. In Genesis 2, which we’ll cover next week, that’s when things start to get messy and the chaotic suffering of the now existing creation starts to actualize.

Likewise, our story isn't over here at KCC just because the summer has ended. Your story isn't over when a chapter of life ends and then morphs into something new.

Instead, every ending holds within it the seeds of a new beginning. God shows us in Genesis 1 that rest is not the finale—it is the pause, the exhale, the holy reset that makes space for what comes next.

For our church, that means trusting that this quieter season is not a void but a sacred invitation. An invitation to breathe, to remember, and to listen for God's voice without the noise of programs, projects, and constant motion. Just as God looked at creation and said, "*It is good,*" we are called to look at what God has done among us this past season, to acknowledge the goodness in it, and then to release it into His hands.

And maybe this is the most important part: Genesis calls us not just to rest, but to strip it all back—to lay down the memories, the good and the bad. To let go of the successes, the struggles, the laughter, the pain, the history that has filled these walls. To put all of it aside for a moment, and return to that first harmonic chord of creation—the quiet, unshaken joy of God giving us this world as a gift. Before expectation. Before disappointment. Before even memory itself. Just the simple wonder that God made all things good, and gave it to us in love.

For you personally, it may mean asking: Where in your life do you need to peel back the layers of what has happened—the pain and the healing, the effort and the exhaustion, the laughter and the grief—and simply sit in God's original joy? That joy is not gone. It is not buried so deep that it can't be found. It's still humming at the foundation of creation, waiting for us to quiet ourselves enough to hear it.

Genesis reminds us that before there was pain, before there was brokenness, there was blessing. Before there was striving, there was Sabbath. Before there was sin, there was joy. And that same God who spoke the universe into being with gentleness and care still speaks over you today: "*It is good.*"

So as we begin this series "*Back to the Basics,*" let us dare to strip away the clutter of memory and return to that beginning. To hear again the melody of God's quiet joy. To see again the gift of creation as if for the first time. And to rest there—just as God did—in the goodness of it all.

Amen.