

Broad Series: Grounded (The life of Jesus in four parts, Exploring Jesus as the incarnation of God in the created world, and how that gives salvation an earth grounding.)

Series Part 1: Dirty Hands (Jesus' role in creation and creating anew.)

Sermon #1: "Dirty Hands"

Scripture: John 1:1-18 (CEB)

Background texts: Philippians 2:5-11 and Psalm 33:4-9.

Text: Genesis 1:1-3

"1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was formless and void. Darkness hovered over the deep, and God's Spirit hovered over the waters. 3 God said, "Let there be light." And light appeared.

Sermon Blurb:

Many people struggle emotionally during the winter months when the hours of daylight are limited. Yet it is during the least-houred days of the year (right after the winter solstice) that Christians celebrate Christmas. We celebrate that into the darkness of our lives, God brings the dawning of a new light. Jesus was born as the Light of the world. It's real! It really happened! This Sunday we'll celebrate how in Jesus, the God who always was, got involved in life, our lives! He was willing to get dirty, get Himself full of dirt, to be our light. If you are bummed about the lack of light in your life, don't miss this Sunday!

Gathering Song: *Joy to the World*

Welcome: Pastor David

Greeting Time: *Share your favorite Christmas movie/song.*

Worship Song Set: Sanctify

That's Why We Praise Him

The Same Love

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Worship prayer: Andrew

Advent Candle Lighting: Carol Pope

Kids invited to Kid's Church

Giving Tree: Teresa Gruber

Bumper: "Grounded"

Message: "Grounded: Dirty Hands" -Pastor David

PP#1: Grounded: Dirty Hands

Genesis 1:1-3 "1 In the beginning *God* created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was formless and void. Darkness covered the deep, and God's *Spirit* hovered over the waters. 3 God *said*, 'Let there be light.' And light appeared."

Grounded: The story of human salvation—our salvation: in reality, in history, on earth, in *dirt*. Dirty Hands. Genesis 1:1-3, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void, darkness covered the deep, and God’s Spirit hovered over the waters. God said, ‘Let there be light.’ And light appeared.”

PP#2: *Image (not too fluffy, but with joy) of “Merry Christmas” being spoken out loud.*

Saying merry Christmas, *speaking it out loud*, may be the most important way we can celebrate Christmas, the way we can share its real meaning, and unleash its hope.

For Christmas is about the Word. It’s about God’s Word, speaking into darkness, speaking into chaos, speaking a new creation, bringing out a new reality.

Saying merry Christmas is a way for us, who are made in God’s image, who are given God’s Word to speak, is a way for us to invite God to create *new* in our world, in our lives.

Christmas is about the Word, shared.

PP#3: Grounded: The story of salvation in dirt.

Genesis 3:7

“The Lord God formed the human [Hebrew: *adam*] from the topsoil of the fertile land [Hebrew: *adamah*] and blew life’s breath into his nostrils. The human came to life.”

Today, we’re beginning new series—a very *long* series!—one that will take us through Easter. We’re going to trace the life of Jesus on earth, in dirt. You see, Jesus was born as a baby: a real person, in a real place, in real time. Salvation is not just some idea, some belief in the mind, some concept of hope. It’s concrete, it’s historical. It actually happened, and it continues to actually happen. The story of salvation is God coming to creation, taking on creation, to bring creation back to Himself.

God made all things. He spoke and created light, separating it from darkness. He spoke and created dirt, separating it from water. He then—figuratively—put His hands into that dirt, and shaped a human form. He breathed His Spirit into the nostrils, and the human became alive. From the first, God made the second: male and female He created them.

These first humans, as intended, shared a close relationship with God their creator. They shared the same breath, the same Holy Spirit. But before long they turned away from God’s plan, and did what they wanted. This caused a rift, a separation of the creation from their Creator. And this rift has been inherited by all of God’s created.

But then, God comes back, again getting dirt on His hands, or more accurately, taking on dirt for hands—and feet, and body—and is born as a human. The Creator takes on a formed body, to lead His creation back to Himself. Jesus came to restore our close relationship with our Creator.

PP#4: John 1-3

1 **In the beginning** was the **Word**, and the **Word** was with **God**, and the **Word** was **God**. 2 The **Word** was with **God** in the beginning. 3 Everything came into being through the **Word**, and without the **Word** nothing came into being.

Genesis 1:1-3

1 **In the beginning** **God** created the heavens and the earth—2 the earth was formless and void, darkness covered the deep, and God’s **Spirit** swept over the waters— 3 **God said**, “Let there be light.” And light appeared.

Now, before Jesus was born, Jesus always was. Jesus is God, and with the Father and the Spirit, has always been God. One God, one being, but three persons. Jesus, before taking on a body made of dirt, was the Word of God.

The Gospel of John puts it this way, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word was with God in the beginning. Everything came into being through the Word, and without the Word nothing came into being.”

John is calling attention to the story of creation. In the beginning, God created. How did God create? He spoke, and what God said, happened. “The Word [of God] was with God in the beginning.” “The Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

The baby born at Christmas is the Word of God. He was with God in the beginning. Everything that came into being “came into being through the Word, and without the Word nothing came into being.”

The baby born at Christmas is the Word of God, coming into the reality of creation, of life, to bring new life, to create new.

The baby born at Christmas is the Word of God, speaking to you, right now, into your reality, into your life, to bring you a different reality, a new life.

In the beginning the earth was without shape or form. It was void. It was a dark abyss. It was a churning chaos.

The world, after people turned away from God, was plunged into darkness, was made slave to sin and chaos. The abyss of void took over life, and emptied meaning.

You and I, our lives are filled with darkness, and chaos, and shapelessness. We lack form, and yearn for definition, for identity.

God’s Spirit swept over the churning waters, and planned a plan. God’s Breath entered the clay nostrils of the lifeless shape, and the human breathed.

God’s Spirit came to Mary in Nazareth, and disclosed a plan. A baby was born in Bethlehem, and His nostrils breathed the breath of life.

God’s Spirit comes close to you and me, and reveals a new plan. God’s breath breathes new life into each of us.

PP#5: John 1 (CEB)

3 Everything came into being through the Word, and without the Word nothing came into being. What came into being 4 through the Word was Life, and the Life was the Light for all people. 5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness doesn’t extinguish the Light.

6 A man named John was sent from God. 7 He came as a witness to testify concerning the Light, so that through him everyone would believe in the Light. 8 He himself wasn’t the Light, but his mission was to testify concerning the Light.

John 1, verse 3. “Everything came into being through the Word, and without the Word nothing came into being. What came into being through the Word was Life, and the Life was the Light for all people. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness doesn’t extinguish the Light.

“A man named John [–this was John the Baptist–] was sent from God. He came as a witness to testify concerning the Light, so that through him everyone would believe in the Light. He himself wasn’t the Light, but his mission was to testify [–speak words–] concerning the Light.”

PP#6: John 1 (CEB)

9 The true Light that shines on all people was coming into the world. 10 The Light was in the world, and the world came into being through the Light, but the world didn't recognize the Light.

11 The Light came to His own people, and His own people didn't welcome Him. 12 But those who did welcome Him, those who believed in His name, He authorized to become God's children, 13 born not from blood nor from human desire or passion, but born from God.

“The true Light that shines on all people was coming into the world. The Light was in the world, and the world came into being through the Light, but the world didn't recognize the Light. The Light came to His own people [–the Jews–], and His own people didn't welcome Him. [They rejected Him, and crucified Him. Verse 12,] But those who did welcome Him, those who believed in His name, He made possible to become God's children, born not from blood nor from human desire or passion, but born from God.” Jesus took on created flesh, so that those created of flesh, when believing in Him, can be restored as God's precious children, spiritually reborn of God.

PP#7: John 1 (CEB)

14 The Word became flesh and made His home among us. We have seen His glory, glory like that of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. 15 John testified about Him, crying out, “This is the One of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me is greater than I because He existed before I did.’”

16 From His fullness we have all received grace upon grace; 17 as the Law was given through Moses, so grace and truth came into being through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God. God the only Son, who is at the Father's side, has made God known.

Verse 14, “The Word became flesh and made His home among us. We have seen His glory, glory like that of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. John [The Baptist] testified about Him, crying out, “This is the One of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me is greater than I because He existed before I did.’”

“From His fullness we have all received grace upon grace; as the Law was given through Moses, so grace and truth came into being through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. God the only Son, who is at the Father's side, has made God known.”

In Jesus we see God's glory, full of grace and truth. We receive grace upon grace. Grace and truth are real; they came to us, in Jesus. In Jesus you and I have grace, God's favor. In Jesus we have truth, giving form and identity to our lives. In Jesus we see God. And in Jesus we can know God!

PP#8: Grounded: Dirty Hands create:

1. Life

Christmas is about life, abundant and eternal. Our reality may be one of death. Our breath can draw short, our bodies fail. Or, even when our bodies are strong, on the inside, we can experience death. Death of a dream, death to our hopes. Death in parts of our lives that once held joy. Christmas is about a new life born, it is about that life bringing new birth to our lives. Jesus earned new life, and offers this new life to any who believe in Him. When we choose to follow Him, rather than our own plans and desires, life is created again in us.

PP#9: Grounded: Dirty Hands create:

1. Life
2. Light

Christmas is about light, shining in the darkness. Our days, as we plunge deeper into December, lose light each day. The light grows shorter, and the darkness grows longer. This is also true in our lives. The darkness pushes back against the light, and desires to grow.

But at Christmas, the Light of the world, for us all, in us all, shines out. Jesus is the Light, and brings light into us. Just like on the calendar, light begins to grow longer, and the darkness shorter. Jesus is Light, and when we take Him as our own by faith, He pushes back our darkness, and gives us the victory of light. We are children of the Light. The Light shines on us, in us, and it shine out through us. When we follow the Light, we shine the Light into the darkness.

PP#10: Grounded: Dirty Hands create:

1. Life
2. Light
3. Word

Christmas is about the Word. Jesus was the Word of creation. Jesus is the word of creation in us, now. By the Word, we are created new. By the Word, creation is made new. Chaos—yes even your chaos—is brought into wholeness. God reached down into the dirt—got dirty hands—so that our hands, our lives, dirtied by sin, can be washed clean. God’s Word speaks hope... grace... forgiveness... peace... hopeful futures... joy.

PP#11: *Image of majestic angels, subtitled, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace among those God favors.”*

Speaking “merry Christmas” out loud is a sharing of our faith. It is proclaiming that Salvation is real, that it actually happened, and that it continues to happen. We speak of Jesus, who is the Word of creation, who is the Word of our recreating, who is the Word of life and light to our world of death and darkness.

This Christmas, let’s make a point to testify—speaking the Word—concerning the Light. When you say, “merry Christmas,” be ready, be anticipating, an opportunity to share why your Christmas is merry.

It’s not the parties, or the food, or the decorations, or the shopping, or even the family gathering together. All these are *how* we celebrate, not *what* we celebrate. What we celebrate is that the Word of God was born at Christmas. To chaos, He speaks meaning. To darkness, He shines Light. To death, He brings life.

Salvation is dirty. It is a God with hands in the dirt. It is life to us made of dirt. It is Light to those living in darkness black as dirt.

Speak of Christmas this year. Speak the Word, who is Jesus. Speak of a merry Christmas. Amen!

PP#12: Psalm 33:4-9 *[Note: Display this slide until Andrew is prepared to lead the song.]*
 “The Lord’s word is right. ... The skies were made by the Lord’s Word, all their starry multitude by the Breath of His mouth. ... When He spoke, it happened! When He commanded, there it was!”

PP#13: [*Andrew: Insert the words for the Communion song.*]

Communion Song: Andrew

Kids bring in Holy Communion bread.

Kids sit with their parents.

PP#14: Prayers

Communion Prayer of Confession

David: For our prayer time today, as we speak the Word, we're going to use the imagery of light to help us see more deeply into our hearts. We need God's Light! There is darkness in our world. There is darkness in our own hearts. As we dim the house lights, let's reflect on the darkness we struggle with: in our world, in ourselves.

House lights dim.

David: Notice the darkness. Think about the parts of your life that are not the way God wants them, the parts you hide from God, that we keep in the dark. Call to mind how you drift and stray in darkness. What is the Holy Spirit bringing to mind?

Think about the parts of our world that are not the way God wants them, and that in turn rob you of your joy. What is the Holy Spirit bringing to mind?

[*Pause.*]

David: Jesus is the True Light, chasing away the darkness.

Spotlight on the Communion table.

David: Jesus is the Light, coming into our dark world, coming into our hearts. Jesus also created light. He continues to bring light. When we open our hearts to Jesus, He promises to come in. Pray for Jesus to chase away the darkness in your heart, in your life. Pray with me this simple responsive prayer, a prayer for Light. Invite the Light to come in.

PP#15: Leader: In the beginning was the Word.

People: Speak, Word, and create new in me.

Leader: O Come, all ye faithful.

People: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

David: Pray with me. In the beginning was the Word.

[People: Speak, Word, and create new in me.]

David: O Come, all ye faithful.

[People: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.]

PP#16: Leader: Let there be light!

People: And there was light.

Leader: O Come, all ye faithful.

People: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

David: Let there be light!

[People: And there was light.]

David: O Come, all ye faithful.

[People: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.]

PP#17: Leader: Let there be peace on earth!

People: And there is peace among those whom He favors.

Leader: O Come, all ye faithful.

People: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

All: Amen!

David: Let there be peace on earth!

[People: And there is peace among those whom He favors.]

David: O Come, all ye faithful.

[People: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.]

All: Amen!

PP#18: Holy Communion

House lights up; spotlight off.

Dan Hair comes to the Communion table to lead the Holy Communion liturgy.

Rite of Holy Communion

Words of Institution: Dan Hair

Prayer of the Holy Spirit: Dan or David

Instructions: Dan or David

Receiving the elements, bringing of offerings, prayer stations

Receiving of the Elements: All

Holy Communion Song: Sanctify

Closing Song: *Go Tell It on the Mountain*

Benediction: Pastor David