

Dr. Mike Rakes
Genesis Part 1
September 18, 2011

In the beginning, God created the Heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and empty and darkness covered the deep waters and the spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. Then God said “let there be light” and there was light. And God saw that the light was good and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day and the darkness night. And evening passed and morning came, marking the first day. Then God said “let there be a space between the waters to separate the waters of the Heavens from the waters of the earth” and that is what happened. God made this space to separate the waters of the earth from the waters of the Heavens. God called this space sky. And evening passed and morning came, marking the second day. Then God said, let the waters beneath the sky flow together in to one place so dry ground may appear and that is what happened. God called the dry ground land and the waters seas. And God saw that it was good.

I want to talk to you a little bit about Genesis and set up this new series and talk to you about how we are thinking about it. You know Genesis has often been this book that I think people have misused and I don't mean that they meant to, but I don't think they understood the book of Genesis as it was written. So I'd like to make some comments early on, especially to those that listen to the series later online and get it or even those that are watching by internet right now. And I want to make some comments about this. I think what most people object to without even knowing it is the fact that the book of Genesis demonstrates through narratives, that not only is God knowable but he is knowable through personal experience. And there is a lot of people in our world, in our culture, that say that you can't know God through experience. It's an epistemological nightmare for the post-modern mind that this kind of knowledge is valid and yet for those that have not had a God-moment we realize that it's a knowing beyond the minds of smart people. For the Jesus follower, the book of Genesis is about learning to connect the then, the text – the bible, with the now which is your everyday life today. And yet, there is also a third component as well and it's the fact that the beginning that Moses writes about had already happened many, many, many decades, even hundreds of years earlier. And so, the writer of Genesis is sending the message to the community of Israel, looking back down the road to tell them the story of creation. In other words, the writer, we know to be Moses, was already centuries removed from the creation of in itself. So God has promised to stay close to His called out ones until His way is accomplished. Genesis, if it's about anything, it's about being called. That God makes a promise to those that he calls. And Genesis then becomes the story of being called by God to believe in His promises. So Genesis shows how Israel and God both deal with the promises of God. The one to whom the promise is given is called to be faithful, the Israelites, the faithful community of God. Genesis then, for the most part, is made up of stories and narratives, to teach the Jewish people about their God and about their Father. So our approach is this – we approach the text in Genesis as a sacred text, knowing that as we listen with good and open hearts we can make decisions about our life and faith; that our main purpose is not just to answer questions of origin or history. And I just want to speak to those graduate students here and those of you that maybe teach in mainstream schools, that the book of Genesis was never written to help you answer the questions of science and how the world came to be. And so, if

Genesis is about anything, Genesis is not written to satisfy the intellectual critics who want to know all about the science of creation. If Genesis was written for that, then that would mean that Genesis would have been irrelevant for hundreds of thousands of people over the centuries. It was never the intent then, nor should it be scrutinized that way now. I mean it's just like when I share stories about my family, when I share specifics about my family, you can't fully comprehend who I am or who they are, that we are far more complex than the few stories that I have an opportunity to share with you. And I choose to reveal only those parts of our story that make us look a little more favorable in your eyes than other parts. The stories that I tell, although they are very true, are not meant to be scrutinized down to the time of day. Well Pastor said that story happened in the evening, that's a 6 o'clock. I don't tell the story down to that detail. So I leave out important facts that you could not understand without further context of my family of origin, or I leave out details that would make no sense to you. That's just the way that we need to read Genesis. That God knows that without further context, other facts would have just been irrelevant to our lives and beyond our ability to comprehend all those things. And so, today as I bring this message to you, I want to distribute a magazine to you. When the ushers are back in place, we are putting them at work here. I want them to begin to distribute this magazine to you right now. And I just summarized the article off of page 72, where just plain out the idea of Genesis a little bit more of an introduction. There are all kind of articles. Pastor Terrance wrote an article, I was just reading it, on page 37, phenomenal, so many articles throughout the book. And so when we think about this – the first thing you need to do on your magazine is write your name on it, because I know you and you're going to leave it laying everywhere. So our official collection point for magazines this whole fall is going to be the bookshelf, alright? So it's in the west foyer. If you put your name on the front, don't put your phone number or some guy is going to call you in the middle of the night or something, alright? But put your name there so you know it's yours. And you can take notes, if that's the way you choose, on the messages as we move forward this fall. I want this to be a book of personal growth for you. There are some incredible stuff in here and there is even the revelation of some stories that you are going to hear about throughout the series and that we are going to talk about. So, I'm very excited to roll that out.

Today, the part of my message, that is just going to take a few minutes, I want to talk to you about at the start, God creating the world. And so from Genesis 1:1 if we could just take a moment and turn there. Genesis 1. In the beginning, God created the Heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness covered the surface of the watery depths, and the spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. Then God said, in those first two verses and those first couple words of verse 3, you actually have the trinity. And I want to talk to you just briefly about the trinity. The word trinity is not in the Bible. You won't find the word trinity in the Bible. But the word trinity is a way in which we try and think about and describe for you a classical doctrine that has been handed down to us. We call it an orthodox doctrine, which is something that is handed down by even our church fathers, as those that even lived very close to the time of Jesus thought about it. See, Moses would have been a monotheist, that there was only one God. And he knew and that one God spoke and said "I am." But then Jesus, in the New Testament, says in many places "I am, I am the bread of life. I am the light of the world," and so forth. And so Jesus gives us even greater revelation of who God the Father was. So, in reality, God the Father, God the son and God the Spirit were all present in these couple of verses, even as we're getting started in this narrative story, and Moses is not writing the book to you, he is writing it to the Israelites. It is important that you get that. God used it and God got it to us and it

is for us but Moses didn't know your know and that you lived on Honeysuckle Circle. He didn't know that. He's just writing this down, thinking he's helping his generation kind of get it, and God spoke that through him and captures that as it's inspired by the Holy Spirit and we have it brought to us powerfully today, that it is the sacred text. And the stories in Genesis do matter and do have implications for all of our lives today. So, the most important, and if we don't hit it, we will have really thumbed the ball theologically, because you have to understand that there were there. So here it is, God always was and is and will always be the Is or the I am. He was also there with His son Jesus in the Holy Spirit. They were all existent and all in relationship and they were all in unity and they were all love and creative power. So God has always been in relationship. God has always been in relationship. Where did God come from? If we could answer that we would be equal with God. We don't know where God came from. He will tell ya when you see Him. Maybe. If that's the question you really want to ask. So the trinity conversation is important. The word trinity is important to us. So, here is how to think about it, and I'm only going to make a couple more statements on the trinity because I want us to catch the fuller thing. But the idea is to affirm both the unity and diversity of God; and so, a couple of key points, especially from the second century and the counsel of Nicea. The three persons are to be distinguished not in condition but in degree. Not in substance but in form. Not in power but in aspect. In other words, they are exactly alike in condition, in substance and in power. One is not subordinate to the other. It's not like God the Father and then it's like the three bears. A papa bear, the mama bear and the baby bear. That's not good theology. It will get you messed up. It's not that. They are equal. They are one and equal. And the only real metaphor that I have to really get you in to this idea of the trinity is how can three be one. It's a mystical way in which two become one flesh. That two become one flesh, that spiritual bond between a man and a woman giving themselves to the Lord and with God in their life. So the task of the early church was to affirm both that yes, we are still following the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and Moses of course. So I want to tell you a story and give you an idea of how to think about it and then I'm going to get out of the way because Darla has just some incredible thoughts on Genesis 1 here that I want her to share today. In 1926, there was a philosopher named Michael Foucault. He would not be thrilled that I am using him in a church service. But this French philosopher in the 1900's studied thought systems and human theories of socialization and how humans came together. Look to your neighbor and say "I'm bored." Go ahead and look to your neighbor and say "I'm bored." Alright, now I want you to work for a minute. I want your brain to kick in because this is important, okay? Somebody asked me just a little bit ago out in the hallway where did evil come from. Okay, this is big stuff, because culture is going to ask you about all of that, they are. And I want you to have an informed response. So Michael Foucault wanted to explore in the late 18th century when medicine really turned and hospitals came to be, he wanted to explore how healthcare changed. And the bottom line is he looked at the architecture. And here are the buildings they built and it changed it all. They built hospitals in the round and that's where the idea that the doctor is going to make his rounds. So the patients were isolated from the other patients. There might a hundred or two hundred lined up but they could only literally kind of see straight ahead and see the nurse that embraced them. So the doctors made their rounds. It also separated out very contagious diseases, all these things. Foucault makes all these incredible observations about that. Now skip ahead to another study that he did. He was looking at prison systems and how the prison systems function and he found that prison systems base their same theories on hospitals, from the late 18th century. And he notice that prison systems isolated the convicts, and lined them around, and they could watch them but the prisoner may not know who

is just down the hallway, not be able to see, can only see straight ahead and see the authority in front of them. And so the only difference between hospitals and prisons was the guard tower in the middle with the sniper on top. And Foucault talks about how that architecture forms basically your philosophy of how you think about medicine or prison systems and so forth, and socialization. Now, I'm going to connect the dot then and skip ahead to right now and to the church world and then the other dot that I want to connect, and then I'm going to sit down, is the dot related to God creating the world and the structure He created it with. If it's true that hospitals and prisons formed the way in which people think about patients, diseases, correction and rehabilitation and all of that, then the same is true with the church. The church centered itself and constructed edifices so that the word of God became the center of everyone's attention. And everyone was focused on the word, but in our culture, Foucault and other philosophers have done their best to deconstruct the word, and most evangelical churches today, if you ask them this Bible I hold is this the word of God, they will say well I mean it's not really the word of God, just kind of a metaphor. And they would say that in an intellectual way. They've been taught that. And I've been to those seminaries. Here's my point to you. I think that, since we are watching the deconstruction of the Bible right in front of our eyes, where how do you know the Bible is real and all that kind of stuff, what we've turned to in the church is we don't stare at the Bible anymore, we stare at the people on the stage, and we create these traveling prophets that come through and they're supposed to impress us one day a week. And we come to see if he can pull a miracle out of a hat. And so the very structure of the building forces the attention, and rather than it being on the word of God, it becomes on the person delivering the word of God. Is it creative? Did they engage me? Is there a story? Can I feel anything when they talk? I don't know if I like that guy, you know. I can understand his wife. He's random, I don't get him. You know, or whatever. This year, those have been the predominant letters I get - "Pastor, you're all over the place, let Darla talk more." Seriously. Well be quiet. And so you get this too much the center of attention right here. What if I join you sitting in the pew as broken and wounded and lost. This is about Jesus. All of this is about Jesus. It's not about somebody doing a miracle in front of you. There are miracles that happen. And really, if we were to structure the church the right, the 24/6 church way, we would all flip our pews around and look outside and say "God, look at the big world and how do you wanna do miracles through my hands six days a week?" And then one day a week we come in here together and we sing our hearts out in praise to God because He is our God and it has nothing to do with anybody on the stage and it has everything to do with the living water that flows from our bellies, everything to do with that! And so the very architecture, so look at the way God creates the world. And I'm going to develop those thoughts in the next few months. Look at the way God creates the world. He creates the world in a very specific way so that you will see the architecture of His mighty hand and you can see many things through that, but the most important thing that I want you to see is not only is God creating the world but He is creating the world in relationship and in unity. Now I had you cross the aisles and hug necks and love on one another because there is power in unity and God the Father has never known this unity until Jesus took the sin of the world on him. The Bible said He had to turn His head. Some say He turned His head in rejection. I say He turned His head in pain because he didn't want to see His son suffer. I know He can't look upon sin and all of that. I'm telling you God wants you in relationship with Him. There is a message for you. And God wants to create something new in this year inside of you.

Darla Rakes
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You know what, everybody has a story. You have a story too. And you're writing the end of your story right now with the choices that you make. You're writing the end right now. You need to get a grasp on that. Think about the story that you are writing right now. The Bible is a story. It's an over-arching story, a big story, but it also has lots of mini-stories. And what I love about the Bible is that it's really all the same story once you catch on. And if you look really close, somewhere in one of those stories you're going to find your story, a story that you can totally relate to. And what's so good about the story is that God doesn't leave out the ugly parts at all, does He? And we don't like to talk about our ugly parts of our story do we? But what's so beautiful is that when we give God our story – do you know what happens? It becomes a beautiful story. It becomes a story about redemption and restoration. It goes from ugly to good, from dark to light - lots of little mini stories, the same story. It's a story about separation from God to unity to God, from away from God's love to the love of God. God's a personal God and He wants you to know Him personally. Don't listen to what anybody says that you can't know God. You can know God personally and He wants to take you in to that relationship with Him, a love relationship, and I'm telling you that you never get done. You can know more and more and more and there's always a new side of God; always more of God. Many stories make up the big story away from God to unity with God. And when I say story, not fibs, true story, but now I'm going to tell you a fib. Just a little joke. Scientists got together and they said you know what – we can now clone humans, we can do all kinds of miraculous things. So like one of us needs to go to God and let Him know that we really do not need Him anymore. So scientists they pick one guy and say okay we're sending you – and so he goes and he walks right up to God and he goes “you know God we just need to let you know, we can do many things now, I mean, we can do it. We really don't need you.” And God said “really, well let's just have a man-making contest and just kind of let this be decided.” And the scientist go like hey no problem, this is good. And God goes “okay, you go first and lets just do it exactly the same way that I did it with Adam.” So the scientist he gets down, picks up some dirt and God says “oh no, no, no, no.... get your own dirt.” Yeah, think about it. Has to be some matter to start with, doesn't it? Some kind of substance. Genesis was written by Moses between 1400 and 1200 BC. I don't know why but I always like to know that kind of thing. It kind of gives some perspective. Actually the name Genesis was given to it later. At first the name was In Beginning. We kind of put the “the” in there, In The Beginning, Genesis. But what the Latin meaning of Genesis is – is giving birth. So God is like giving birth to the earth, the world, the heavens and the earth being created. I don't know, kind of neat. And you know a lot of people think well the Old Testament, well you know we don't really need that, lets just stay in the New Testament because we're living like today. That stuff is for the past. But let me tell you something, the seeds of truth that are planted, the divine seeds that are planted in the Old Testament, come to sprout in the New. I mean what's in Genesis is like the divine seeds and the truth of God that come to full bloom in Revelation. If you don't know what is in Genesis and you don't know what is in the Old Testament, I mean you have no clue. So it does make sense for us to start here. Within this book are like divine laws of nature that work, and I'm going to show you some of them during this series. So Genesis 1:1... In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. I'm not going to give you a lot of time to turn to Genesis

because it's the first book, you know where it's at. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Now we can look at this and go oh that's kind of a title or that's a summary and some people say that it is and some people say that there was a large space of time between verse one and verse two. And they say well there's an expanse of time before the spirit began to brood or hover over the waters of the deep, because how do we all of a sudden have this waters of the deep and all this mass of whatever. We don't know. Now I want to tell you something, many things we don't know. It's a mystery. And we can get in here and we can say it's the gap theory and that's just a space of time and that's when the fallen angels happened and Satan and all of this. But you know, we'll divide the house on who believes what and what's the point in it all? What's the point? I mean we've got denominations birthing all over the place because we want to divide it up have an argument about the scriptures. Let me tell you let's rest in the mystery. It's okay. We don't know it all. You know? And it's still good and it's still the truth. So - divine creation. Creation is a divine activity. God divinely creates. It's something divine to be able to create out of absolutely nothing, right? I mean God made the earth out of nothing. I can't do that. I mean I think when I'm baking from scratch that's when I get the box out, right? You know, you ladies are with me. You know, get the box out. That's like scratch. You know? You know nowadays that's pretty close, right? You know you mix in what it says. But God made it from nothing. You get that? I mean no things at all. But you know what God also does? He makes something out of your mess. That is like the coolest thing about God, because you get your life in such a wreck. Sometimes we know Jesus and we just kind of drift and we don't find a church and we have no place to grow and before we know it, our life is so messed up and we've weaved such a web that we think there is no way out. But I'm telling you I don't care how bad you have blown it, how big a mess that you've made, when you give God the good, the bad and the ugly, He will redeem it. He will restore it. I mean you guys are clapping because you had it happen to you and you know what I'm talking about. I mean, you know, you made a flubbing mess of it all and God went "oh, it's okay." I know you had that baby out of wedlock but you know what, I got plans for you. I've got something for you to do. I mean I have made all these plans and I've just been waiting for you to realize. I'm just waiting. I'm waiting for you to realize my love. I'm waiting for you. Listen guys, we've all made messes of our lives. And if you've come in here as a guest today, I just want to say welcome to a very messy place. We've all messed up. But I'm telling you, God will take your mess and He will restore it, He will re-create, He will redeem and I'm telling you it's divine when God gets a hold of it. And you can try to fix it all you want and it's never going to look right. But if God gets a hold of it - I'm telling you, let Him have it. Let Him have it. Make up your mind today. I am giving God this mess because I am tired of it, I can't do it anymore. God's just waiting. Verse two - the earth was formless and empty and darkness covered the deep waters. Is that some people's lives in here today? The earth was formless and empty and darkness covered the deep waters and the spirit of God was hovering over the surfaces of the water. You know that implies some movement - like hovering. And I'm thinking the holy spirit is like "yeah, ahhh, I'm waiting, I'm waiting." Remember when we talked about the spirit in the word a few Sundays ago. I mean the spirit knew that the word of God was getting ready to be spoken and the spirit is hovering, going yeah, God the Father is getting ready to speak. Oh this is going to get good - just anticipation of that. And what happens when God speaks? You've got word and you've got spirit and you've got power, right? I mean the force. There is unity that happens in your life. There is wholeness that happens in your life. There is oneness that happens in your life. I don't care what the mess is, I'm telling you God intends to make it right, to fix it today, to redeem it, to restore it. And look, I know you've got

children away from God. I'm going to tell you we are just going to pray and get the spirit hovering over that situation, hovering over that child, hovering over the mess you got at work. I mean let's just pray and begin to speak the word of God over the situation until we see the activity of God go forth and that kid come home or that mess be fixed and restored by God. That's what God wants. He wants your mess. I'm telling you, God wants your mess. Does that make any sense? I don't want anybody's mess. But God wants your mess. He wants your mess today. So the spirit was hovering and waiting for the word of God. A literal translation – you know what darkness, hovering and all those words say to me? Formless, empty, darkness – it all speaks of death, oppression and wickedness. That will mess up anybody's life won't it? I'm telling you. Darkness, you know? - oppression, wickedness? The enemy intends to completely destroy your life. You let him have it long enough and he will. He will take you to nothing. You are writing the end of your story with what's going on right now in your life. And I'm telling you, you can't make it good. God can though. God can do it. So the spirit is brooding, hovering, and this is waiting on the word of God. Verse three of Chapter one. Then God said let there be light and there was light, and God saw the light was good and then he separated the light from the darkness and God called the light day and the darkness night and evening passed and morning came, marking the first day. Now I love this, because this is the first words that God speaks and God is getting ready to work and what does he do? He turns the lights on. Don't you do that when you're getting ready to work? I mean you've got to have lights. Right? So He turns the lights on. The very first activity He does is correct the darkness. We've got to have some light here. Let's turn the lights on. And you may say it's not that big a deal. But when God says let there be light, it happens. I like that line. And it happens. God spoke it and it happens. Because that's the way it is when a King decrees something. When God, all powerful, all mighty God says something, it happens. That's power! I mean, wouldn't you like that to be like you know you say it and it happens? When we speak the word of God over our situation and begin to say let there be light, let there be light, let there be light, let there be light. Do you know that this is not the luminaries? When I first read that I thought – oh okay, stars, the moon, no, no. That's on day four. This is day one. And God says let there be light on day one. Where is this light? Where is this light coming from? Is he calling forth something out of himself? Was it the light of Jesus? Jesus said that he was the light of the world. I mean, was Jesus even referring to this moment? He said I'm the light of the world. Jesus says that I am the light of the world in John 8:12. I am the light of the world and whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life. Somebody want to get out of the darkness and the mess you are in today? I mean the spirit is hovering going come on. Do you feel it? The spirit of God hovering in this place - wanting to work in your life, wanting to bring you out in to the light, in to what He has for you. Don't listen to anything that says otherwise. I don't care if even your mind is telling you otherwise. God has stuff planned for you. And you know what? When we're in darkness we can't see it and we can't believe it. You feel all closed in. I'm telling you, God is big enough to speak one word and change everything. Just believe. Just believe. Just believe. God can do it. Luminaries were not created yet. Isn't that something? And He turns on the light. Do you know what? I think we all need to say let there be light. Who's going through some stuff in here? Come on, raise your hand. Okay, the rest of you are liars. Come on. Everybody's going through stuff. And stuff is that dark stuff. Dark stuff. I want to speak the words of God over your life and I want you to say them too. Let's say let there be light. Let there be light. I want you to look at your neighbor and I want you to say to somebody near you – let there be light. Speak it over their life. Man! Speak the words of life. Let there light. Do you know this is the first law of, I see the

first law of God. And I'm trying to think, what do you name the law so I made up my law of seeing. I was going to call it the law of light but I thought no, I'm just going to call it the law of seeing. Because the law of seeing is you can not see without light. Now this works in the natural and the spiritual. Isn't that kind of cool? Like the laws that work in the natural realm also work in the spiritual. You know why? The same God. The law of seeing is you have to have light. You can not have a revelation of who God is, you can not have a revelation of His love, you can't have a revelation of Jesus without the light. But you get in a place like this and you feel the presence of God when they are worshipping. I mean you know what you were feeling in here today? It wasn't just the passion of people. It was the stirring and the hovering of the spirit saying - let me work in your life, let me work in your life, give me the ugly mess, give me the darkness and let me work in your life. And the law of light is or the law of seeing is that you can't see without light. You have to have light to see. And whether it's spiritual light or whether it's natural, whether it's in the physical or the spiritual you have to have light to see. We have to have revelation to see. And I'm telling you, we don't have full revelation yet. We see a little bit, a little bit of God, a little bit of understanding. One day I believe there will be revelation and full light and we will live in that, praise God. So, there's a pattern that begins to happen. And the pattern you can kind of see it in verse six in chapter one. Then God said - and He goes through this. Then God said. Then God said. And every time He is getting ready to create it's "then God said." Then God said let there be a space between the waters to separate the waters of the heavens from the waters of the earth, and that is what happened. Because when the king decrees something or speaks something it becomes law. It becomes a rule right then. So the light, the law of seeing, that became a law. We have to have light to see. And here it is. God made the space to separate the waters of the earth and the waters of the heavens and God called the space sky and the evening passed and the morning came and marked the second day. Then verse nine. Then God said, let the waters beneath the sky flow together in to one place so dry ground may appear and that is what happened. In verse ten, God called the dry ground land and the water seas and God saw it was good. Isn't that nice? God saw it was good. Then God said let the land sprout with vegetation and every sort of seed bearing plant, trees that grow, seed bearing fruit, these seeds will then produce the kinds of plants and trees from which they came and that is what happened. Now God is setting things up. This is how it's going to be. If it's an apple tree, there's going to be more apple trees, right? No matter what it is. If it's grass, this kind of grass or that kind of grass, Bermuda grass can only produce Bermuda grass. Right? And we do some science things and we kind of put a peach and an apple together or whatever, but without that intervention apples produce apples and oranges produce oranges. That's the way it is. So God is setting rules. The water is going to be here, it's going to separate, we are going to have streams and making everything get in it's place and it does just what the Fathers says, and it plays the roles that it's supposed to play. Now we'll talk more about the rest of these. Let's read verse thirteen right quick. Then God said let the lights appear in the sky. This is when the luminaries were created, to separate the day from the night. Let them mark off the seasons, the days and the years. Let these lights in the sky shine down on the earth, and that is what happened. I love that. And God made two great lights. The larger one to govern the day, the smaller one to govern the night, and he also made the stars. He is setting the rules. This is when you do this, this is when you do that. Sun you're here, moon you're here. This is what you do. Moon you're job is the night. You see? God set these lights in the sky to light the earth, to govern the day and the night and to separate the light from the darkness and God saw that it was good. Yes. And evening passed and morning came to mark the fourth day. And we are going to stop right there today. But

we're going to talk about in the beginning. The words "in the beginning" are too brief to really give us a scientific or full historical explanation I mean of what was happening in the beginning. But I also found something really neat, how the phrase "in the beginning" ties to something in the New Testament - the gospel of John. How does the gospel of John start? He starts out with the phrase "in the beginning," and you know what? I know John was very intentional about this. He wanted us to tie it with in the beginning in Genesis. And he says in the beginning, John 1 – the word already existed, the word was with God and the word was God. He existed in the beginning with God. Who is the Word? Jesus. God created everything through him and nothing was created except through him. So we have the word, we have the spirit, we have Jesus, we have the holy spirit. That's why we had power to create. The word gave life to everything that was created and his life was brought to light to everyone. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness can never extinguish it. And I'm going to tell you God's light wants to shine in your today brighter and brighter and more and more. There are three new beginnings in the Bible that are mentioned. First the beginning of history and time, then in the New Testament the beginning when Jesus came and gave us new life, we received through him. That was a new beginning. But there's also a new beginning in revelation when God creates a new heaven and a new earth. So we have Jesus coming but we have Genesis time in history, then Jesus coming and then the new heaven and the new earth. Three new beginnings mentioned. I'm going to tell you, there's many new beginnings for us aren't there? Sometimes we need do-overs and start-overs. But what begins in Genesis and what is so important that we know the Old Testament, what begins in Genesis is completed in Revelation. You see it again and again. I'm telling you. You start with the first heaven and the first earth. You end with the new heaven and the new earth. You start with the first garden. Do you know there's a garden city in Revelation talked about? You start with the tree of life which is guarded, becomes guarded in the first, in Genesis, but in the end the tree of life is available. How about that? You start with the first marriage of Adam and Eve in Genesis and the last marriage is Jesus with the bride. Satan deceives in the first. What happens to Satan in the end in Revelation? He is thrown in to the lake of fire. Death enters in Genesis and it exits in Revelation. It's over with there. The redeemer is promised in Genesis. Then we go through the New Testament and Jesus comes to earth and we have our redeemer in Revelation at the end. There are also three new beginnings in your life that happen. First you are born in the flesh, in the physical realm, you have new birth and then you have another new beginning, spiritual. You receive Jesus. You say I need you, I made a big mess. And you have a spiritual birth. And then ultimately in the end you have a new body and in to eternity. But I think we have a lot of new beginnings in between because I think we make bad choices sometimes, we drift from God and we need a new beginning. There are times we need a new beginning. I think some of us today need a new beginning. And maybe you haven't drifted from God but maybe you have. Maybe you're in a place and you're like – I need God to do something new in my life, I've got a mess going on and I need to give him this mess. I'm a believer, hey, but I've got a mess and I want God's light and I say let there be light in my mess. God shine some light in the darkness that's happening in my life. I need some light in my life. I'm suffering from depression, I need some light, or I'm suffering at my work or I don't have a job, I need some light in my darkness. Where are you at today? We said that together, let there be light in the mess right now that I'm going through because it makes no sense – I didn't ask for it, I didn't deserve it, I've tried to do everything right, I've tried to follow the Lord, and let there be light right where I'm at today God. I need light. Do you need light? I need light. I want a greater revelation of God. I want to encounter Him. I want to know Him. We want to know Him more don't we? I need light

in my life. I can't tell where it's going. I don't know who I'm supposed to marry. What's going on. I mean where are you at today. Do you need light? Do you need divine direction? Are you writing a story that's going to end really, really bad right now if you keep going? I mean what's the story you're writing? Because the things you're doing right now are writing the end of that story. Is today your today? I mean today. I'd like to sing that song that we were singing earlier. We need light. I mean I don't care where you're at. You can be a believer forever, and I'm going to tell you there comes a time when you need a new beginning, you need some fresh love, you need some fresh energy in you, you need your marriage re-ignited. You know what I'm talking about? You need a new beginning.

(Pastor Mike Rakes) Check this out now, I jotted down – you said formless and empty and darkness, right? From verse two. Formless means you would be living a life with no boundaries. Empty would be living a life right now that's not fulfilled, you're not content in any way. And darkness would be just far from God's plan for your life and you know you are. And then you mentioned that we have history in time, that God put boundaries or structures around our lives, He knows the beginning and the end. And that Jesus came to fulfill us, to give us contentment in the here and now, right? And that it is a brand new day. So, as they sing this song. Now why don't you all stand. Let's conclude the service this way. (Darla Rakes) Let there be light. Let's just speak it over our lives. Let there be light. We need unity, we need the division that has happened in our lives to come back together in to unity God. We need wholeness, we need love, we need to be full and filled with you God. Let there be light. (Mike Rakes) If you're here and you've been living a life of no boundaries in certain dimensions or whatever, or you just say I'm just not content, something's up, I'm unfulfilled or you would say I just want to declare this a brand new day. I need a brand new understanding a brand new day in my life. While they sing this, I want you to come as an act of submission. (Darla Rakes) Whatever the darkness or whatever it is, if you want a special prayer, come forward today. (Mike Rakes) Come and move right now. You know who you are as we sing. Sing this to Him church. Lift if up real loud! I love this song, Creator!

I wasn't going to share this but we had the wedding yesterday and we just had a lot of visitors and people staying at our house and I turned on Christian television for them this morning to watch and just saw a bunch of stuff that just didn't sit well with me and I just prayed "God keep my attitude good" and all that. I thought about all the failures that I've had walking with the Lord and all the times that I've tried and I was like "God I'm not saying I'm any better than that" and I realize what it was that bothered me and it was that in the songs there is a certain energy that you write in the songs but you get caught up in the energy and miss who we're singing about. And I just felt like, me included, when there are times that you just get caught up in the idea of God, rather than in God himself.

And I just say to God over us today, I just say Jesus you're beautiful, you're more beautiful than I can imagine, you love me as I am, you love me just like I am, and you love us, you love our nation God. Lord, I just pray this prayer prophetically. I pray this prayer God as a dream, as a hope. Lord when we say the name Las Vegas and the city Las Vegas people think – we have a certain image that comes to mind. And when we say the names of other cities around our nation, we can think of certain sins and certain things that are associated, but God I can't think of one city when we hear the name of that city that we think of God's power, and God's love and God's

unity. But I pray prophetically that someday God, when people say the words Winston Salem that they will think of unity and power and grace and love and forgiveness. In the name of Jesus I pray creatively over our city, that it would be a city of unity God between black and white and Hispanic and white and black. I pray God that your grace would shadow us. I pray for unity God among the churches and the pastors and the denominations, that we would lay down God all of these other things and come to know you, because Jesus you died for all of us and you're trying to bring us all in to this wonderful family and you are beautiful. When I see you I don't see my sin or my friend's sins or Christian television or pagan television, but I see oh God, I see you're beautiful and you love us all and you even appreciate our human effort, but you want us to lay that down as an act of worship and just say come to me. So Lord as we sing this song to you one more time, we're going to declare Jesus you're beautiful. We're going to sing it right to you Jesus. Would you listen? Would you pay attention? We're going to sing it straight to you right now Jesus. So God, I speak creative miracles, creative miracles. Lord I know that's there is some watching on the internet, they are all by themselves, maybe they are at work today and they just have it on. I pray a creative power over them God, that you're spirit would do something in them. God I pray that you would birth unity. Let this be the start of unity, not just in our church but in our city, among the races, among families God. In the name of Jesus, bring unity to the body of Christ. In the name of Jesus I just speak over the atmosphere God, that you would breathe. I am asking you God. I am asking you God to do this. And that person watching on the internet right now, that dis-unity has been in their life in such a high level of proportion. God they know I don't even know who they are. I wouldn't know they are watching. God you know, and I pray in Jesus name, unity in this situation, unity, creative power and unity over them. And I breathe it over this group of believers today and I bless them, in Jesus name. Amen. Amen.