

Me:

Good evening, It's so good to have you all here tonight! My name is Sam, I part of the team here at Proclaimers. Our lead Pastor, Pastor Tom is in Sunderland this weekend with a church up there which is awesome. We get to release him to input into other churches.

Hey tonight, carrying on from this morning, we are going to explore the theme/topic of creativity. Over the last few weeks we've been doing musical items during our evening service in the run up to today. The purpose of these was to explore God's creativity through music. That's why we just had a punk item in church! I'm sure some of you are wondering how on earth we can play that music in church! As pastor Tom described in his first book, Relentless, we believe that if we can see God's glory and beauty through a sunset, can we not see it through a movie set?

One of the reasons we've been doing musical items is because for one, it's one the easiest art forms to produce in a church service context. Also, we figured music is probably more engaging than watching someone paint a picture live.. But also, as Phil outlined this morning, we believe that God is expressed through our creativity.

We:

I've heard a guy called Erwin McManus ask these questions in his talk about the 'Artisan Soul'.

Who here would consider themselves a creative genius?

Ok, let's take away the word genius because the humility in this room is overwhelming!

Who here considers themselves to be creative?

Ok a few but not everyone..

As Phil outlined this morning.. We are all created to create..

It's so easy for us to dismiss the notion that we might be creative..

I believe that every single person in this room is a creative. That each person was created for a purpose and that purpose is to *create*.

God:

Created to create:

From the beginning of time until now, new things have always come to be via a journey called creation. Creation is the process of bringing something into existence. The first record of this was the creation account recorded in Genesis. Now despite our potential differences in how we believe the process of earth's creation came about, I think a lot of us agree that it was authored by the original creator, God.

Creation is in God's nature. It is part of who he is. You see, before the bible reveals the other characteristics of God, we see that he is creative. Forming the earth from a dark void of nothing, moulding ideas into reality, bringing things into existence.

Now here's the important bit:

Genesis 1:27

So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

God created the world but most importantly, he created us. Not only did He create us but he also created us in his own image.

So us being created in his nature, in his image means not only were we created by the creator, we are created creative just like our maker.

Now there may be people in the room who maybe aren't artistic and you may think this doesn't apply to you but actually I believe that there is more to creativity than artistic creativity.

The definition of the word create is to bring (something into existence).

generate, produce, design, make, fabricate, fashion, manufacture, build, construct, erect, do, turn out; bring into being, originate, invent, initiate, engender, devise, frame, develop, shape, form, mould, forge, concoct, hatch;

You don't have to be able to do all of those things but you can do some of them.

Creativity isn't limited to those who can paint or sing or write. Creativity is a part of who we are as human beings created in the image of God.

Yet many of us can't see our creative nature expressed because we don't know how to unlock the creativity that is trapped inside us.

For some reason, the majority of us have an unlocked creativity just sitting inside us, and we're not sure how to express it and we're not really sure how to get it out. How do we unlock our creativity?

Introduce panel:

Before we go any further, I want to bring some people up to help me. Guys why don't you come join me?

Sam introduce everyone

These guys in my mind are completely creative in every aspect. Well they would be would they because everyone is creative! But I feel that each one is unique in their creativity. Many of you will know who these guys are. Scott plays keys in the worship team and Lily leads worship so well. Rose is actually Lily's sister and though she doesn't sing, she is incredibly gifted in typography and photography and other artsy stuff but actually she is incredibly gifted in other areas...

Rose, how would you define creativity (expanding on the non-artistic side of creativity)

Creativity is all about creating something, innovating and being imaginative. I love the way the dictionary defines the word create – To create is to bring something into existence. For some, creativity looks like writing a song or painting a picture, but if our only view of creativity is producing art, we're really missing something.

You can create art, but you can also create so much more – systems, structures, atmospheres and moments. To me, creativity is creating a painting in art at school, it's creating a more efficient system at work, it's creating a warm and loving environment at home and so much more.

So in a way we are all artists?

(a person skilled at a particular task or occupation)

I spoke about the fact that we are creative because God is creative, Lily, how do you think the bible defines creativity?

I think what creativity really boils down to is just doing something new. As humans we sometimes have a tendency to avoid change because we can get comfortable with what's familiar, but God loves change and desires for new things to be created. This is evident in the fact that God creates living or life-giving things – humans, plants, trees, animals etc. - that are constantly changing, growing and developing. We are children of a creative God who has given us all different skills and abilities so that we can invent new ideas to change and renew our world. When the apostle Paul tells the Colossian church about how Jesus changes us he said:

“For you have acquired new creation life which is continually being renewed into the likeness of the One who created you; giving you the full revelation of God” Colossians 3:10 TPT

This is just more evidence of how God is creative to His very core, He brought Jesus to earth so that our lives would be changed forever and He gave us His Holy Spirit to help us change, grow and develop – which takes creativity! The book of Psalms talks a lot about “singing a new song” to God (Psalms 96:1, Psalms 144:9, Psalms 149:1) so when it comes to praise and worship it's also important that we're not getting stuck into what we find familiar, that we're constantly looking for new ideas and moving forwards. It's nice sometimes to reminisce and look back at memories, but being truly creative is all about looking ahead at what we still can do.

I love that Lily, being truly creative is all about looking ahead at what we still can do.

Scott, I touched on this idea that everyone is creative but why do you think that not everyone embraces their creativity?

Because it's hard!

I think that there are three defining traits one needs to be creative – passion, curiosity and not being afraid to take risks.

I think if you are passionate about something, it is so much easier to be creative with something that you are passionate about. Writing, drawing, doctoring, spread sheeting, engineering – if you are passionate about it, being creative around that practice will come to you far quicker than another area you aren't passionate in. A lot of the time, people can't embrace creativity because they don't know or haven't found what they are passionate about.

When it comes to curiosity, I think age beats it out of our system. We look at children who are curious about EVERYTHING, but when we 'grow up' – where does that curiosity go? Curiosity is a muscle – the more you use it, the more it can do. Curiosity naturally leads to innovation, but without curiosity how can we expect to feel confident enough to be creative?

Which leads nicely onto the fear of taking risks. I get the privilege of running our youth, "Fearless", and we often talk about the kind of fear that keeps you alive, and the kind of fear that keeps you from living. We withhold from taking risks for the anxiety of the unknown, feeling insecure about your own ability compared to what you perceive to be others' ability. I believe that the biggest reason we don't see more people embracing their own creativity is from that fear of the unknown.

Rose, how do we unlock creativity?

Scott made a really great point about how fear so often holds us back from being creative, So when considering how to unlock creativity – I believe it starts by being braver and allowing our ideas to linger in our minds long enough to give them a fair shot. We all have creative thoughts – one of my favourite ideas is the idea that a spreadsheet could make me a cup of tea. It's hilarious and sounds ridiculous – but actually, why not? Okay, so it might not be the top of Google's priority list right now to make that possible, but one day maybe! But as that crazy thought lingered in my mind, I began to think what is possible in a spreadsheet – and from that, a new system for recording and managing our media team's projects was created as well as a comprehensive fearless statistics report generator.

Joshua 1:9 says "This is my command – be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

God calls us to be brave and not fearful, whilst this applies to so much in our lives – it also applies to our creativity. When you have a creative idea, why not step out in faith and give it a go – pitch that idea in your in your next staff meeting, give creating something new a chance and you have no idea the impact of your creation.

You know when a child comes home from school clutching what apparently is a family portrait in their hand, but if you're honest – it looks more like you're a family of potatoes than people? It's hardly the Mona Lisa, but you never know – One day, it could be. We need to stop being afraid to fail, afraid that our ideas will get shot down or that they're just too plain crazy to actually be created – because God is calling us to a life of creativity.

Lily, how do we help others unlock creativity?

I think it's important that we don't confuse creativity with talent. Quite often people think of creative people as just those who are talented in the arts, and therefore think that if they're not a talented artist then they're not creative, which simply isn't true. You don't have to have a specific talent to be creative. So I think that changing people's perceptions about creativity will help them to realise that they are more creative than they think. If you can come up with a new way of doing something you're creative, if you can make something positive out of a negative situation you're creative, if you can completely change someone's day because you reached out to them and encouraged them, you're creative.

I also believe that confidence and being open to change are key to helping people unlock their creativity.

“Discover creative ways to encourage others and to motivate them toward acts of compassion, doing beautiful works as expressions of love” Hebrews 10:24 TPT

The biggest killer of creativity is fear and often we keep our creativity hidden for fear of our thoughts and ideas being shot down. This is why it's so important that we support and encourage each other's creativity, regardless of what we might think of someone's idea. By doing this we give each other more confidence to be creative and try out different ideas. As a worship leader I've tried out some things that have worked beautifully, and other things that have gone down like a lead balloon! But we never find the things that DO work unless we have the confidence to try! One of my favourite things about running our Christmas Choir is meeting people who tell me how nervous they are and how they don't think they're very good singers, surround them with people who just love to sing and encourage each other and it's amazing what beautiful voices come out. When everyone is singing in harmony, for me there's nothing like it!

Us:

Scott, Why do we need to unlock our creativity why should we care?

The key thing that makes creativity so dangerous, and important, is that creativity invites change.

Marcel Duchamp is a famous artist and really a pioneer in the early 1900's that helped lead the way in contemporary art, putting urinals next to portraits to open the eyes of the galleries and the decision-makers in the art world. What he was able to do was to broaden the world's vision to redefine what was considered art, helping to innovate completely new forms of expression and ways of thinking.

Nelson Mandela is another great example of a creative genius when it came to leadership – he was so strategic and intentional. Mandela brought about change so radically that he was able to unite a broken South Africa, bringing people of all backgrounds together, and unite a rainbow nation.

And Jesus, the creative genius who changed humanities history, forever, bringing about the biggest change to man that has ever been done; sacrificing himself on the cross on our behalf so that we will be able to know God in a way that was never even thinkable before. Jesus stormed into this world, a mighty God in a mortal body, tearing His way through a shell-shocked world to save a broken humanity. If that is not a creative solution to an eternal problem, I don't know what is. As it is beautifully put in the Hillsong song "So Will I", Jesus' whole journey is a masterpiece – a work of art called love.

So I think that the real question is can we afford not to care about creativity?

Each of these creatives brought about significant change to not just their lives, but to the world around them – and for generations to come. Pastor Tom has been talking about this season having a God-shift. It says in Isaiah 43:19 "See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland."

God is doing a new thing. Creativity is not an option – we are creative beings. It is now up to us, in this God-shift season, to decide how we want to use that. Fall to the side of fear? Or shake the very foundations of the earth we stand on?

Scott, I think you've summed that up very well! I believe that creativity is not a characteristic or a personality type, It's a mindset.

It's a mindset of 'there is a better way,'

'How can I bring life to this situation'

I believe that creativity as a church is more than, 'how well did our band play' or how many lights can we fit on a truss' or how good is our production value. It's new ways, new streams, new roads for people to see Jesus, to experience His love. "This work of art called love" That's why we have no choice but to be creative in our pursuit of souls for heaven. As we step into the creativity that God has called us to, people start to take notice. But we have to decide to be creative.. We can chose to unlock our creative potential and become pioneers, world changers, or keep our creativity locked with in us.