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St. Paul's Lutheran Church
2100 16th Street SW
Austin, MN 55912-1749
Pastor Ted Barthels
Sermon preached on
June 7, 2020
Trinity Sunday

Scripture Lessons: 2 Corinthians 13:11-14 Matthew 28:16-20
Hymns: 541; 549:1,5,6; 246:1,3; 644

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Genesis 1:1-2:3

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ²The earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

³Then **God said**, "Let there be light"; and there was light. ⁴And God saw the light, that **it was good**; and God divided the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day.

⁶Then **God said**, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters." ⁷**Thus God made the firmament**, and divided the waters which *were* under the firmament from the waters which *were* above the firmament; **and it was so**. ⁸And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day.

⁹Then **God said**, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry *land* appear"; and **it was so**.

¹⁰And God called the dry *land* Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that **it was good**.

¹¹Then **God said**, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb *that* yields seed, *and* the fruit tree *that* yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed *is* in itself, on the earth"; **and it was so**. ¹²And the earth brought forth grass, the herb *that* yields seed according to its kind, and the tree *that* yields fruit, whose seed *is* in itself according

to its kind. **And God saw that it was good.** ¹³ So the evening and the morning were the third day.

¹⁴ Then **God said**, “**Let there be** lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; ¹⁵ and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth”; **and it was so.** ¹⁶ Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. *He made* the stars also. ¹⁷ God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, ¹⁸ and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. **And God saw that it was good.** ¹⁹ So the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

²⁰ Then **God said**, “Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens.” ²¹ So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. **And God saw that it was good.** ²² And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” ²³ So the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

²⁴ Then **God said**, “Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, *each* according to its kind”; **and it was so.** ²⁵ And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. **And God saw that it was good.**

²⁶ Then **God said**, “**Let Us make man in Our image**, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” ²⁷ So **God created** man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. ²⁸ Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

²⁹ And God said, “See, I have given you every herb *that* yields seed which *is* on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. ³⁰ Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which *there is* life, *I have given* every green herb for

food”; **and it was so.** ³¹Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed **it was very good.** So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

2 Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. ²And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. ³Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made. (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth.
Amen.

In Christ Jesus, God our Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: It is vacation season once again.

Majestic scenery can be seen across our country, and around the world. This year many people may limit travel. Instead of going to distant parts of our country or even the world, maybe we will be more comfortable staying in Minnesota, or one of our neighboring states. Even then it is very easy to find places with overwhelming beauty and a majesty that makes us realize how small we are, how tiny in the scope of creation, and even more so in consideration of the Creator.

Today, on this Trinity Sunday we focus our worship on acknowledging, and giving glory to the one true God, the **living** God. The Triune God made the earth and all that is in it, indeed the entire universe, and still holds it all together with the word of His power. --

**THEME: The Majesty of the Triune God Is
Revealed in His Creation.**

We read in the epistle to the Hebrews: *“By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.”*

(Hebrews 11:3)

We aren't setting out this morning to make the grand debate against macroevolution. While the creation account of Genesis chapter one is in perfect harmony with true science that is not why we believe what we believe about the origins of the universe or the creation of this world and the origins of the human race. We know what we know to be true by FAITH! This faith was created in our hearts by the Holy Spirit working through the Word. Our focus on this Trinity Sunday is what we learn about God from this first chapter of the Bible that recounts for us God's work of creation.

We alluded to the majesty of creation that we see when we take our little trips around the state or nation or even the world, and we realize that the majesty of God who made all things is evident in all that we see around us. We learn of God's majesty --

I. In His Power and Wisdom.

It was the beginning of all that we know as the universe. It happened in an instant, that instant when God created the heavens and the earth. Immediately God's focus is on the earth. This is the place which God prepared for people. He prepared it for people who were to be the crown of His creation. So let us consider how it is that God proceeded. Our text speaks to us of God, and in doing so we see indications of this God being that special Triune God we worship and adore.

The form of the Hebrew word for God is not in the singular or the dual in most of the references throughout this chapter. Except for a one specific reference later in this chapter, what the Holy Spirit led Moses to write was God in the plural form. Now some may say that this is simply a majestic use of language. Sort of like a king or queen referring to self as "we." That isn't necessary for God to do. He is the Almighty and His majesty is far above all the earth. When we consider the allusion to the Word and to the Spirit of God hovering over the face of the waters, we come to understand, to know and believe that this is a reference to the Triune God, Father, Son (present as the Creating Word,) and Holy Spirit all being actively involved in the creation of the world.

Remember how John opens His gospel account of the life of Jesus. He begins by identifying Jesus with the Word of God, "*all things*

were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.” (John 1:3) Ten times in this opening chapter of Holy Scripture we read the words, “**and God said.**” And when God said something the things that He said came into being by the power of His Word. The power of God, the power of His Word is astounding.

But it isn't only a matter of making things appear. It isn't only matter of God having great power. What God did in those six days of creation also reveals the majesty of God's **wisdom**. This world that began without form and void, was very quickly and surely put in order to support life. It was put in order to make life not only manageable, but blessed and good. God ordered things so that the world was prepared to support flora and fauna. First the plants appeared, then the animals that depended upon the plants for nourishment and growth. God set things perfectly as they needed to be to support life. He determined how it was to be, “*and it was so.*” That expression “and it was so” is repeated six time in this chapter teaching us of the majesty of God's wisdom in ordering this creation in which we live.

The topper of all this that reveals the majesty of the Triune God in His creation is that God saw that “**it was good!**” Six times we read that with a final conclusion, “*God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good!*” (v. 31) Not a work in progress that needed a great deal of fixing, but a world, a wonder that was very good. It was ready for that crown of God's creation, the human being, man.

We learn of God's Majesty --

II. In His Goodness to the Sons of Men.

This revelation of the majesty of the grace of God begins with the creation of man. It is different. It is decidedly different. The difference speaks to us of God's view or attitude toward the human being as the crown of His creation. Mankind was not created exactly as all the rest of the beasts of the field had been. It was not verbal command, “Let there be Man,” and suddenly human beings existed on the face of the earth, and male and female existed together. It was done in the counsel of God. It happened as the Triune God in His glorious mystery said, “*Let Us make man in our*

image, according to our likeness.” (v.26) Here we see most clearly in the creation account the presentation of the reality of the Three in One God, the only true God. The verb and pronoun forms here are **plural**, in a context that indicates not a majestic use of words but a literal expression of three persons conferring and agreeing upon a course of action. And then we read “*So God created man*” and the verb form is **singular**. Here we read that one specific use of the singular use of the word “God” in this creation account. The Triune, the “Three in One God” created man as a spiritual being as well as a physical being.

God created a human being not only possessing a comprehension of his Creator which other animals do not possess, but a consciousness, a spirituality which was in perfect harmony and peace with its Creator, **This is the image of God!**

Man was created by God and placed in a position of trust in God’s most splendid creation, Man was to rule over all of God’s creation. Man was to care for it. This is the majesty of God’s goodness toward us.

What happened? We know that Adam and Eve were tempted and deceived by the devil, and fell into sin, and in the moment they ate of the tree in the center of the garden, they died. The **image of God** within them died. Mankind is still distinctively different from the rest of the fauna of God’s creation. Man still possesses an eternal soul, but that soul was immediately shrouded in the darkness of sin and death. Sin’s corruption infected all of God’s perfect creation, and has ever since. As majestic as the world may appear, because of sin it is no longer the “**very good**” which God had declared it to be.

What remains still testifies to God’s presence, and for good reason. God would have man search for Him and seek to find Him. This was Paul’s message to the people in Lystra when, after Paul and Barnabas had healed a lame man, the people would have worshiped them as gods. Paul declared, “*We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them,* ¹⁶ *who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways.*

¹⁷ Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.” (Acts 14:15-17)

The majesty of God is revealed in His goodness toward man and all of His creation. It is evident for man to see. The Lord is good to man, yes, even after the fall into sin when “*the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth.*” (Genesis 8:21) The Lord would have man prepared to hear of the greatest act of love and kindness that He imparts, and so His goodness is seen in the majesty of creation. We read in Proverbs:

Who has ascended into heaven, or descended?
Who has gathered the wind in His fists?
Who has bound the waters in a garment?
Who has established all the ends of the earth?
What is His name, and what is His Son’s name,
If you know? (Proverbs 30:4)

Those are the questions of life! By the guidance and revelation of the Holy Spirit we know the name of our Creator. We know that the Triune God has revealed Himself to us as the Lord Jehovah, the covenant God who reached out to sinful man right away after the fall into sin! After man brought death and destruction upon God’s perfect creation, God reached out in grace and promised the Seed of the Woman. We know His Son’s name! It is Jesus, “*the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*” (John 1:14)

By sending His Son into the flesh that He might live and die for us and rise again, by calling us to faith in Jesus, causing us to trust in His merits, God has restored to us believers that image of God which was lost. We are restored to a state of righteousness and purity before Him, and our delight is once again in the law of the Lord. “*We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*”
(Romans 5:1)

By faith we know the full extent of the majesty of the goodness of God. As long as we continue our pilgrimage in this life we will have our struggles: struggles with sin, and the fruits of sin’s corruption: sickness, violence, suffering and death; everything we have seen too much of on TV news in recent days and weeks. And

the children of God shall be swept up in these things as well. But because of the revelation of the true Triune God coming to us, we have hope in His name. We know the words so well, “*Our help is in the name of the LORD, Who made heaven and earth.*” (Psalm 124:8) That name is Jehovah. He who made us brings us the covenant of His peace.

Just think of that! We turn to the LORD for help in time of need. We turn to the Almighty, the all wise God who by the power of a simple spoken command brought all things into being, by the power of that word established the order of creation for our good and blessing. He is our Savior who in His grace does not deal with us according to our sin but according to His loving kindness which endures forever. He who Made us, has also Redeemed us to Himself by the death of His Son, and has Sanctified us through the powerful working of the Holy Spirit. To the Triune God be praise and glory both now and forever.

AMEN.

And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.