

First Sunday after Epiphany

St. Paul Lutheran Church

01/10/2021

Sermon Theme: God's Creation

Sermon Text: Genesis 1:1-5,26-28

Grace, Mercy, and Peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,

Amen.

What was your first experience of God? When was the first time you encountered God? When did you realize who is the creator of the universe? Did you hear a voice? Did you see an image? Did you see an Angel? Did you read the Bible about creation? Or did you attend a Church service where God was worshipped as creator?

(Let's watch a short video clip)

The book of Genesis begins with God's act of creation. God is the subject of creating the universe out of nothing. In the beginning, Moses writes that God created heaven and earth and all that is in it. Creation has the beginning of space, matter, and time. Whereas God has no beginning. All creation reveals God who created it out of nothing. We, human beings, are special among God's creation, for we are created in God's image. We are God's image having his attributes, including moral responsibility and knowledge. Looking at all creation, including humankind, reveal their creator-God! King David writes on Psalms 19:1;

"heavens declare the glory of God,
and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. "

Whether you are religious or atheist, there are moments, if not periods, you feel or hear from others/ scholars that there is no God. The very first proof that there is an active God in the universe is creation. Look at the plants. Look at the waters. Look at the animals, look at the heavens, look at the stars and the planets in the galaxy. Look at the air. Look at yourself. Look how incredible and organized your body is. Look how planet earth contains all the elements plants and animals need to live. God had carefully and thoughtfully designed creation.

A Doctor told me, when he studied the anatomy of our body, especially how God wired our nerves throughout our body, he could not help but believe that God exists and he is super-genius!

A coworker told me that the love he and his wife have for one another reminds him that God is their creator and how great the creator God is. A grandpa and man of God told me that God created his children, boys, and girls, and God gave him grandchildren. He encountered God's creation through his children! He experienced God and his creation in his family! I Grew up on my parent's farm, where we relied on a rainy season for crops to grow and ox-driven plow to make the soil ready. I

have experienced God's active existence in my village. Of course, all creation, including heaven and earth, declare God's glory!

When your faith gets weak, and you begin to doubt God's existence, please take a walk-in nature and meditate on how he created the world and yourself. God reveals himself to you through his creation. Unfortunately you will find out during your walk that God's beautiful creation has been corrupted due to sin. Sometimes you see the poor, the sick, victims of war and injustice, genocide, violence, the powerful oppressing the weak, and the evil succeed at the expense of the kind. Then you are tempted to conclude that the universe is functioning by itself. It is easy to believe that God created food and oxygen for us. It is hard to believe that God created storms and germs like the Coronavirus. It is easy to think that God created you in his image: a man or a woman of God. It is hard to believe that God created some individuals in his image, including Adolph Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Idi Amin, Ivan the terrible, and Nero.

Creation has been in chaos, eroded by sin, and rebellion. Only God could bring order out of chaos. Only the creator could get light out of a formless void. In the wilderness of Sinai, Israelites who were experiencing much chaos heard the good news of their creator through the prophet Moses. It remains good news for us today. God created

life and continues to create life. The poison of sin polluted our image of God. Jesus Christ came to restore our image to what God originally created us. He began the salvation work in his baptism by John the baptizer. When Jesus was baptized, Mark writes that the heavens were open. God, the Holy Spirit, came down and dwelt on Jesus Christ. God the Father declared that he is pleased in Jesus Christ -his beloved Son! God has been pleased with Jesus saving us and recreating us to God's image. God takes pleasure in Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross on behalf of you and me. The Great exchange happened on the cross- Jesus took what was ours-SIN, and He gave us what was his-RIGHTEOUSNESS!

Paul writes about his recreation on 1 Timothy 1:15-16. He said Jesus Christ came to save/restore sinners, including himself, who was the chief of sinners. God takes pleasure in Paul's restoration to be God's image. He also takes pleasure in us who do good as his children! He is proud of us, especially when we reflect God's mercy for sinners who lost being God's image. We are God's children, and God loves us when we act as his images and introduce his love to sinners. He is pleased about us when we witness our faith to the world.

Poet Annie Johnson Flint Wrote a poem "The World's Bible" about our role as God's creature in his image:

“We are the only Bible,
The careless world will read.

We are the sinner’s gospel.
We are the scoffer’s creed.

We are the Lord’s last message,
Given in word and deed.

What if the print is blurred?”

It is incredible that God created us and recreated us to reflect his image to the world.

We are God’s image and the only Bible for most sinners. God has created and sent us to the world to witness Jesus act of recreating humankind. God will be pleased and proud of you when you reflect on his image.

The peace of God which passes all understanding guards your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus!

Amen.