

"Creation and Re-Creation"

Genesis 1:1 – 2:4

June 11, 2017
Trinity

The Holy

Today is the festival in the church year called The Holy Trinity (or, as we used to call it when I was a child: Trinity Sunday). Now this is not the kind of celebration that calls for carols, gift-giving, and decorating. In fact, to be perfectly honest, The Holy Trinity may evoke a bit of a groan. The Holy Trinity is the only festival in the church year which commemorates a doctrine rather than a Biblical person or event and its celebration may bring thoughts of a sermon which a dry and boring theological lecture on the nature of God which contains difficult words such as homoousias and homoiousias. And then there's the Athanasian Creed which we trout out every year and is so long and repetitive that we have to divide it up to confess it. Besides, isn't the Trinity just God's expression of Himself in the New Testament which is less than half the Bible? It's not even mentioned in the Old Testament. Why get so concerned about the Trinity?

However, bringing forth groans and objections is not the intention of celebrating The Holy Trinity. This day is not only about who the true God is, but, more importantly, what that true God has done for each of you and me. And the true God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – is present and active throughout the Bible from beginning to end.

Our text for today goes back to the beginning of time to see the true God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – and what He has done for us then. The beginning is pretty bleak. The universe is without shape and empty. There is nothing but darkness over everything. Why didn't God simply leave it alone to continue that way? The answer to that question is quite simple. As the Scriptures say, "God is love. (1 John 4:8) Love cannot be love without there being an object of that love. We see the extent of the great love of God the Father by what He did next. He created the heavens and the earth, i.e. the universe, that He might be able to share His love and have creatures upon whom He could lavish His love.

And, oh my, did He create! We often read the account of creation from our perspective in the present day world and it is rather a ho-hum read. What's the big deal? But imagine reading this account from God's perspective before the existence of the universe. What creativity, originality, intelligence, and tender love of God was shown by Him in what He created. If you had the power to create a universe and were planning to do so, would you have thought of and included all that the Father did? He invented light! He came up with items such as sky, ground, and water and how to properly divide them. There wasn't just one kind of vegetation, but many kinds of plants. There wasn't just one kind of living creature but there were all sorts of animals – some of which flew in the sky; some of which swam in the water; and some of which crawled on the land (how

clever was that?) – and there was a creature – adam – who was created in the very image of God Himself as the pinnacle of all creation. What a wonderful display of love was God the Father’s creation of all things.

How did God the Father carry out this expression of love and will for the universe? By His strong Word! (as we sang in the hymn). God the Father sent His Word out of His mouth and the Divine Word (which was more than simply a grammatical term, but was, in fact, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity) carried out the will of the Father and expressed His great love by causing all things to come into existence.

And the third person of the Trinity – the Holy Spirit – is present and involved in the miracle of creation as well. The text says, “And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.” His presence over the waters signified that He also was involved in the creating and sustaining of all that was coming into existence.

After God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – was finished creating from nothing all that now exists, He “saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. God’s love was satisfied. He now had an entire creation upon which to lavish His love and two creatures – Adam and Eve - made in His image with whom He could share His love in a most intimate relationship. No wonder that God declared that it was all very good.

But that wouldn’t last long. Soon this “very good” creation would revert back to darkness and emptiness. This was not because God had failed to create something that would last; no, His creation was perfect. The creation would revert back to darkness and emptiness because God’s most beloved creatures – the ones made in His own image – man and woman chose to rebel against their Creator.

This rebellion by humanity would have a profound effect on creation. In essence, this holy creation made by a holy Creator was broken by sinful people. Sin would bring down God’s curse upon creation and would be shown by weeds, thorns, and so-called natural disasters. Sin would also bring down God’s curse on humanity. People would be separated from God, die, and be condemned forever.

We share in this sin of Adam and Eve by inheritance and by deed. We are sinful in who we are by nature and in what we do, either by doing wrong or by failing to do good. Each of us has broken God’s creation. Each of us has earned God’s punishment for our sin and are separated from Him as a result. Each of us is doomed to die and spend an eternity apart from God in hell.

God found Himself in much the same position as He did in the beginning. He desired to share His love but all that lay before His was the darkness and emptiness of sin. So, God the Father, out of His great and undeserved love,

decided not to simply fix His cursed creation and cursed humanity, but to recreate a new and holy creation for Him to love.

How would God the Father do this great miracle? Again, it would be through His Word – His Divine Word, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, who had been present at creation and had brought creation into existence. Only, this time, instead of merely speaking the Word, God would become more deeply and intimately involved. The Word became flesh, as John's Gospel says. The Second Person of the Trinity, the Son of God, took on human flesh, assumed a human nature (in addition to His divine nature) and became one of us.

The Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth, took on the heavy lifting of fulfilling the plan of God the Father to bring forth a new creation – a re-creation of the old. By taking on human flesh, Jesus would become the second Adam and the substitute, not only for Adam, but for the entire human race. Jesus would re-create the universe and all of its creatures as God had intended for it to be: “very good”, holy, and perfect.

Jesus took Adam's place as the obedient Son He is as opposed to the disobedient son Adam was. Jesus perfectly obeyed the Law of God for Adam and all of his descendants, including you and me. He always and completely did everything good, said everything good, and even thought everything good according to the will of God the Father. He also never ever did anything bad, said anything bad, or even thought anything bad according to the will of God the Father. The Son achieved the holiness and perfection which God the Father required of all His sons and daughters.

For all of the sins of Adam and all of his descendants including us which had to be removed from the presence of a holy God, Jesus took Adam's place – our place – under the divine system of justice. Jesus made atonement for the sin of all God's sons and daughters by enduring the punishment decreed for sin: death here and now and death in hell forever. By His death on the cross, Jesus experienced death and hell for everyone so that sin might be forgiven – let go of by God, canceled, removed humanity's record. By rising from the tomb, becoming alive from death, and living again, Jesus was initiating the new creation for God's creatures. Here was new life for recreated bodies that would last forever.

But something was not yet complete. The plan that was made by God the Father and carried out by God the Son would have to be received by those for whom it was intended – sinful humanity. But humanity was unable to receive the benefits of God's plan precisely because we were sinful. Our sin separated us from God, made us blind to God's plan, and deaf to any declaration of God's plan.

However, God the Holy Spirit was there hovering over the water of Holy Baptism. The Spirit uses these waters to wash away our unrighteousness

through the forgiveness of sins and replaces it with the righteousness of Jesus Christ which He earned for us by His sinless life on earth, His sacrificial death on the cross, and His glorious resurrection from the tomb. The Spirit works in us the faith necessary to receive these gifts and be re-created as new creatures.

That plan of re-creation is for everyone, both those within the Church and those outside of the Church in our community. As the Bible says, "God wants all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." Unlike the first creation which happened all at once, the re-creation happens individually, on a one by one basis. Yet the plan is still the same.

God the Father loves all people completely and unconditionally. Yet, He not only loves the world, but He loves you individually and personally. Even if there had been no other sinners in the world and you were the only sinner in the world, God the Father would have devised a plan to save you, and you alone, from sin, death, and hell.

God the Father implements the plan in the same way: through His Divine Word, this time in written form. The Word of God written in the Scriptures testifies to the person and work of the Word of God made flesh in Jesus Christ. As Jesus once said to the religious leaders of His day, "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me," (John 5:39) The Word brings God's plan to us individually.

And God the Holy Spirit is there to work that re-creation in each of us individually as He hovers over the water of Holy Baptism and as He uses the Bible which He inspired as the Word of God. As each of us is baptized in the name of the Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – and reads the Bible, hears the Bible preached, and studies the Bible, God the Holy Spirit forgives each of us, works faith in each of us, and gives eternal life to each of us.

Celebration of The Holy Trinity on a special Sunday should be just that: a celebration. We know who the true God is. We have a relationship by faith with that one true God. And through the planning of God the Father, the working out of that plan by God the Son, and the implementing of that plan in each of us by God the Holy Spirit, we have forgiveness for all our sins, peace that passes all understanding, and eternal life as part of a new creation that will never end. Isn't that a reason to celebrate, not only on this day, but every day and throughout eternity? I would say yes. Amen.