

The Holy Trinity

June 7, 2020



PROCLAMATION POINTS

The following are some thoughts and questions to be used for a text study on the weekly lessons, or for jump-starting the imagination of the preacher and hearer in preparing for the proclamation event.

Therefore we should not dispute about how it can be that God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one God, for it is by its very nature beyond all reason, but it should be enough for us that God speaks in this way about himself and reveals himself thus in his Word.

— Martin Luther —
Sermons on John 3. WA 52

Genesis 1:1–2:4a

The sheer length of this passage, along with its familiarity, makes it challenging for preaching. Addressing some major themes of the passage may prove a helpful approach.

One thematic focus is the power of God's Word to accomplish his purposes. Day after day in the creation account, God speaks and things happen. Light, sky, dry land, plants, animals, and finally humankind all come into being through the power of God's Word. This powerful Word that brings about creation will eventually take on flesh for the salvation of the world that came into being through him (John 1). God's Word not only creates the world, it also creates saving faith.

- *What does this account of creation show us about the power of God? If you were imagining how the world came to be, is this what you would imagine?*

A second thematic focus has to do with the goodness of God's created order. God looks upon what he has made and makes an assessment of it. Day after day, as God brings his creation into being, he declares it good. Creation is as God wants it to be; it is aligned with his purposes. Understanding the goodness of creation in this way shapes our understanding of what happens later, when sin enters the picture. The whole of creation becomes misaligned. It is out of step with God's purposes, disordered.

- *What is the significance of the original creation being good? How does that shape how we think about life in this world?*
- *With the entrance of sin into the world, what remains of creation's goodness? What is God at work doing for his creation, even now? (Compare Romans 8:18–25.)*

A third thematic focus is the order and intentionality of God's creative work. Creation is not brought into being in one instantaneous act; instead, creation is an unfolding process. God adds to his creation over time, and when the world he desires is complete, he rests. God is deliberate. This passage reminds us that the world is not the result of chance or the general indifference of a distant deity. From the start, God has had an ongoing vision and purpose for his creation.

- *How does this passage relate to what science teaches us about our world? Are the two at odds? Does it matter?*

Psalms 8

In the face of an amazing creation, the world and all who live in it praise the name of the Lord. God is worthy of praise

from those who have been created. The handiwork of God is beyond anything a human can imagine. The psalmist is grateful to be counted among the glorious creation and stands in awe of God's decision to place humanity just below the angels.

- *When you think at the same time of God's majesty and his great love for humanity, how would you describe the sense of awe and wonder that the psalmist felt?*

Acts 2:14a, 22–36

As Peter preaches about the significance of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus he points the finger at those who are listening saying, "this Jesus whom you crucified and killed" has been raised from the dead by God. The one who denied Jesus three times now leads the disciples to be proclaimers of the Gospel and witnesses to the resurrection of Christ.

- *In what ways are all of us those who have denied Christ and yet are called to be sharers of the Gospel?*

Matthew 28:16–20

The sending out of Jesus' disciples to baptize and teach has become the blueprint for the continued sending of Christians into the world. But Jesus' Great Commission is more than just an evangelism slogan — it reveals something important about Jesus himself, and his place in our lives.

As they are gathered up on the mountain, Matthew tells us the eleven worshiped Jesus. This is not surprising, given that he has just been raised from the dead. There is recognition by the disciples that Jesus is one worthy of worship. But even in light of all that has happened, despite all that they have witnessed, Matthew tells us, "Some doubted." For some of the disciples, the evidence didn't add up to faith.

- *What do you think caused some of the disciples to doubt? What does their doubt, despite a firsthand encounter with the risen Lord, tell us about the nature of faith?*

Jesus tells his disciples that "all authority in heaven and on earth" has been given to him. He now holds in his hands absolute authority over God's creation and now calls upon his disciples to go out and share the Good News. His authority is going to be used to bring about salvation for those who are lost. That is a far different use of absolute authority than anyone would have imagined.

- *What does this passage show us about what authority looks like in the hands of one without sin?*