

## Scripture Readings & Sermon for The Holy Trinity, June 7, 2020

**Psalms 8:1(ESV)** <sup>1</sup>O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. <sup>2</sup>Out of the mouth of babes and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger. <sup>3</sup>When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, <sup>4</sup>what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? <sup>5</sup>Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings <sup>£</sup> and crowned him with glory and honor. <sup>6</sup>You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, <sup>7</sup>all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, <sup>8</sup>the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas. <sup>9</sup>O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

**Acts 2:14a, 22-36(ESV)** <sup>14a</sup>But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them, <sup>22</sup>“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— <sup>23</sup>this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. <sup>24</sup>God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. <sup>25</sup>For David says concerning him, <sup>£</sup>“I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; <sup>26</sup>therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. <sup>27</sup>For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. <sup>28</sup>You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’ <sup>29</sup>“Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. <sup>30</sup>Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, <sup>31</sup>he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. <sup>32</sup>This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. <sup>33</sup>Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. <sup>34</sup>For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, <sup>£</sup>“The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, <sup>35</sup>until I make your enemies your footstool.’ <sup>36</sup>Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

**Matthew 28:16-20(ESV)** <sup>16</sup>Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. <sup>17</sup>And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. <sup>18</sup>And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in <sup>£</sup> the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

## Order from Chaos

**Genesis 1:1-2:4a (ESV)** <sup>1</sup>In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup>The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. <sup>3</sup>And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. <sup>4</sup>And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup>God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. <sup>6</sup>And God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” <sup>7</sup>And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. <sup>8</sup>And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day. <sup>9</sup>And God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. <sup>10</sup>God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. <sup>11</sup>And God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth.” And it was so. <sup>12</sup>The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. <sup>13</sup>And there was evening and there was morning, the third day. <sup>14</sup>And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, <sup>15</sup>and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. <sup>16</sup>And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. <sup>17</sup>And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, <sup>18</sup>to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. <sup>19</sup>And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day. <sup>20</sup>And God said, “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.” <sup>21</sup>So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. <sup>22</sup>And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” <sup>23</sup>And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day. <sup>24</sup>And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.” And it was so. <sup>25</sup>And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock

according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. <sup>26</sup>Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” <sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. <sup>28</sup>And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” <sup>29</sup>And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. <sup>30</sup>And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. <sup>31</sup>And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. <sup>1</sup>Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. <sup>2</sup>And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. <sup>3</sup>So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation. <sup>4a</sup>These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

Natural disasters are the result when the forces of nature don't behave the way that we consider normal. Uncontrolled wild fires turning the landscape into dark patches of blackened earth, tornados spiraling down from the skies leaving long and wide paths of devastation and upheaval, and tsunami and other flood waters crashing over and washing away personal property. All these so-called “acts of God” have made countless people homeless and have left their indelible mark on the lives of an untold number of folks. Property damage is in the billions of dollars just from the natural disasters nearly every spring. An untold number of lives lost. And every year for the foreseeable future, we'll have these natural disasters from which to recover. And this brief account hasn't even taken into account the damage from hurricanes, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions. The residents of planet earth have seen, and experienced, the chaos, disruption, and destruction that natural disasters inflict on us year after year.

Yet even with all this property destruction and upheaval in the lives of so many, people continue to go on. They repair the damage, rebuild their homes and businesses, replace the ruined items, and restore some semblance of order to the chaos left behind. In many situations, an uninformed visitor to these one-time areas of upheaval would never suspect from what he or she was seeing now that there had ever been such severe and widespread damage there. We're grown accustomed to bringing order out of

chaos—even when that chaos is of our own making. Rioting, looting, and other such acts do their best to destroy the tranquility surrounding us.

Back before time, as we know it, even existed—back in the “beginning”—God brought order out of chaos to the planet and universe that we call home. Contrary to the somewhat popular scientific “Big Bang” theory that attributes our environment’s existence to an exploding micro dot, the Bible says that the earth was without form and void—and darkness prevailed. And out of this formless void, God created the heavens, the earth, light, stars, moon, and the entire universe. The environment that would sustain life was all in place when the Lord God brought humankind into existence. Our ancestors never saw or experienced the formless void that was to become the home of the entire human race. God had brought about Order from Chaos.

Yes, out of nothing but chaos, God brought everything good into existence. The entire creation account reveals an orderly and strict attention to detail account of how God formed all things. The Creator begins by bringing the heavens and the earth into existence. Next comes light and darkness, the sky, separation of the waters, vegetation, sun and moon, living creatures in the water and birds in the air, land creatures, and finally man is created. All this was done in six regular, 24-hour days. God blessed all He had created. On the seventh day, God rested—or ceased His creative work.

We understand that when creation first took place, everything and everyone was perfect. There was no sin, no discord, no disbelief, no disharmony, and no chaos. Everything was in perfect order and everyone got along. Everything operated the way it was supposed to work; nothing was broken. Death was not even an imaginable concept. Man, animals, fish, birds, and all of creation flourished together. Man was given seed-bearing fruit to eat; other creatures were given green plants to eat. The animals didn’t eat one another or man—and man didn’t eat them. All of creation existed on vegetation. Not a single part of all creation had any difficulty whatsoever with another part. Everything fit together and flourished as the Creator intended.

Yet, we are painfully aware that this perfection didn’t last. Our initial ancestors were created in the image of God, but they were tempted to go after something that would supposedly transform them beyond their current perfection. Foolishly, they not only listened to the Tempter’s proposition, but acted upon it. This forbidden act brought sin and death into the world and placed humankind under Satan’s power. Perfection was discarded; imperfection was the legacy our first parents passed on to their children—and ultimately to us.

A television commercial some time ago asserted that “image is everything.” Corporations spend millions of dollars every year trying to create a positive and attractive image for their companies. Sports stars and celebrities are hired to help create

a certain image. Yet this image can be lost quickly and suddenly with one product that has to be recalled, with one misstep by a corporate executive, with one explosive scandal. The image of God given to Adam and Eve was also lost quickly. One simple act of disobedience destroyed the image our ancestors had. Try as we might, we cannot re-create this image for ourselves. Only God has the power to re-create this image in us. He brings about this necessary transformation through the One He sent to restore His image in us: His Son, Jesus Christ. For us, this image is everything!

But sad to say, many do not believe that Jesus is the answer to our image dilemma. Instead most continue to accept that each of us has the power to make ourselves acceptable to the Almighty—that we can improve our own image through meritorious deeds of one kind or another. These deluded souls apparently believe that some fictitious divinity can be hoodwinked or swayed into accepting our personal efforts as satisfactory compensation—or payback—for our sinfulness. These folks are deaf and blind to any suggestion that they may need a personal Savior from sin, because they firmly believe that everyone can save themselves through personal effort. They have come to accept the premise that imperfect human beings have the inherent power to transform themselves to perfection—or at least close enough to perfection—to make oneself acceptable to God.

Fallen man has basically invented two ways to get into heaven. The most popular way is the way of works righteousness. This approach requires a person to do certain things to make up for the bad things he or she has done. It's sort of like atoning for past misdeeds. The other approach doesn't require any action whatsoever. Following this approach, one just has to believe that God is going to take everyone—or nearly everyone—to heaven. The first approach appeals to those among us who feel they have to do something to be saved, while the second approach appeals to those who really don't want to do anything—but still want to be saved. Most of humanity is following one of these two fictitious pathways to heaven.

The problem with either of these approaches is that they both originated in the mind of man. God the Father Almighty, Creator of the heavens and earth, didn't author either one of these approaches. Instead, He authored another approach—another way—that humanity is to follow. God determined that the only way for anyone to be saved is to have a personal Savior from sin, death, and the devil. He sent this Savior into the world in the person of Jesus Christ. With His perfect life, death, and resurrection, Jesus paid the full price required for our sinfulness—the restoration of our fallen image. The way back to the perfection that God had initially created can be obtained only through Jesus Christ. Only in and through God's Savior can we be made clean and declared not guilty for Jesus' sake.

In our time—as well as in all times—there have been those who reject the biblical account of creation. In ancient times, the pagans traced the origin of the world to some primordial matter or divine substance from one of their many gods. In more modern times, humankind has chosen to reject these particular myths and substitute evolution in their place. And naturally, modern man doesn't refer to their new way of thinking as myths; rather, now they call it science. Yet, the science—on which natural man appears to place so much emphasis—has many unanswered questions. Namely if evolution is correct, where is the evidence that it is still going on today? Yes, modern man—just like their ancestors did before them—continues to pursue human invented avenues to explain our existence rather than the biblical account of creation. Why? Because if people can be convinced to reject the Creator, then they will easily believe that there is no need for a Savior. And fallen mankind ultimately wants to believe that he or she is in control of his or her own eternal destiny.

For us, the Genesis account of creation explains how everything—except for God—came into existence. The Gospel account explains to us why it was necessary for Jesus to come into the world to be our Savior from sin, death, and the devil. We've heard the story—and we believe what God says to us in His Word. “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth,” and subsequently, in time, He brought you and me into this fallen world. And for our re-creation, He sent Jesus to be our one and only Savior.