

June 19, 2011
 Sermon for Trinity Sunday
 St Peter Lutheran Church
 Bowie, TX
 Larry Knobloch, Pastor
 Genesis 1:1-2:3

¹ In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ² 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. ³ And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴ And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. ⁶ And God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." ⁷ 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. ⁸ And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day. ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. ¹¹ 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. ¹² 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. ¹³ And there was evening and there was morning, the third day. ¹⁴ 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, ¹⁵ and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so. ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, ¹⁸ to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day. ²⁰ 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." ²¹ 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. 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 And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day. ²⁴ 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. ²⁵ 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. ²⁶ 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." ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ 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." ²⁹ 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. ³⁰ 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. ³¹ 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. ¹ Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. ² 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. ³ 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. ⁴ These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens. ¹

¹ *The Holy Bible : English Standard Version.* Wheaton : Standard Bible Society, 2001

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

Amen.

We have reached the Festival of Holy Trinity. This completes what is known as the festival half of the church year and brings us into the time of growth for the church. One of my professors from the seminary, Rev. Dr. David Scaer once said: "We could not have commemorated the Feast of the Holy Trinity any earlier in the church year than today." The death and resurrection of God's Son and the sending of the Holy Spirit complete the picture of the working God for us and the giving of His life for the life of the world.

We celebrate the Trinity, the Triune God. As we said in the Athanasian Creed together this morning, the catholic or universal church, confesses the Triune God, Trinity in Unity, Unity in Trinity. A wonderful, glorious, mighty, sinless, and perfect God, in whose image we were made...in God's image...what does that really mean?

In the beginning, God created all things, out of nothing. The heavens and the earth, the waters, the lands and the things in the waters and on the land. All living things were created by God...out of nothing and everything that was made was pronounced "good". And when God finished all of His creation, including man, He looked at the entire creation as it all had come together and pronounced it "very good". But nowhere else in creation did God create anything in His image other than man, not even the angels, only mankind.

The image of God does not mean that we looked like God or even that we walked or talked like Him, but we were created in righteousness, with the knowledge of God; complete confidence and trust in Him. Sinless, just like God. Mankind knew no evil, only good.

But then, you know what happened from there, as Adam and Eve fell into sin, tricked by the devil, they exercised their free will and directly disobeyed God. On that day, in that instant, that image of God was lost. We no longer have a natural knowledge of a loving God, only of the law that condemns. We no longer have confidence in Him, but we try to take care of things ourselves...sin has marred and broken all creation, including all of us. Yet we still cling to those words "Created in the image of God". We refer back to that in our own imperfect, selfish way. We use it to rationalize our actions on this earth. We misuse this statement as we call out for equal rights saying all are equal, created in the image of God...yet in our sinful nature, do we really see all as equal? Or do the others have to earn their equality in our eyes before we grant them this supposed equality?

As Christians we are quick to cry out against abortion, saying that all life begins at conception but then in our own sinfulness, begin to consider it as an option when an unplanned or embarrassing pregnancy takes place in our own family.

How about the adjectives that we give our neighbors around us? We use adjectives to identify different classes of people, using skin color, ancestry, age or even financial means...we use these adjectives to determine if that person is

worth our time. Whenever we create images to fit our needs of classification, they are a poor image indeed.

We are a fallen people. It's a little hard to look at ourselves and our actions and prejudices...because they really aren't that pretty sometimes. Sin is a dirty, ugly thing.

But God, who created us in His image, does not leave us fallen and broken in our sin. The God who created us, also re-creates and He is restoring His image in us, a fallen and broken race.

We still try to create and fix our image on our own, but only God can create something out of nothing, just as He did in the beginning. After sin entered the world, the image of God was lost...no longer were we sinless, we had lost the image of God, but God had not lost us, He came and continues to come to us in our sinfulness as begins again. Not scrapping the planet and the people that He loves but rather He sent His only Son Jesus Christ, who is the only true image of God, to fulfill the law in our place.

Born of a woman, born under the law so that He could fulfill the law perfectly for us, through no merit or worthiness of our own.

It is in Jesus that our image, that we lost, lives. Jesus is the one who knows the Father ... the one who completely trusts and obeys Him. Jesus is the righteous, sinless Son of God. But Jesus didn't come to restore the image of God on the world for only a time, but for all time. Our Savior takes our sins upon Himself, our punishment and death, and carried them all to the cross, in what

Martin Luther calls a “Happy Exchange” as Jesus gives us His righteousness in exchange for our sinfulness.

Through the Holy Spirit, which proceeds from the Father and the Son, the image of God is again ours. We are made new again by the Holy Spirit, conformed into the image of Christ, who is the image of the Father. This is the work of the Holy Trinity that we celebrate today! God no longer sees sinful human beings but He sees His Sons image that has been given to us, for our salvation.

That work is what today is all about. We celebrate Trinity Sunday not simply to proclaim who our God is, although we certainly do that, but today we celebrate and proclaim all that He has done and continues to do for us. We proclaim that the Holy Trinity is applying Himself to the world, for the life of the world. To restore the image in us, you and I, giving us something that we cannot create. If He didn't give it, we wouldn't have it.

This gives us a new perspective as we look at what we are called to do in the Great Commission, given to us in our Gospel for today as we read in Matthew 28:19-20: *¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

This is not so much about what we are doing as it is about what our Triune God is doing through us. We are merely tools; the voices, hands, and feet may be ours but the work is God's: His water, body, blood, and His Words that come through the Sacraments and the Bible are the means of Grace that restore,

re-create, and make something out of nothing. Creating us, His children in His image once again through His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

We are blessed with forgiveness and we are blessed to serve Him.

Amen.

The Peace of God, which passes all understanding keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Amen.