

Sermon Text for October 19, 2014

by Rev. Robert K. Bronkema

Genesis 1:1-23, Romans 1:18-23

“Maker of Heaven and Earth”

This past week we filled with dirt the area where I tore up the concrete and planted grass seed, on Tuesday, and then Wednesday we got that torrential downpour, just kind of turned everything upside down and put all of our grass seed in bunches along the dirt. We have no control over the weather do we? A lot of times at wedding rehearsals the bride or groom will come up to me and say, put a good word in for us tomorrow that the weather will be nice. I want to answer: “Sorry that’s management, I’m into sales”.

Today we continue our series on the Apostles’ Creed, which is our statement of belief that we proclaim every week. We have seen I believe, in God the Father Almighty, today we look at Maker of Heaven and Earth. Just so you know we are not going to rehash the evolution vs. creation debate. My position is that it is a useless debate because both sides are saying that God created and what the fight is over is the details. It isn’t a scientific description, it is a theological affirmation. The debate reminds me of the two mothers fighting over the baby in I Kings 3 where ultimately the truth, that God created, is jeopardized.

John Calvin stated: We cannot open our eyes without being compelled to see him. Every time our eyes are open, we should be able to see God’s work around us. Sir Isaac Newton said: the marvelous ingenuity of nature is unintelligible except in terms of a belief in God. What God moments have you had when nature took your breath away? Interlachen.

It goes against the grain of reading so much Scripture. Churches now are moving to one verse and then building a story around it. Here we are doing the opposite today, the story is built around the verses. A commentator after pages of insight ended with: nevertheless, in spite of the reams of pages written and the volumes published on Genesis 1, the text should be allowed to speak for itself.

God created. I want you to notice in Genesis that throughout the entire creation account he consistently says: it was good, or it was very good. There is no moment in this account where the opposite of good reveals itself. Even the nighttime and the dark serves a purpose. It is not put within the context of anything that is evil or bad. We were

created and all of nature was created and it was good. That is God's purpose, that is how God works. All that is evil comes later, when we enter the pictures.

Now one of the dangerous religious offshoots if this thought is taken too far is what we see today in those faiths built upon the natural world in which we live and which we see around us. Much of the new age belief structure is established upon a pantheistic, or many God, natural world view which sees God in a flower, or in a bird or in a river, and that signifies for some people God. How many times have we seen a beautiful sunset and said innocently: now that is God. This is not what Paul means in Romans when he states that God is revealed through the things he has made. Paul in Romans is describing the presence of God felt in nature, or nature which testifies or witnesses to God, and then again the Apostles' Creed declares that we believe in a creator God, but it never makes equal God the creator and that which God has created.

God is not nature. God is not a plant, or a flower, or a bird, or the ocean. God has created all of these things, yes, and God's power and glory are proclaimed loudly by all of this wonderful creation, yes, but that is not God. I remember in high school having a debate in English class and one student insisted that the canvas that was nature is all there is to the picture which we call life. I reminded him that there has to be a painter which applies the paint to the canvas, the creator of nature, and that painter would be God.

In Romans he says we are without excuse because we can see the presence and power of God in nature itself. In verse 23 he states that they have exchanged the vehicle of revelation, nature, for the actual revelation. In Acts 17 when Paul is walking around Athens and sees all of the idols and graven images and gods he tells the people I sense you are a very religious people, but I tell you the God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands.

The reason Paul in Romans comes down so hard in these verses, and the reason why it plays a fundamental part of our faith is that if we refuse to acknowledge God as creator we remove ourselves from any possible fellowship with him. If we refuse to recognize God as master, then someone, something else becomes the creator, the master. This is what Paul means when he speaks about idolatry. It begins by denying that God is the creator, the Lord, the maker and thus the one in control of heaven and earth.

If you look at Scripture you will find that the root of human sin is the substitution of something for God. Usually, guess what or who takes the place of God? Guess who

we try to put in the place of God in our lives? You don't know? Ourselves. It began with Adam and Eve, you won't die if you eat that apple, in fact if you eat that apple you will become like God.

Our creed begins our healing, our turning our eyes away from ourselves and toward God by telling us, I believe in God the father almighty, maker of heaven and earth. We must come to the realization that there is no theory out there that states that we created ourselves. We did not create, so our allegiance must be to our creator.

What can really help is that when you pray, stop and remind yourself that you are actually praying to, you are in actual conversation with your creator. The one who knows you so intimately that he was the one who knit you in your mothers womb and knew what you were going to look like even before you were born.

Paul tells us that if God is anything less than our creator, then we are at fault. We have no excuse. Nature proclaims his glory. Acts 14 Paul states that God has not left himself without a witness: giving rains, fruitful season, food. But all of these witnesses all point to a God who is revealed completely for our sake in Jesus Christ. Our belief may begin as we open our eyes and see the creation and give thanks to the creator. From there it leads to our realization that we have made idols in our lives, oftentimes, we are the idols in that we insist on our own way of life. In Christ Jesus we find one who was idol free. Who never allowed God the Father to become another thing in his life, but rather was the thing. Christ Jesus lived a life of obedience to the maker of heaven and earth and in so doing not only showed us the way, but provided us a way through his life, death and resurrection to be in complete communion with the creator in spite of our continual insistence to try to be our own masters.

Believe in God the maker of heaven and earth, and everytime that you see a sunset over the farmlands, or see the sun sparkle off the water, ask yourself if you have exchanged God for something else that is temporary, that we be only part of the creation. Do not give up the creator for the creation. Amen.