

The Faith We Confess
A Series of Sermons Based on the Core Doctrines of the Nicene Creed
Maker of Heaven and Earth: “The Creator of All Things”

Two words came to my mind this week as I began to reflect on the subject that is before us.

First, tangent. In the dictionary its primary definition is that of a straight line that intersects with edge of a curve. It is a mathematical term that is used in geometry. I was terrible in geometry and I have never understood the concept of this definition.

Ironically, my lack of understanding of this word is somewhat like my understanding of creation. There is a whole lot I do not know about it. I feel a little bit like the psalmist David did when he penned his psalm of creation in Psalm 8. We used a portion of this in our call to worship today.

David was blown away by the awesomeness and immensity of God’s creation. He was humbled by the expanse of it. He is taken aback by the fact that God would have made little old insignificant man and actually cared for him and then crowned him as the pinnacle of his creation. There is the sense in this psalm that David reflecting on something that he knows little about, in terms of its immensity, complexity, and awesomeness.

When I consider your heavens,
The work of your fingers,
The moon and the stars,
Which you have set in place,
What is man that you are mindful of him,
the son of man that you care for him?
You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings
and crowned him with glory and honor.

The second definition of tangent is one that I do understand. It means to deviate; to go off track; to diverge from the main point. To go off on a tangent is to “go on a wild goose chase.”

Preachers do this from time to time (of course I never have that problem) and a sermon on God’s creation could easily turn into that, due to the immensity of the subject matter and all the questions it raises. But it is my goal in this message to not go off on a tangent, but to keep the main thing the main thing.

Closely related to this goal of keeping the main thing the main thing is the other word that came to my mind, (*actually a phrase*) when thinking about this sermon- “vain speculation.”

John Calvin, that great Protestant Reformer of the 16th century and the founder of the Presbyterian Church, was quite fond of this phrase. He spoke of man vainly speculating on matters that he knew little about. He sometimes used the phrase to describe the human problem of focusing on questions that were of little practical help (minutia) when it came to the knowledge of God and living the Christian life.

I think one of the chief problems in the Christian community, really even in the secular world, as it concerns the subject of creation is the problem of “vain speculation.” We try to say (*in a very dogmatic way*) that that we know more about the world than we really do. Therefore Christians and non-Christians alike get into fruitless arguments about how old the world actually is, or whether or not God created it in six twenty-four hour days, or whether those six days represented long time periods. The fact of the matter is that a lot of this stuff we cannot and will not know this side of heaven. So in some sense our pursuit of such questions can be “vain speculation” on our part and they can totally miss some of the wider points of truth that **can be** known, and are much more important for us to know in the grander scheme of things.

So I am not here today to get into a squabble about how old or young the earth is, or whether the six days of creation are to be understood as six twenty-four hour days or as long periods of time. The fact of the matter is we cannot know some of these things this side of heaven, regardless of what some theologians and scientists try to tell us.

The Bible tells us that in this world we now see through a “glass darkly” (our vision is blurred), but there will come a day when we shall see “face to face.” In this world we now know only “in part” (our knowledge is partial); but there will come a day when we shall “know fully,” even as we are “fully known.” (I Cor. 13:12-13) In short, when we die and go to be with the Lord there will be much about this world and universe that will finally be unveiled to us.

I say none of this to discourage the pursuit of truth; for that is a good thing that God would affirm in us. God is the author of all truth. Nor do I say any of this so as to imply that there is no truth that can be known with certainty. That would not be true either. God has revealed some crucial things to us, the important stuff, the core stuff, about His creation and we can know it, and that is what I want us to focus upon this morning.

Two Big Truths of Creation

So what can we know for sure? Two main things

First, the Bible tells us that God created the world and all that is in it.

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and earth.” These are the very first words of the Bible. We heard something similar to it in our text from the book of Acts. Paul told the Athenians that God made the world and everything in it. From one man he made every nation of men for the purpose of being in relationship with God.

The Psalmist in Psalm 139 tells us that God created “our inmost being, that he put us together in the womb of our mother, and that we were fearfully and wonderfully made.” God created this world and all that is in it, and he most especially created us humans. We are the pinnacle of God’s creation. According to the Bible it is only we who have been “kissed by God,” so to speak, (“*God breathed into man the breath of life and he became a living being*”) and it is only of we whom it says that “God created man in his image, both male and female he created them.”

What I am saying here is a fundamental, basic truth of the Bible. If you reject this then you really reject everything else that follows in the Bible because everything else that is in this book is predicated on this one thing being true. God created the world. It is this truth that gives life meaning, order, and purpose to the world.

The problem with much of evolutionary theory, *(it's funny how Darwin's theory of evolution has become fact in our public schools and institutions of higher learning)* besides the fact that it cannot give an explanation for the origins of the non-living chemicals that supposedly came together to give birth to the first forms of life, and besides the fact that the fossil records do not seem to support the theory of the macro-evolution of lower forms of life into higher more advanced forms of life. *(In Darwin's day he only had hundreds of fossils to work with and those fossils showed that plants and animals pretty much had remained the same, regardless of the age of the fossil. He hoped that future fossil discoveries would prove his theory to be true that creatures developed in intermediary forms of life, from simple to more complex, but the fact of the matter is that new fossil discoveries have not revealed that to be the case. To the contrary, they show that plants, animals, and humans have pretty much remained the same throughout all the stages of the earth's existence. No quantum leaps. Dogs have remained dogs, fish fish, and humans humans)* Beside these problems, the real problem with the theory of the evolutionary process and trying to understand the origins of the universe apart from the existence of God is that it leads to chaos, loss of meaning, subjective morality, and the taking human life.

How can life have meaning apart from God? How can we have morality apart from God? How can life be treasured apart from God? It can't.

Let's suppose an atheist could make some coherent sense out of the meaning of life, how could it ever be a unified meaning? You see, apart from God the secular atheist gets to decide for himself what the meaning of life is, but so would every other atheist. As a result, what becomes meaning for one atheist could be totally different from another. If one atheist decides that the meaning of life is to grab everything there is to grab in life, all at the expense of other people, but then another atheist decides that the meaning of life is to stay in an altered state consciousness through the use of drugs then we would end up with total chaos in society. It would very much be like the society that is described in the book of Judges where "everyone gets to do what is right in his own eyes." Apart from the belief that there is a Creator God who stands behind this creation and who defines for it what is the meaning and purpose of life we would self-destruct into utter chaos, darkness, and moral relativism. (That's part of our problem today).

Even worse, the greatest problem with understanding this world apart from God is that it leads to the justification of taking human life. If we remove God as the One who stands behind creation, declaring it to be good and giving to it its value, then what's to stop man from taking innocent human life? As sinful creatures we already have enough problems in this world with murder and war, but when you remove God as the source of creation from the minds of people, then what's to stop the floodgates of death and murder from flinging wide open?

Adolph Hitler did not do what he did in Germany in the name of Christianity. He may have duped large portions of the church and the German church (for the most part) may have fell in line with him, but he did not do what he did in the name of Christianity. He did what he did in

name of the secular Darwinism. His embracing of the Darwinian belief of the “survival of the fittest;” the idea that only the strong survive and the weak get weeded out was the very cruxes for his extermination of the Jews. He believed they were weak, inferior creatures; therefore they should be done away with. He attempted to create the perfect Arian race all in the name of Darwin. It was his embracing of the “survival of the fittest” that led him to exterminate not just Jews, but also mentally and physically handicapped people, and other disparaged people. Since these people were considered to be weak, inferior, and a threat to the “gene pool” they were done away with.

The popularity of the modern eugenics movement in the 1920’s and 30’s and its reemergence in our own culture today, with humans trying to create designer babies, can find its justification in the theories of secular Darwinism as well. Dr. John Doe, “I would like to place an order for a baby who is male, blond hair, blue eyes, 6’2”, 195 lbs, perfect IQ, and no health defects. If you get my order wrong I will simply eliminate it (the baby).

The Bible is the antithesis of “the survival of the fittest.” The Bible supports the survival of the weak, the defenseless, the poor, the sick, and the helpless. The worse off one’s situation is, the weaker and helpless they are, the more that person is treasured by the God of the Bible.

Because all life is sacred, the Christian faith (when it’s doing what it’s supposed to be doing) always fights for the human life that is defenseless, unwanted, and deemed useless by society.

Jesus Christ finds the idea of the “survival of the fittest” to be abhorrent. That is why he died on the cross and that is why the church, with almost one unified voice, stands for the sacredness of all human life, whether it is blond-haired, blue-eyed and perfect, or whether it is mentally and physically handicapped; all the way from the womb of the mother to the very last breath that one draws in old age. God is the giver and Creator of all life; therefore only God can take it away.

The second thing that we can know about this world is that God created it “very good.”

Again, the Bible tells us this right from the start. In Genesis, after each day of creation, God declared his creation to be “good.” And then after the six day of creation God looked upon all He had created and he declared it to be “very good.”

This truth should have profound implications in the life of the Christian. It should radically affect how we view our own bodies and the importance of taking care of and not abusing them. This body has been created by God; therefore we ought to read the owner’s manual so as to insure that we don’t do things that would damage it and so that we keep it properly tuned up. Our bodies are a temple of the Holy Spirit and Christians are called to treat it as such.

This doctrine should also profoundly affect how we treat one another. God said that man is created in His image. Do we treat other human beings as such? Think about how some people pet their cars. It’s always shiny and clean. Always tuned up, full of gas, and never low on oil. We need to treat one another in the same kind of way because God has created us in His image. If God has declared us to be “fearfully and wonderfully made” then who are we to treat anyone else any different? We must love and value who God loves and values.

It should also affect the way Christians treat the creation. Creation care is an act of Christian discipleship. God pronounced creation to be “good” and God commanded that we be good stewards over His good creation. A deep grounding and grasping of that Biblical truth should affect how we take care of this world. It is an act of our discipleship.

Being Careful to Not Fall into Error

As we think about this world and what it means for God to declare his creation good we must be careful not to fall into error as we think about such things.

The most common way I see this happening (even in the church) is in the strong efforts of a growing number of people who try to justify actions and inclinations that are contrary to the revealed will of God in scripture.

The whole homosexual/bisexual/transgender debate is the most common way I see this problem playing itself out. It goes like this: God created me. God said I am good. I am also homosexual/bisexual/transgender; therefore my homosexuality, bisexuality, and my transgenderism must be good.

We must remember in our doctrine of creation that there is first the initial act of God’s creation in the beginning (*before the fall of Adam and Eve in the garden*) and then there is that continual act of God’s creating that goes on in the world today after the fall. In other words, God is still in the creating business (*humans, animals, trees, and plants are born every day*) but something has gone terribly wrong. Something has changed since God first declared it to be good.

What has happened is that Adam and Eve sinned in the garden and the consequence for their sin was a pattern of death, brokenness, rebellion, and dissension that entered into the world. That pristine paradise that God initially created has now become damaged goods because of our sin and we who are here today live on that other side of the fall.

We, just like Adam, are created in God’s image and we are declared to be good by God along with everything else in creation, but at the same time we still suffer the effects of the fall in this world.

Our bodies are not perfect, our minds are not perfect, and our desires are not perfect. Sin has taken its effect upon us. Because life is now like this (*post-fall*) we cannot try to justify our brokenness by the fact that God has created us and declared us to be “good.” We are all damaged goods but that is not God’s fault; it is the consequence of our sin and rebellion. This reality takes us to the heart of the gospel because this **is** the reason we need a Savior.

Conclusion

When Humpty Dumpty fell off the wall (Adam) and broke himself into a million pieces he was in need of being put back together again. In Jesus Christ God does this for us; He puts back together the broken pieces of our lives.

Christ does for us what we cannot do. He lives an unbroken life of love and communion before God the Father and he does it **for** us! He is sinless and he substitutes his sinless life in place of our sinful lives and God declares us to be righteous on his account when we believe in him.

Even greater, Jesus pays the price that is owed for our sin by his death the cross. He does more than just live a perfect life; he goes to the cross for us so that we won't have to pay the price for our sins. This is how he puts us back together again and the Bible tells us that when God begins this new work in our lives that he will carry it to completion until the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Phil. 1:6)

Our God and Father, the Maker of heaven and earth, wants to remake all that is broken in our our lives through his Son the Lord Jesus Christ. Would you believe on him today?

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.