

**Genesis 1:1-2:3**

***In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup> Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. <sup>3</sup> And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. <sup>4</sup> God saw that the light was good, and he 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 between the waters to separate water from water." <sup>7</sup> So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so. <sup>8</sup> God called the expanse "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day. <sup>9</sup> And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. <sup>10</sup> God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good. <sup>11</sup> Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. <sup>12</sup> The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. 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 sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, <sup>15</sup> and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so. <sup>16</sup> God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. <sup>17</sup> God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, <sup>18</sup> to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from 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 water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." <sup>21</sup> So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. <sup>22</sup> God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase 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 land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so. <sup>25</sup> God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. <sup>26</sup> Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth,<sup>b</sup> and over all the creatures that move along the ground." <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> God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." <sup>29</sup> Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. <sup>30</sup> And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so. <sup>31</sup> God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. <sup>2</sup> By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. <sup>3</sup> And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.***

## ***Find rest and peace and security in the love of our Triune God***

A father desires to provide for his children. He wants to give his children what is good and what they need. He is careful to provide for them, to care for them. A father has his children in mind and he is invested in them and their well being. He cares about his children and it shows in the decisions that he makes and the actions that he takes as each day goes by. A father is willing to counsel his children and offer them instruction. He gives his sons and daughters wisdom and direction, and then he simply takes time to be with them.

This certainly could be the job description of any father. These are things that, as a father, you hope that you achieve. These are things that you hope that fathers in your church, in your neighborhood, and throughout the world would be able to accomplish. But today we take special notice of how this description fits our God, our Father in heaven.

As God created this world we can see an underlying desire to provide for his children in everything that he does. A careful look at these words from Genesis reveals that in every day of creation, in every aspect of his creating work, God proceeds with mankind in mind. He wants to provide for his children. He wants to give us what is good and what we need for generations to come. Mankind is not some sort of afterthought. You are not merely some creature that came as a result of some cosmic coincidence. No, God created mankind as the crown of his creation. He created the world as the home for his children. And he filled that home with many different things that his children could have and enjoy.

God had a loving desire to provide man with what was good and what he would need. He took that which was without order and form and in a careful progression and with unmatched craftsmanship he made the earth into our home. With a simple command from his lips, he created light, and the sky above and the earth below, as well as the bodies of water that stand and flow between. He did this all with mankind in mind. As he creates all life, he also develops life to be sustained for the generations that were to come. He created all of this, this whole world that so effortlessly supplies and also sustains the life that we need. And to think he accomplished all of this for us in just six 24 hour days by means of his almighty word. He spoke and it simply came to be.

He made this place that we call home and then he filled this world with living things for his children to have, to enjoy, and to care for. And then when this dwelling place was built, and filled, and ready, the triune God took special attention to form man from the earth. The rest of creation was formed simply by his command, but now he paused to engage in a solemn discussion as he approached the formation of this most significant piece of his creation. God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, declared, ***“Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”*** In perfection our Triune God seemed to bend down and form with his own hands the first man from the dust of the earth. In love he then placed the man and then his bride in the perfect world that he had created for them. He blessed them and as a Father he spoke and gave his children blessed counsel and direction. As he spoke to the first man he spoke to all that would come after him. *Rule over and care for the creatures in this land. Partake of the land and its fruit that I give to you.* God stated clearly what his purpose was in designing his highest creature. Man was to manage and care for the earth as he served God. That remains our calling to this day. God made all of this with us in mind. We are to see all that we are

and have as a blessing from his hand and then we are to live out our lives in service to him. God formed and created the first human beings as the crown of his creation. And then after he created everything in this place we call home he paused to rest and to consider what he had done.

On this day of spiritual rest, as we come together to commune with God in worship, let us consider what our God has done. Let us find rest and peace in his creating work. We are not just some creatures that somehow emerged from the chaos and found our way to the top of the food chain. We are not a bunch of animals with no real purpose or direction as we wander through this existence. Mankind was created by a loving Father to be the crown of his creation. This world did not just come about by chance, but this whole world was created with us in mind. Our God, our creator, our Father desires to care for us his children. He wants to provide for us. We are special to him. And he has a purpose for us. We can find great rest and peace and security in these truths. We find rest in our Father's care: in the way that he created us, in the way that he provides for us.

Consider for a moment what it would mean if what they teach in many classrooms was true. What if we were just another creature? What if this life is nothing but unordered chaos and your only purpose is to survive? Then we would have no obligation to our God or to our neighbor even. We would have no clear purpose but to serve ourselves. Life would be a rather meaningless existence as it would no more than an exercise of survival until our time is up. The thought is extremely unsettling and this false teaching, this false belief, has robbed far too many people of the clarity and peace that God desires for all his people.

But the loving care of our Father gives us his children rest and peace. He gives us the restful security that comes from his clarity of purpose. We are put at ease when we see his love demonstrated in his careful crafting of his creation. We feel loved and cared for as we hear his calming voice in his measured words of assurance in his Holy Scriptures, He gives us restless creatures rest and peace and purpose. We are his special creatures, more than that, we are his children. We have been created by God to serve and honor Him and to care for his creation. What wonderful care and concern God demonstrated in his creation of our race! What a blessing it is for us to live in this home that God has made for us! What a high calling the Lord has given us that we may honor, praise, and serve our God as we live out our lives here on this earth!

While you and I might not buy into the theory of evolution, thanks be to God, we do find ourselves periodically wandering into its mindset and such carelessness occasionally shows up in the way that we live. We don't always consider or fulfill our high calling, do we? We don't always act the way that God intended children to act. No, many times the sinful nature in us overlooks what God has done. We forget our place and our purpose, and like some kind of disobedient child or untrained animal we crave and we chase only after what we desire. We lose sight of the fact that our purpose is to serve our God and we seek to serve ourselves.

But thankfully, our God, who is our creator, is also our sanctifier and he is our blessed redeemer. The triune God, who paused to declare his intention to form the first man, is the one who decided that he would come down to earth to save mankind when we fell into sin. He cleanses us from our sins by his precious blood. He restores us through his righteousness. He makes us worthy of paradise once again. The Father who created us, the Son who came to redeem us, and the Holy Spirit who gives us faith to believe: this is who our God is. He, however, is not three separate beings. He is one God yet three distinct persons, who works in perfect communion to create, to redeem, and to make holy through the gift of faith. This is the mystery of our eternal God: he is perfectly three in one. He is triune and we praise him.

At district convention this past week one of our presenters, Pastor Jonathan Hein, challenged us to think a bit differently about the price that our God paid to redeem us and set us

free and save us. Often we think of the suffering that our Savior endured as being measured in blood and pain and physical suffering. It certainly is true that our Savior suffered greatly in this regard; but what about the profound emotional pain and absolute anguish that our God willingly put himself through to save us? The triune God had always – even before time began – had always enjoyed perfect unity and harmony as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But God willingly gave that up for a time to suffer for us. Consider the agony of the Son as he suffered the wrath of the Holy God on the cross for our sins. Consider Jesus' absolute agony when God the Father with whom the Son had enjoyed perfect unity – suddenly had forsaken him. No wonder he cried out, **“My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?”**

Can you imagine that kind of pain? Pastor Hein came up with the following illustration to help us begin to consider what this must have been like.

*If a complete stranger said that he hated me and never wanted to see me again it would bother me, but I would probably get over it in a few days. But what if I came home one day and my son met me at the door and said in absolute sincerity, “I don’t like you anymore and I never want to see you again.” Or what if my wife - with whom I am so intimately connected - what if I came home one day and she said, “I don’t love you anymore. I don’t want to see you ever again.” And then she just packed up her things and left. It would be absolutely crushing, so terribly devastating, wouldn’t it!*

Consider the price that our God paid to save us! The one who enjoyed perfect communion, absolute and eternal harmony, with the Father and the Spirit, the one who was with God at the beginning and joined with the Father and the Spirit in creation, he willingly left that joy, he willingly gave up that harmony and became one of us, in order to save us. The one who spoke and it came to be, spoke words of agony from the cross as he was punished, and separated from the love of God, in our place. He was crushed physically and emotionally for our transgressions. This is how much your God loves you. The one who created you saves you and gives you faith to believe in this love that is so beyond our understanding.

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the triune God created this beautiful home for us his children. He carefully planned out everything in his creation with us in mind. And then when the prized piece of his creation fell into sin he carefully planned out our salvation. God the Son would leave the comfort and joy and harmony of heaven and he would suffer unspeakable pain so that our harmony with God might be restored. And God the Holy Spirit has sent out his word into our hearts so that he might bring us to believe these remarkable truths and serve him with thankfulness and joy. Like a loving father, the Lord speaks calming words of assurance to us so that we may believe that we his dear children. We have been created to serve him now, and we will one day enjoy perfect harmony with him forever. How amazing the love of God the Son! How remarkable the gift of God the Holy Spirit, that we might believe this and be saved! How graciously our Heavenly Father provides for and cares for his children! Dear friends let us find rest and peace and security in the love of our Triune God! Amen.