

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² 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.

³ And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴ God saw that the light was good, and he 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 between the waters to separate water from water." ⁷ So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so. ⁸ God called the expanse "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.

⁹ And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. ¹⁰ God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good.

¹¹ 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. ¹² 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. 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 sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, ¹⁵ and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so. ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, ¹⁸ to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from 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 water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." ²¹ 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. ²² 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." ²³ And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.

²⁴ 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. ²⁵ 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.

²⁶ 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, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ 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."

²⁹ 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. ³⁰ 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. ³¹ God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

***2** Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. ² By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. ³ 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.*

The Triune God is the God of Creation and Redemption

1. God prepared creation for its crown
2. God redeemed the fallen crown of creation

The God we worship is the Triune God. Our God is the Trinity. These words, Triune and Trinity, are really a combination of the numbers three (tri) and one (unum, which we get our word *unity*). Some other religious sects scoff at our teaching of the Triune God. They say, "That word triune doesn't even exist in the Bible." And they're right. It doesn't. This term *triune* was a word that the early Christians invented to accurately communicate what the Bible teaches about our God. The Bible teaches that there is one God. The Bible also teaches that there are three persons in the one God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. How that is possible is beyond human understanding. It is a divine mystery. But God's Word tells us it's true. Some think this teaching is just a bunch of verbal gymnastics, an unnecessary splitting of hairs that does nothing but confuse and divide people over who God is. But nothing could be further from the truth. God revealed himself to us as the Trinity— as the three-in-one God— because it gives us terrific insight into the love that God has for us. This morning we see the Triune God's great love for us already at the creation of the world. We also see the Triune God's love for us by redeeming the world back from sin.

This morning's lesson takes us back to the beginning. Not just a beginning. But *the* beginning. Before the event which Moses recorded in Genesis 1:1 nothing existed except God. Time didn't even exist. Only God existed in eternity. But then "**In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.**" Out of nothingness God brought forth everything. But God didn't instantly create the world in the form and shape which we see and experience today. Moses says the "**earth was formless and empty.**" There was more creative work to be done.

Furthermore, God reveals to us in his holy Word that this creative work was done by the Triune God. We often think of God the Father being the person responsible for the creation. He certainly was. In fact, that's what we confess in the Apostles' Creed: I believe in God the Father Almighty, the maker of heaven and earth. It wasn't, however, the Father alone who made the world. All three persons of

the Trinity are active in the creation. Moses records for us that “**the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters**” of this formless and empty earth. The Son of God was there, as well. The apostle John tells us in the first verses of his Gospel: “**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.**” **Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.**” John is speaking about Jesus. So when Moses writes, “**And God said, ‘Let there be,’**” we understand that Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, is the powerful, creating Word that brought all things into being. The undivided Triune God is the God of creation.

You have to ask yourself, “Why did our Triune God create the world as he did, one day at a time, so to speak?” Why didn’t he just do it all at once? God is trying to tell us something. Our God is a God of order. And he used the six creating days to bring the disorder of the formlessness and the emptiness into order. He wanted to make it very clear that he was ordering and preparing this world for something very important. And that something very important is us. God created this world for us humans. We are the crown of his creation. You see, our God is a God of love. He wanted to create something to which he could show his love. He wanted to love us.

The orderliness of God’s creation outlines God’s love for us. The first day God made light-he created daytime and nighttime. The second day God created the expanse, the sky-a vertical separation of the waters-because God knew we would need an atmosphere in which to live. The third day God created dry land and seas-a horizontal separation of waters-because God knew that we would need dry land on which to live. He also created plants on the third day. He is beginning to fill out the empty dry land. God knew we would need plants for food and shelter. Then God created the sun and the moon and the stars on the fourth day. God knew we would need these things to give order to our seasons, to give us a time to plant and a time to harvest. On the fifth day God created birds and fish, things that would fill in the empty sky and the empty seas. And on the sixth day God created animals to further fill up the dry ground.

And then, when everything was prepared, when everything was good and in order, God brought forth the crown of his creation-human beings. Notice the special way that he did it. God doesn’t just say the words, “Let there be” like he had with everything else. To show that humans are very close to God’s heart, the three persons of the Trinity engage in a solemn conversation. “**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, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’**”

It was perfect. Everything God made was declared very good. In this state of perfection, Adam and Eve, the crown of God’s creation, enjoyed a perfect relationship with God. That’s why God set aside that seventh day. It was a day of rest. It wasn’t a day when God had to recover from all the hard work which he did on the six previous days. Scripture tells us in another place that God never rests in this way. He doesn’t get tired. He is always preserving the world with his mighty hand. But God set apart that seventh day as a day to commemorate the joy God found in his creation and to commemorate the joy Adam and Eve felt toward God because of the great things God had done for them. God set apart that seventh day because he wanted to celebrate how it was always supposed to be between himself and his creation. The blessings of that seventh day-the blessings of rest and communion between God and man- were supposed to continue forever.

But that is not the world in which we live. The perfection didn’t last forever. Eve was deceived by the serpent. She doubted God’s Word and ate the fruit. Instead of steering his wife away from trouble, Adam took the fruit and also ate. Sin entered the world. It ruined God’s perfect creation. It ruined Adam and Eve’s perfect relationship with God. The crown had been broken. Ever since that time, sin has had its grip on this world and has been forcing it into a downward spiral that leads to death. We experience that downward spiral, don’t we. God had created us to rule over his creation with care and love. But many times we do just the opposite. We carelessly throw away. We waste our resources. We waste our time. We mistreat the bodies of others. We mistreat our own bodies. We can be very poor stewards of the things our Lord has given to us. Because of sin, we have lost our spiritual rest. We deserve nothing but the spiritual unrest of God’s eternal wrath.

Our God, however, doesn’t want us to face his wrath. God wants us to regain the communion and fellowship which Adam and Eve once had with him. God wants us to have spiritual rest. We cannot even begin to understand that. Usually, when something has been ruined, when it has been made worthless, you get rid of it, you throw it out. That is not what our God did. When we became worthless because of sin, God didn’t throw us out. He didn’t destroy us on the spot like he rightly could have. He continued to love us. He made a promise to us. “**Though you are filthy like garbage, I want to make you clean. You are mine. I will not leave you.**”

God spent thousands of years reminding his Old Testament people that the promised Savior was coming. One of the ways he did that was with the Old Testament Sabbath day. In the Law of Moses God commanded that the Israelites do no work on the seventh day of the week-the Sabbath day. It was a day of rest. That Sabbath day was supposed to remind the people how they had lost their perfection and their spiritual rest with God because of sin. They no longer had what Adam and Eve celebrated on the seventh day of creation. But even more than that, the Sabbath day reminded the Israelites that the Savior was coming. The physical rest of the Sabbath day reminded them that they would find spiritual rest in the promised Savior.

You and I live on the other side of that promise of the Savior, the New Testament side. We don’t need to observe that Old Testament Sabbath day of rest anymore. We know the fulfillment of the spiritual rest to which the Sabbath day pointed. We know how our Triune God has redeemed us from sin. We know the great love which God the Father demonstrated to the world. He was willing to give up his one and only Son for it. We know how Jesus, the true God who created the world, humbled himself and became a man. We know how he died on the cross to pay for our sins and how he rose from the dead to conquer death in our place. We know how God the Holy Spirit works faith in our hearts through Word and Sacrament.

Our Triune God has given us the certainty that we will be restored to live in perfect fellowship with him-just as Adam and Eve did in the Garden. We will live in the blessings of that seventh day of creation. And it will never be lost. God has given us spiritual rest, and it will last forever. Amen.