

June 11, 2017, Holy Trinity Sunday

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**Focus:** God makes us good.

“Why did God create the mosquito?” Melissa Dunn asked me this a while ago after a sermon about creation. “Why did God create the mosquito?” Now I was stumped. The truth is we don’t love them. Mosquitoes buzz around, they irritate your skin, they carry deadly viruses, they literally *suck your blood*. We hate them so much that we spray gases like DDT often at a real cost to the environment. So I think at the time, I just said, “Because they feed bats?” Well, Melissa, if you’re hoping for better, I think I may disappoint you. “Why did God create the mosquito?” All I can say is, stop me if you’ve heard this before, “Because he said so.”

Today is Trinity Sunday. It is a weird Sunday because the Holy Trinity is another one of those mysteries that is just really hard to understand. We believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and yet, as we will repeat time and again a few minutes from now in the Athanasian Creed, “there are not 3 gods, but one who is god.” I will let that Creed explain the technicalities as only it can, but for me the important thing is who God is, not in the abstract, but who God is *for us* and what God has done *for us*.

And to me, that story has to begin “in the beginning” with Genesis 1. I think it is one of the most beautiful ways to tell about how all this got here. One of the things that has always grabbed my attention about this passage is that there appears to already be some raw material to work with, but it’s a mess. What does Genesis say the earth was? A formless void. In Hebrew, “tohu v’vohu.” The idea is it’s a complete mess. Chaos. I always think of tohu v’vohu as being like my bedroom when I was growing up. Dirty clothes strewn over the floor, books and baseball cards lying around collecting dust, unmade bed, a complete fire hazard, and let’s not get into the smell. Tohu v’vohu, a complete mess, you get the idea.

And to this tohu v’vohu, this complete mess, what happens? God speaks. 3 simple words in English. **Let. There. Be.** First, God speaks, and day breaks the darkness. God speaks again, and a brilliant blue sky canopies over the vast ocean, as puffy clouds balloon in the air. God speaks, and out of the ocean rises land: islands at first, and then great big continents, and then skyscraping mountain ranges that pierce the clouds and look down over the valleys and rivers and seas below. God speaks and seeds fall into the ground and slowly up come the little flowers: tulips and daffodils and dandelions, but it doesn’t stop there, up comes corn and tomatoes and then the big maples and strong oaks all the way up to redwoods so big you can drive your car right through them. God speaks and the sun blazes yellow and orange and red, and the moon hangs suspended in the sky like a clock, and the stars take their place and connect the dots into constellations like Orion and the Big Dipper and the Pleiades. God speaks and minnows go to school, and whales breach, and eagles perch in their eyries. God speaks, and cows and sheep, but not just them, giraffes and hippos and dogs (and cats) and rhinos and wolves and bears and monkeys and people take their first breaths. The earth: no longer tohu v’vohu, but teeming with plants and animals, with busy-ness, with life, with be-ing. And as a mosquito can be heard to buzz around, God looks at everything that he made, and indeed, it was very good.

Do you believe that? Do you believe that all of this is very good? On the whole, we are tempted to say “yes.” But what about all those things that we don’t like very much? What about the parts of the world too hot or cold to live in? What about poison ivy? What about snow and SLEET? What about those animals that we don’t like? What about mosquitoes!?

The only answer I can give once again is, “because God said so.” And his words aren’t cheap. The God of the universe: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the God whose words bring into existence the things that do not exist, the God who says “let there be” and there is, that God has looked at all this closely, he’s inspected it, and he has said “this is very good.” When God speaks, it happens. What God speaks is true.

God said, “let us make human beings in our own image,” and what happened? “...in the image of God he created them: male *and* female he created them.” But this, it turns out, is hard to understand because the thing is: so often we don’t reflect that image of God.

If we want to be realistic about creation, we need to be realistic about ourselves. God called us to be fruitful, and we have entire industries devoted to screens and entertainment: from harmless social media to pornography that not only wastes time, but seems to take us out of that creation. God called us to multiply, and we let people go hungry, and we kill, and we make war. God called us to have dominion over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living thing, and we exploit them, creating an age of extinction. God creates life with words of freedom “let there be,” and we use our words to force people, to hurt people, to win arguments, to gossip, to slander, to yell and threaten, to lie, to tempt people, and even to blaspheme God.

Does that look like the image of God? Or does that look like sin? Ask refugees fleeing from warzones whether humanity looks so godlike. Ask the forests. Ask the words written in God’s law and the prophets. The truth is that we have made a real mess.

We have left only the words of Scripture: “And God saw everything that he had made, and indeed it was very good.” The important question then is, in a world scarred with sin, do you believe that God’s creation is still very good? Do you believe that you’re very good? Do you believe that no matter what you’ve done—to your loved ones, to your friends, to your co-workers, to the earth, to your body, to yourself that God still looks at you and says you’re very good? Do you believe that when you feel guilty or depressed or sinful or ugly or dumb or scared or unworthy that God still looks at you and says you’re very good? No matter who you are or what your story is, God counts every hair on your head. And even when you feel like you’re a real mess, he loves you, and you are very good in God eyes. Why? Because he said so. Imagine for a second, God saying to you, by your name, “\_\_\_\_you are very good.”

And it’s better. Not only does God say that. But when that image of God was so distorted by sin that no one would recognize it. When we had made a real mess, God made himself into our image. The Holy Trinity is all about that God. The Holy Trinity tells us that God did not just create the world, call it good, and call it a day. He didn’t forget about you or any of us. But in Jesus Christ, that God came once again to live in this creation. To experience the ups-and-downs of our day-to-day existence, to live in a world that’s a mess, a world that would crucify the Son of God, but a world that God still calls very good. A world that is good enough for Jesus Christ to give his life for, and to rise for. God has chosen to work with this mess because he loves it,

and he loves us. And we as human beings are good enough in his eyes to be taken into his heart: the very heart of God: and to experience there God's wonderful joy and goodness.

Jesus Christ, the same God who created the cosmos: from the Milky Way to the elephants to the mosquitoes looks at you and from the cross we put him on says, whatever you have done, "you are forgiven." However unlovable you may feel, "I love you." "*You are very good to me.*"

We have received his Spirit. A Holy Spirit of the God who is still speaking and whose words still mean what they say: a Spirit who in this church speaks, "you are forgiven," and your sins are forgotten, a Spirit who speaks, "this is my body," and we eat, a Spirit who speaks, "I baptize you," and you are born as a child of God, and a Spirit who looks to the promises of God's restoration and renewal of creation in the coming kingdom and speaks three words: "Let. It. Be."

Let it be, Lord, according to your word. And on that day, God will look at everything he has made, everything he has forgiven, and everything he has loved: at you, and at me, and indeed all will be very good. Because he said so. **Amen.**