

MINISTRY BY MAIL
Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship
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Second Sunday After Trinity, June 13, 2021

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)

Hymns: 8, 237:1, 385: 1-4, 39, 366:2.

Lessons: Genesis 1: 1 – 2: 3, Hebrews 1: 1-13, John 17: 15-26

Sermon Text: Hebrews 11: 1-3.

Sermon by Pastor Robert Mehlretter

In the name of Jesus Christ, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

How did all things come into being? It is part of your confession that you believe that “God created all things”.

Last Sunday you heard God tell us that *“faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.”* The creation of all things is one thing we accept on faith. God says one thing and men have a number of different ideas. One of these is man’s theory of evolution. Evolution requires a great deal of faith. It hasn’t been proven, least of all by the steps of the so-called scientific method. Yet many people accept evolution “on faith”. However, we who believe that the Bible is God’s Word, accept and believe another method for how all things came into being. That is the doctrine of creation.

The very first line of the Bible presupposes and demands faith. No one else was there when *“the universe was formed,”* only the eternal God, and he has recorded what took place. It was *“at God’s command”* that the heavens and the earth and everything in them came into being

Only by faith can we accept that everything we see around us was not made out of things visible to us. We place our trust not on what others who were not there have to say, but on what the one who was there has been pleased to tell us. Could the author have found a better example of faith? Today, let’s talk about

CREATION

1. *“The universe was formed at God’s command,*
2. *So that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.”*

Charles Darwin’s book On the Origin of Species in 1859 shook up a lot of people. Until that time in history, many people, and most Christians truly believed in creation, or at least didn’t challenge God’s teaching of creation. In the Renaissance – generally the 1300s through the 1500s – there was a shift from a God-centered world to a world centered around man. Darwin’s theories challenged a literal understanding of the Bible and since that time, evolution has taken a tremendous hold on society.

You may wonder, how could man reject God’s beautiful truth about creation? We find a reason in God’s own words in Romans: *“For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.”* (Romans 1:20-23 NIV)

Students of the Bible have recognized that even in literature, before Darwin, there seemed to most often be an assumption of creation of the world by even writers of fiction. Since Darwin there is just the opposite: an underlying assumption of evolution. Such ideas as evolution, not only in literature, have had a profound effect on the world.

For example, if man is merely an animal which has evolved higher than some other animals, then there is no real foundation or basis or reason for any moral behavior on his part. Then there is no reason for him to do “the right things” or avoid “the wrong things”. If man has evolved, then the chief reason for his existence is to be concerned only about himself, enjoy life, and to live life to the fullest. Any concern for others would exist or grow only to the extent that it would affect his own well-being, success, and personal good.

Evolution usually suggests very slow changes over a very, very long time. Because of that, those who believe in evolution and choose to reject God’s fact of creation – cannot really “prove” evolution. We are told about events that occurred “millions of years ago”, or things that occurred over a period of “hundreds of millions of years” or longer. In fact, just up the Minnesota River Valley at Granite Falls you can see and touch rocks supposedly among the oldest on earth – allegedly 3 billion, 800 million years old. Evolutionists tend to make lots of assumptions. There are even people like the public high school biology teacher who said that he believes in “creation”, and he then explained that God created things over 6 eons – meaning very long periods of time, which is really an evolutionary theory, really rejecting exactly what God said. God said he created all things in 6 days – and the Bible means 6 24-hour days! Even churches tolerate the idea of combining aspects of creation with evolutionary ideas, thus rejecting what God really says and really meant. All these things are part of the devil attacking God’s truths with lies and half-truths – and a half-truth is really just a lie.

To a certain point we can prove “creation”, but it is more a matter of disproving other things. We can argue against myths like the idea of the world actually being on the back of a turtle, and some of the other picturesque fables men have about the origin of mankind and all that surrounds him. We can argue against the evidence used by evolutionists, and point out that events after the eruption of Mount Saint Helens in 1980 have shown that some geologic events which supposedly took millions of years to occur could have occurred in a matter of mere days or years.

If I am stubborn enough, I can choose to believe what I want to and you can’t prove otherwise to me well enough to refute my erroneous beliefs. And aren’t we all stubborn in some ways like that? If a person doesn’t want to believe what God says, that person just won’t believe! And, of course, the end result is eternal damnation in hell.

But ultimately, creation is a matter of faith. By faith we believe in creation. Even a dictionary will define the word create as meaning “to bring into being, to cause to exist”. From what God tells us about the creation of the world, the universe, all things, we would emphasize that “create”, as God uses the word, means to “to bring into being out of nothing, to cause to exist when and where nothing at all existed before”.

How did God create things? He used his word. He “said”. Can any of us do that? “Let there be smoke.” “Let there be fire.” “Let there be a rock here where there was none before.” Of course not. But then there is something called “magic”. As children we may be deceived into believing that magicians can make things appear out of nothing: A colored scarf or many colored scarves appear to come out of someone’s pocket, the rabbit or the birds appearing to come out of the hat. Changing a five-dollar bill into a 50 dollar bill. Where did those things come from? How do magicians do the things they do? As we grow older, we realize that such things are merely a matter of trickery or sleight of hand or deception of other kinds. People are fascinated by magic and what magicians seem to do.

If we think of the influence that the man-made theory of evolution has had on all things, we can almost begin to think of it as magic, as sleight of hand, of deception. Surely many aspects of man’s theories of evolution almost make us think of magicians and how they trick people. How can someone “prove” something that supposedly happened millions of years ago?

God works faith in us to believe. This faith comes from hearing the Word of God, as we read in Romans: ***“Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.”*** (Romans 10:17 NIV)

We cannot see how all things came into being. God tells us. ***“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for. By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.”***

We “understand”, that is, we comprehend, we have a mental grasp of how the universe – all things, the world, the heavens we see – was formed. ***“By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s***

command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.” Hebrews 11:3 (NIV) We could not understand or know if God had not told us.

What we see was not made out of anything visible. This is what makes the “creating” of an artist different than the “creating” of God. An artist will start with a bucket of clay, or a block of stone, or paper and ink and paint to come up with his “creation”. There was nothing before God created it. ***“Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep.”*** (Genesis 1:2 NIV)

All that we see today – the huge wonders of nature that we can see at the mountains or at the ocean beach, the tiny wonders of nature that we can only see through a microscope – all of it was created by God’s simply saying so. If you can see the beauty in nature around you – the birds at your bird feeder, the pets you love, the hills and lakes and all of creation, can you imagine how much God loves you, to have made you the greatest being in all this creation?

So why was this done? ***“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”*** (John 3:16-17 NIV) Make no mistake: Man is the gem, the jewel of God’s creation. Despite his wickedness in disobeying God – once shortly after creation to bring sin into the world and every day, continuously, repeatedly since then – Mankind is loved by God. Each one of you was created by God at your conception, grew for nine months in your mother’s womb, and have grown since then. Despite your original sin and the actual sins you commit each day, God loves you, personally, and individually. God sent Jesus Christ to redeem you, and promised you a perfect “creation”, a “new creation”, a “new heaven and a new earth” after your life in this evil, sin-filled world. That perfect creation will be yours throughout all eternity through faith in Jesus Christ your Savior from your sins!

This very letter to the Hebrew Christians has this beautiful introduction ***“In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.”*** (Hebrews 1:1-3 NIV)

How did God create all things? Through his Word. The Spirit of God was there too. So from the first verses of Scripture we have the teaching of the triune God: Father, Holy Spirit, and Son: ***“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 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. And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light.”*** (Genesis 1:1-3 NIV) And of course we have that picture explained in the first chapter of John’s Gospel: ***“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He [the Word] was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men.”*** And then about ten verses later, John explains exactly who this “Word” was: ***“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”*** (John 1:14 NIV) God made you the highest being of all he created! Praise and honor God for all his creation! Amen.