



[Rev. Steven S. Billings](#)

Sermon for Trinity Sunday

June 15, 2025

Creation, Re-Creation

Acts 2:14a, 22–36

¹⁴ But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them:

²² “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—²³ this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. ²⁴ God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

²⁵ For David says concerning him, “I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; ²⁶ therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. ²⁷ For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. ²⁸ You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’

²⁹ “Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, ³¹ he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. ³² This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. ³³ Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.

³⁴ For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, “The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, ³⁵ until I make your enemies your footstool.” ’

³⁶ Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

We should never underestimate the importance of Creation. The Bible doesn't begin with the beginning just because it makes sense to begin at the beginning. What happens at the beginning, namely, the *beginning* – the Creation account – sets forth what God does in His most important work, which is *re-Creation*. Scripture begins with creation because that is the story of salvation. The creation account is inseparably linked with the account of redemption.

Today we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Trinity. Some people don't like to deal with the Trinity; they don't want to concern themselves with doctrine and things they don't understand, especially when they hear something like the Athanasian Creed. The name



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of the creed *alone* is enough to make them wonder what in the world we're saying. But then, when you get into the words themselves, you can easily get lost in what's being confessed. If you ask the average person, even the average Christian, to read the Athanasian Creed, their eyes may very well glaze over. It's heavy on theological jargon. Some may get the impression that theology is dry and boring or doesn't pertain to everyday life. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is true that, as fallible human beings, we can make theology *sound* dull or impractical, just as it's true that, as sinful people, we're not as enamored with theology as we should be.

If we dig into God's Word, we'll find that theology is anything but dry and what God has to say to us is in every way practical. Theology, after all, is the study of God, and what could be more interesting than the Creator of the universe?

The Athanasian Creed says that what it proclaims is the "catholic" faith. Now, don't let that term scare you; in this context, the word "catholic" simply means "universal." What we confess in the Athanasian Creed is the universal Christian faith: "that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, neither confusing the persons nor dividing the substance." The holy universal Christian faith is that God is Triune: one God in three Persons and three Persons in one God. There is one God, not three. God is not divided up, but exists in unity; yet the three Persons of the Trinity are distinct: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

As you may have noticed when we confessed the Creed moments ago, it goes to great pains to stress the nature of God as the One in Three and Three in One. But it would all be for naught if it didn't get around to the main point of it all, which is what the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds also confess, that God is not just God, He's not even just the Triune God, and He's not even just the One *True* God — He's the God of salvation, the God of Creation and of *re*-Creation. His work of salvation is His work of *re*-creation.

God creates; it's what He does. He brings things into being from nothing. This is not theological dogma or jargon; this is the very essence of life. Or, to put in more practical terms: this is the basis for who you are and how you live day to day. You are who you are because God is who He is. In other words, God is the Triune God, He is the Creator, He is the one who brings you into being and gives you life. Not only that, He is at work *re*-Creating you, not only giving you life, but giving you *new* life. He has created you and He re-creates you.

How does He do this? He does it by giving you Himself. What does that mean? It means that He's not only the one who creates and gives new life; He does it in Himself. God created the world in six days. In six days He brought into being all that is. That was His work of Creation. Then, Scripture says, He finished all the work He had done. He completed it; it was now in a state of having been created and was now existing. What happened next? He rested. On the seventh day, the Bible says, He rested.

Why? Why did God rest? Was He tired? Was all that work of creating so taxing that



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He was just plain exhausted? He did need to rest, but not in the way we typically think of. God wasn't exhausted, He didn't need to put His feet up and have a nice cool beverage. He needed to rest, not because of His work of Creation, but because of His work of *re-Creation*. What He accomplished with His work of Creation is directly correlated to His work of *re-Creation*.

Let me explain: In six days God completed His work. In six days, He finished all that He had done. If we can borrow a phrase from the Gospels, when God completed His work of Creation He said, "It is finished." You might recall that that phrase came on another sixth day, the day we refer to as Good Friday. On the cross Jesus was moments away from death when He cried out: "It is finished." The first five days of Holy Week had led up to this, His work of *re-Creation*. On the sixth day God finished all the work He had done in creating the world and on the sixth day God finished the work He had done of *re-Creating* the very people He had created at the beginning, the very people who fell into sin, fell from the pure creation God had brought about, dragging down that creation with them. By His suffering and death on the cross, God, in the person of His Son, restored that creation and made it possible for His people to be restored as well, by grace through faith.

On the seventh day, the day after creating the universe, God rested. He didn't need to. He wasn't tired. But He did need to, because He needed to show that, even though the precious people He created would fall away, He would do His more marvelous work of *re-Creation*; in other words, His work of salvation. So on the seventh day He rested. When Jesus cried out on the cross "It is finished" He then bowed His head and died. He was placed in a tomb and on the seventh day, the day after His work of *re-Creation*, He rested. In the creation account God says that He made that seventh day holy. Now we know why, for Christ made it holy by His rest in the tomb.

God declaring the seventh day holy is the end of the creation account. It moves on from there to the account of the fall into sin. Jesus' rest in the tomb on the seventh day, however, is not the end of the story as far as God's work of *re-Creation* goes. There is a new day after that. We would normally think of it as the first day, that is, the first day of the new week, Sunday. But another way to think of it is as the Eighth Day. The day of the New Creation, or God's *re-Creation*. That's the day Christ rose from the dead.

Today's second reading gives the continued account of Pentecost. Last Sunday we heard about the coming of the Holy Spirit. Today we hear the sermon that Peter proclaimed. Who does he proclaim? Not the Holy Spirit, but Christ. Peter makes a special point to show that it is the work of the Triune God to make known to us how He goes about His work of *re-Creation*, His work of salvation. Peter says that *Jesus* "being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the *Father* the promise of the *Holy Spirit*, He has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing." The reason God sent the Holy Spirit was so that He would make Jesus known.



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Peter emphasizes Jesus' work of salvation, that even though He died, even though He was buried, He was raised up. The Jesus who was crucified is the one who is Lord and Christ. The Triune God, as we confess in the Creed, and as the Bible makes known to us, is the God who specifically manifested Himself to us in the second Person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ. Not only that, He specifically reveals Himself to us in His work of *re-Creation* through His suffering, death, and resurrection.

What this means for you and me is that our lives have meaning. If you think in terms of who you are and the life you live and the things you do, God's work of *re-Creation* makes a difference.

Consider just one thing, which happens to be a very big thing. Today is Father's Day. Now, Father's Day is a day that has huge significance for all of us, because we all have a father. It's true that some have never known their father, some have been abused by their father, some are at odds with their father, and we could add to the list of how Father's Day for some is a sad day, including some who would like to be a father but are unable to. But the fact that each of us has a father means something important. It means that what God accomplished in the Garden of Eden in creating us, bringing us into being, is a continued work. We are brought into existence not in the way Adam was, from the dirt, or in the way Eve was, from a rib, but from God's creating work, that is, from a source, namely, a father.

Whether people believe in the Triune God or not, the fact is, God has continued His work of creation through the temporal means of fathers. This is a testimony to the fact that God is Himself the Father of us all. The Triune God is the God who Himself is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and from whom the Holy Spirit proceeds. We shouldn't think of God in terms of our earthly father but rather our earthly father in terms of God our Father. Someone who has been abused by their father may not be able to see in God a loving Father. But what we ought to see in God is the perfection of a Loving Father and in comparison how our earthly fathers in many ways fall short. When you consider your father, you should be moved to consider the Heavenly Father who has given you His Son by the Holy Spirit. If you have issues with your father you should look to the Heavenly Father who loves you in this way: He gave His only-begotten Son to die on the cross for the sin of the world – including yours and your father's – and in the work of His Holy Spirit has given both of you new life in Holy Baptism.

This is what Jesus was getting at when He gave his Great Commission. The way disciples are made is not through our efforts but through the work of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The way God's Church is continually renewed and *re-Created* is not by our own work but by the work of the Triune God in baptizing and teaching.

The reason this is so important for you in your daily life is because your life is filled with things you do. That's well and good, mind you, but the things you do ultimately bring about your failure. As Adam and Eve fell into sin so do you on a daily basis. God is the God who



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creates and *re*-Creates. We can never look to ourselves or others for what we need in order to live as God calls us to live. Even a man like David was unable to bring about what is necessary for God's people to live as God's people. Bluntly, Peter said that David was in the grave and his grave was still there to that day. It's only Christ who can bring about the life God desires for you. Because the Triune God reveals Himself in the Person of Jesus. The Triune God creates and *re*-Creates you in the work of Jesus.

God the Father Almighty, Creator of the heavens and the earth, the Father who gave His only-begotten Son to create us anew by His Holy Spirit, continue His *re*-Creating work in you through His Means of Grace. In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen