

Creation Sunday – “In the Beginning Was the Word”

Genesis 1:1–2:4a & John 1:1–18

As many of you know, I grew up in the Alps.

And one of the things I have always loved is downhill skiing.

There is something very special about being on a mountain early in the morning—being one of the first people up.

Sometimes you get to the top and there are still no ski tracks in the snow.

Just the mountain.

The snow.

The light.

And the silence.

And I think that is one of the moments when I feel smallest.

You stand there looking out over the mountains, and you suddenly realize how enormous this world is—and how small you are within it.

But I don't feel insignificant.

I feel wonder.

I feel gratitude.

I feel connected to something much bigger than myself.

And perhaps that is part of what Creation Sunday invites us to recover:

wonder.

Because Genesis begins with something that looks very different from that beautiful mountain landscape.

It begins with:

תהו ובהו — *tohu va-vohu*.

Formless and void.

Darkness over the deep.

Chaos.

And then God speaks.

“Let there be light.”

And there is light.

God speaks, and something begins to happen.

God separates. God names. God orders. God gives space for life.

And finally God looks at creation and says:

“It is good.”

And then, at the end:

“It is very good.”

There is a beautiful theological movement here:

God brings **order out of chaos, life out of emptiness, and goodness out of what was formless.**

And then we turn to John's Gospel.

John begins his Gospel with the same words Genesis begins with:

“In the beginning...”

But John changes the sentence.

Genesis:

“In the beginning, God created...”

John:

“In the beginning was the Word.”

In Greek:

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος.

En archē ēn ho logos.

And this word **λόγος** — **logos** deserves our attention.

We usually translate it simply as **“Word.”**

But *logos* is much richer than that.

It can mean word, speech, expression, reason, meaning, even the rational principle that gives things coherence and order.

And that makes John's choice of this word fascinating.

Because Genesis tells us that God creates by speaking.

God says, “*Let there be light,*” and there is light.

John says: **the Word through whom God creates is not merely something God says. The Logos is with God. The Logos is God.**

And then comes the astonishing sentence:

“And the Word became flesh and lived among us.”

The Logos—the divine Word, God's self-expression, God's meaning and purpose—becomes flesh.

The God who speaks creation into being enters creation.

The Creator becomes a creature.

The Word becomes a human being.

And John is telling us something profound about Jesus:

Jesus is not simply someone who comes to tell us about God.

Jesus is God's Word spoken into the world.

If Genesis tells us that God speaks into *tohu va-vohu* and brings forth creation, John tells us that God speaks again—and this time, the Word takes on flesh.

And that means creation is not simply something God did *once upon a time*.

God is still creating.

God is still bringing light into darkness.

God is still bringing order into chaos.

God is still bringing life where there seems to be emptiness.

And that brings us to our hands.

Next Sunday we celebrate **God's Work. Our Hands.**

And Creation Sunday gives us the theology behind that phrase.

We cannot create a universe.

We cannot speak mountains into existence.

We cannot create *ex nihilo*—out of nothing.

But God has given us hands.

And sometimes God's work happens through them.

Our hands can bring a little order into someone's chaos.

They can prepare food.

They can repair something.

They can plant.

They can build.

They can welcome.

They can comfort.

They can hold another person's hand.

We don't replace God's work.

We participate in it.

And perhaps that is what it means to be created in the image of God: not that we are little gods, but that our lives can reflect the Creator's work.

We take what God has placed into our hands and use it for life.

For goodness.

For healing.

For community.

For creation.

But before our hands can do God's work, they have to learn something else:

They have to learn to receive.

When I stand on that mountain in the early morning, looking at the untouched snow, I am reminded that I did not create this.

I cannot control it.

I can only receive it.

I can wonder.

I can give thanks.

I can rest.

Genesis ends not with God producing more and more, but with God resting.

The seventh day is blessed.

Creation is complete enough for Sabbath.

And perhaps that is a word we need to hear.

We are creatures, not the Creator.

We do not have to fix everything.

We do not have to control everything.

We do not have to save the world.

God is already at work.

But God invites our hands into that work.

So perhaps Creation Sunday gives us two things to say.

When we look at the mountains, the snow, the stars, the trees, the world around us, we can say:

“God, this is good.”

And when we look at the places in our world that still feel like *tohu va-vohu*—chaotic, empty, dark—we can say:

“God, take my hands.”

Use them.

Make them instruments of your creative work.

Because the work is God's.

And yet, mysteriously and wonderfully,

God chooses to work through our hands.

God's Work.

Our Hands.

Amen.