

Sermon for December 3, 2017 - 1<sup>st</sup> Article – Creation

Isaiah 64:8 EHV

Theme: **The LORD is your Father.**

- 1) He created you.
- 2) He continues to shape you

*<sup>8</sup>But now, LORD, you are our father. We are the clay, and you are our potter. All of us are the work of your hand.*

Did you know that each of you is a miracle – a wonder that secular science can't explain? Let me clarify what I mean: the chemical compounds that compose the human body aren't worth all that much: less than \$10 by some estimates. And yet the organization of these chemicals is so complex that - if it were even possible- it would take trillions of dollars and countless years of work to create an exact, synthetic replica of the human body!

Yes, even speaking from a strictly secular level, every living organism is a wonder - a symphony of chemicals – reacting and interacting together in such a way that it defies explanation. And if this is true of a mere amoeba, how much more of a miracle are you who can sense, think, will, feel and dream.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, the Bible confirms what honest biological chemistry reveals: we are not biproducts of chance. No, we all have been masterfully designed. With the prophet Isaiah as our guide, let us learn about our creation, under the theme: **The LORD is your Father.** 1) *He created you.* 2) *He continues to shape you.*

Part One: He created you.

Our sermon text is part of a confessional prayer Isaiah offered up for God's Old Testament people. Time and time again they had sinned against the LORD. Would He forgive them? Isaiah was confident that He would. Why? Because the LORD was their father and they were his creation, to whom the LORD gave wonderful promises

Brothers and sisters in Christ: do you understand how wonderful it is to pray with Isaiah: "*But now, LORD, you are our father*"? You are not the biproduct of chance. Some impersonal "force" didn't create you. No, the LORD himself created you, who describes himself as: *the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, <sup>7</sup> maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished.<sup>1</sup>* Yes, the LORD – the God of free and faithful love - created you to be his child, because of which your life has great purpose and meaning.

“But,” someone might say, “I get that God created Adam and Eve, but how did God create me? How am I not merely a byproduct of chance chromosomes from my parents – mixed together in my mother’s womb?” Don’t suppose that God’s creative activity stopped when he formed Adam from the dust and breathed into him the breath of life. No, the almighty Lord continues to carefully direct the creation of each and every human – masterfully using biological chemistry to weave together the exact person he wants to create. Because of this we can confess with Luther: “I believe that God created me and all that exists, and that he gave me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my mind and all my abilities.” Because of this, we can praise God with King David, saying: *You created my inner organs. You wove me together in my mother’s womb.<sup>14</sup> I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful, and my soul knows that very well.<sup>15</sup> My bones were not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.<sup>16</sup> Your eyes saw my unfinished body. In your book all of them were written. Days were determined, before any of them existed.*”<sup>iii</sup>

Yes, the LORD created you – giving you a soul and shaping you to be exactly who you are. He created you for a purpose: to be his holy, righteous child - enjoying a special, loving relationship with him. He created you to play a special role on this earth – praising and glorifying his name through your life. Sadly, ever since Adam and Eve fell into sin, humanity has lost all knowledge of their true identity and purpose. Sin has so thoroughly corrupted our nature that we no longer wish to view the LORD as our loving God who created us – as St. Paul says in his letter to the Romans: *<sup>18</sup> Indeed, God’s wrath is being revealed from heaven against all the ungodliness and unrighteousness of people who try to suppress the truth by unrighteousness. <sup>19</sup> This happens because what can be known about God is evident among them, because God made it evident among them. <sup>20</sup> In fact, his invisible characteristics—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen since the creation of the world, because they are understood from the things he made. As a result, people are without excuse, <sup>21</sup> because, even though they knew God, they did not honor him or give him thanks as God. . . . <sup>25</sup> Such people have traded the truth about God for the lie, worshipping and serving the creation rather than the Creator, who is worthy of praise forever. Amen.*<sup>iii</sup>

Oh, how sad the human race has become: instead of praising God as its Creator, it denies that he exists. Instead of enjoying the wonderful father/child relationship the LORD wants us to have with him, humans look elsewhere for purpose and love in their life. And why do we do this? Because, ultimately, we all fall for the same temptation that got Adam and Eve to sin: we want to be our own gods – master of our own fates, responsible to no one.

This spiritual corruption of human nature has put us at odds with God. It has made us objects of his just condemnation – deserving of his eternal wrath and punishment. But here’s the thing: God loves us. He doesn’t want us lost to hell forever. This is why he sent Jesus - his only begotten Son - into the world to do all the things necessary to satisfy the LORD’s just anger over our sins – paying for them in full on the cross. This is why God continues to do everything necessary to call us to repent of sins so that our loving relationship with him might be restored through faith in Christ.

Yes, the LORD is our Father. We are all the work of his mighty hand! This truth should cause us great joy – happy to be who we are. And yet, how often aren’t we just the opposite? All too often

we see the beauty, health, wisdom and talent of others, and become discontent with who we are. “Why, LORD, didn’t you give me the good looks of Brad Pitt or Angelina Jolie? Why, LORD, can’t I be as smart as Einstein, as funny as Robin Williams, as skilled as Aaron Rodgers, or as wise as King Solomon? Why, LORD, can’t I be like the other people I want to be?”

Is such complaining justified? No. Why? Because – as Isaiah confessed in his prayer – the LORD himself is our potter. Doesn’t a potter have the right to shape and form a glob of clay into anything he wishes? Doesn’t God have the right to form and shape us into anything he wishes?

You see, herein lies the great “lie” of our world: it claims that we are answerable to no one but ourselves and, therefore, can do whatever we want with our lives. But this is not true. God created us; we belong to him. He created each of us with a specific purpose in mind – giving each of us unique abilities and limitations that we might fulfill *his* purpose for our lives; not our own.

And how blessed is the person who realizes this in Christ. Why? Because such a person will be content and happy with who he is – praising God for his work - instead of being unhappy that he is not exactly like someone else. The person who accepts who he is in Christ will find direction and hope for his life. He will rely on the LORD in every trouble, and praise the LORD in every triumph. On top of this, he will realize that his life and this earth are temporary. God has created him for the much greater glory of eternal life with him in paradise. And if this is the future God graciously grants us through faith in His Son, how can we not thank him by gratefully, thankfully living our lives to God’s glory?

Yes, the LORD is not only your God, he is your gracious father who lovingly created you to be who you are. Not only that, but he continues to shape you throughout your life – making you ever more beautiful and useful as you– under the Holy Spirit’s guidance - submit yourself to his gracious hand.

## Part Two: He continues to shape you

Do you want to know something fascinating about us humans? Even though God created each one of us with set genetic abilities and limitations, we are always learning, adapting and changing. God didn’t create us as Kiln-fired pots – serving the same purpose through out our lives. No, as wet clay changes - taking on new details and shapes - while in the hands of the potters, so our lives are often reshaped, defined and changed in the hands of the LORD.

And this is important to note. Why? Because so often we live as if our lives are in our own hands – to shape and mold as we please. We set up goals for ourselves – working hard to achieve them. But then the LORD throws a curveball in our way – events like an accident, severe illness, or the death of a loved one – reminding us that we are not in control; only He is. And like clay in the hands of a potter, the LORD wants us to conform to his good and gracious will – trusting not only in his grace that forgives all our sins, but also in his guidance as he shapes our lives; as St. Paul writes: *Therefore I urge you, brothers, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice—holy and pleasing to God—which is your appropriate worship.* <sup>2</sup> *Also, do not continue*

*to conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, so that you test and approve what is the will of God—what is good, pleasing, and perfect.*<sup>iv</sup>

Yes, the LORD is constantly shaping us – using his Word to call us to repent of our sins and trust in him. Just as a master painter works at filling in all the details he may have sketched out with a pencil on the canvass, so the LORD is always active in our lives – filling in all the details, so that our lives might be the grand masterpiece he intended them to be.

And just as we might wonder why a painter is doing what he does – filling in certain colors here, and scraping others there, so there are times in our lives when we have no clue what the LORD is doing – allowing the painful and frustrating things that he allows. To us it may make no sense, but to the LORD it makes perfect sense. He wants us to trust him – following his lead, convinced of his promise *that all things work together for the good of those who love God.*<sup>v</sup> Let the LORD's enduring grace be sufficient for you – just as it was sufficient for Paul, when he faced his enduring thorn in the flesh, saying; *Therefore I will be glad to boast all the more in my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may shelter me.*<sup>vi</sup>

Brothers and sisters in Christ: each one of you is a miracle – a masterpiece created by the LORD, your heavenly Father, who loves you dearly. Understand this about yourselves – and stop lamenting that you are not like others. Repent of all discontentment, selfishness and sin. Look at the value God places on you in Christ and rejoice in who you are - who God both created and saved you to be. Thank God for the purpose he gave you in creation and ask him to help you humbly submit yourself to the gracious way he shapes and reshapes your life, *convinced of this very thing: that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus*<sup>vii</sup>– all to the glory of his name. Amen

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<sup>i</sup> Exodus 34:6-7 (NIV84)

<sup>ii</sup> Psalm 139:13-16 (EHV)

<sup>iii</sup> Romans 1:18-21, 25 (EHV)

<sup>iv</sup> Romans 12:1-2) EHV)

<sup>v</sup> Romans 8:28 (EHV)

<sup>vi</sup> 2 Corinthians 12:10 (EHV)

<sup>vii</sup> Philippians 1:6 (EHV)