

Personal Creator ... or Formed from a Green Mass?

Sermon for the 15th Sunday after Trinity

Sermon Text: Genesis 2:4b-15



...In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens. ⁵ When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up – for the Lord God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, ⁶ and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground – ⁷ then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. ⁸ And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there He put the man whom He had formed. ⁹ And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. ¹⁰ A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. ¹¹ The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. ¹² And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. ¹³ The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. ¹⁴ And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates. ¹⁵ The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.

End of summer sale: 80% off. Every must go! Five swimming trunks for 1.50 Euros. A few weeks ago, our shopping malls and our stores advertised something like that. Naturally, everyone wants to get a bargain. But stress goes along with that. Oh, the difficulties we have shopping! But on our shopping trips, we don't even realize what all hides behind the colorful facades. Before the swimming trunks land in my shopping bag, there is a lot of work involved! Quite often the clothing is produced in poor countries for a pittance. It is the same with our food: fruits, vegetables, bananas, and meat are often produced on a completely different continent and then transported to us. And even on this foreign continent, it takes many hands to bring this food to us through their hard work. And there is even more to this process: seeds, bountiful harvest, air, water, fertilizer, sun, and wind. And this is not only in the textile and food industries the case. In every human authority, there are many people who contribute to the work so that we can live and survive in society. From there, it is only one more step to see that these people didn't simply fall out of the sky. They must all come from somewhere. Martin Luther writes: for everything, I owe Him (that is, God) thanks and praise. With this, Luther expresses that everything we

are and have, our whole existence really, is from God's hand. Generations before us took all of this for granted. In some cultures of the world, the belief that God created the world is so self-evident, that this fact doesn't even need to be mentioned in an article of faith. It's different in Europe. Because here, since the 17th Century, human reason was placed higher than God. As the astronomer Pierre-Simon Laplace presented his book about celestial mechanics to Napoleon, he remarked: "Now we understand everything that can be understood. We no longer need God to explain the world." Since then, it has been understood that science can't be held between two book covers. By now, we have Google and Wikipedia for all the answers one could possibly have. In any case, belief in God has even less space in our enlightened minds today than in the 17th Century. Strangely enough, we know now that many things in our world really cannot be explained through science. Strangely enough, in this case, they have found another name other than God. That's why at the point where science reached its limits, you hear the following sentence: "Nature wanted it that way." This sentence is already very old! Even in the earliest times, people couldn't look beyond the things of the world and began to worship these things that they could not understand. For example, the sun, the moon, or the rain. It seems to me that today is no different. People who look beyond and believe in God the Creator are criticized as antiquated and fossils. "How can you say that God created the world? That's kid stuff! We have long since outgrown that! Only some very crazy people still believe that!" say many people. Because one is so quickly despised for this belief, some Christians no longer want to talk about it. So, the number of those who think that everything originated without God and all things came into being on their own is growing.

That people think that we all developed entirely without God has had a catastrophic impact. In this belief, we humans are only the end of a long production line. Oh, how poor we are without God! Then our nourishment is nothing but calories and protein to keep us alive. I must tightly hold on to this little life and push away old age with tons of beauty creams and other aids. And so, we cannot receive our nourishment as a precious gift from our God but thoughtlessly throw everything that we bought into the garbage. As we do with the food, so we do with people. If the former loved one becomes useless, ugly, and irritating, I can simply dispose of him or her. And when I myself have reached the end of my beauty, I can likewise give myself an injection to put an end to the agony.

Today I read something completely different from our account of creation. The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the proper Father of everything that lives, stands against the opinion—that was common back then and still is today—that nature is God. The account of creation describes that behind every herb and behind every ant, as well as behind all the large animals, fish, and birds is this God. I don't want to be made from an impersonal biomass, but by a personal God who cares for me, don't you want that too? In the account of creation, it becomes very personal. God creates all other living beings out of nothing. With humans, though, He goes a step further. The living God breathes His breath into man's nostrils. What an intimate picture! And how wonderfully it becomes clear that God wants to be connected to us humans so closely. Martin Luther also found this personal approach to creation as he wrote in the explanation of the first article: "I believe that God created ME." Yes, God didn't just breathe a living breath into the first man. He is also still here for you today—personally! Oh, if only we could once again take this fact to heart! How differently we would interact with our food, if we understood this. How differently we would interact also with our families and those entrusted to us, if we understood this! How relaxed we could be about our appearance if we only understood that God wanted me this way! Just like the first person, you came to be through His will! There was no need to tell Adam and Eve. They had received the personal breath of God breathed into them. Through this, they

were personally connected with God and no one had to explain to them that there is a God. In Jesus, God acts as it was with Adam and Eve. He makes it very personal. He died for all our sins personally. HE allows all of this to come to us personally as we are baptized in His name. Never again will we be separated from God's love; never again will we be alone.

When I give my last dying breath, I would like to know this, and above all things, that this last breath is God's breath. In Jesus, it is so. Amen.