

Adult Confirmation Study Pentecost 2020

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Week 6

July 5 - 11

The “By Heart” resource from Augsburg-Fortress tells that Martin Luther preached many times on the First Article of the Creed. In the first several sermons he focused on the word “Father” but in the later sermons he preached on God as the “Creator”.

Certainly, a theology of creation is central to our faith. “In the beginning God created...” are our very first words of scripture. They ground us in God’s doing “good” at the beginning. The creation myths of Genesis are called into question when people misuse the “dominion” and even the order of creation as male first, but the overall understanding of God’s creation is that it is good and that we are a part of it.

“Although the doctrine of creation has always had a place in Christian theology, primary if not exclusive attention has been given to the creation of the human species. That there were other beings created by God was certainly acknowledged, but they were often treated, as Alan Lewis notes, more like stage props than like important participants in the drama of salvation whose central protagonists were God and humanity.

However, a shift in emphasis in the doctrine of creation has occurred in recent decades as both church and society have begun to awaken to the worldwide ecological crises. In the view of some experts, the damage to the environment is already severe and in some cases probably irreversible...The scope and gravity of the ecological crises give new urgency to the task of rethinking the Christian doctrine of creation. Any neglect, marginalization, or distortion of the doctrine of creation in our time would only contribute to impending disaster. Development of a strong and comprehensive theology of the first article of the Apostles’ Creed, in which the church confesses its faith in God as “Maker of heaven and earth,” must be a major part of every Christian theology today.” Faith Seeking Understanding, Daniel L. Migliore pp. 80-81

Humanity and the rest of God’s creation are intertwined and dependent upon one another. Each needs the other (humanity and nature) to survive. “The heavens are telling the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims his handiwork” (Ps. 19:1) All of God’s creation glorifies God’s goodness. In Luther’s explanation to the First Article, he reminds us that God has created me and all that exists”. We must coexist and be interdependent.

The Doctrine of Creation is central to Luther’s theology.

“Luther’s theology of creation is neither limited to a description of what happened “in the beginning” nor restricted to some initial and selective point of life. Instead, Luther understands creation as the principal and permanent feature

of God's action and communication, something happening constantly and taking place in a threefold way: by creation, preservation, and re-creation." Martin Luther's Doctrine of Creation, by Johannes Schwanke as found in Oxford Research

The ELCA has expanded their understandings of certain current teachings and they are called – Social Statements. We have a Social Statement called: Caring for Creation. You can read it online at ELCA.org. Here is the introduction.

The Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice social statement explains the ELCA's teachings on ecology and the environment, grounded in a biblical vision of God's intention for the healing and wholeness of creation. This statement provides a Christian understanding of the human role to serve in creation, and a hope rooted in God's faithfulness to the creation from which humans emerge and depend upon for sustaining life. It provides a framework for understanding the human role in creation, the problem of sin and the current environmental crisis.

When I need to feel close to God, or when I need to find clarity, or when I need refreshment, I go into God's great creation. When I need to be reminded that I am not the only thoughtful being on earth, I look at the whale and the racoon. When I need to be humbled, I watch a thunderstorm.

Questions:

1. A better translation of the Genesis scripture about "dominion" is "stewardship". How do you care for the creation that God has made?
2. The explanation to the First Article says that God will provide us with all that we need and will protect us from every harm. What do you say to those in need and those beset by grave illness?
3. What is God still creating in you?



Prayer:

God of Creation, You made us wonderful in your sight. Inspire us to sing your praises and to love all of your creation. Bless ecologists and veterinarians, farmers and those that recycle. Thank you for the sun and the wind. Use us as co-creators in this marvelous cosmos. Amen.