

³¹And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. ^{2:1}Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

In today's Old Testament reading, God created the heavens and the earth and all living things on the earth and blessed them. On the 6th day he created the very pinnacle of his creation. He created man in his own image, after his own likeness.

God, though the second person of the Trinity—the Word is spoken and something is created! Some critics, especially Atheists and evolutionists believe that it was not God who spoke creation into existence.

They believe that the universe, and life came from a natural, physical process without any divine intervention, some believe the first lifeform came from a single cell.

Others assume that God could only do so much in just 6 days. “Each 'day' must really mean millions or even billions of years” they claim.

Still others disbelieve that God made so many different creatures. Some think that it all must have evolved from 1 very simple life-form.

But the second person of the Trinity spoke God's Word and made everything there is out of absolutely nothing! It wasn't...and then it was!

He made every single species there is—without the help of any kind of evolution, and even caused them to reproduce after their own kind. And all this God did in six 24-hour days.

Why should this astound people? With God, all things are possible! He could have created it all in an instant...but chose to use six 24-hour days for our sake.

So, if God the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit could create the entire universe in 144 hours' time.

Certainly, God could take care of simpler things and provide everything needed for all humans on a daily basis. Many people even doubt this is the case.

In Matthew 8, when the royal official's son was sick in Capernaum, the people expected Jesus to come quickly from Cana to do some exciting, miraculous sign for them to see.

They just couldn't believe Jesus could heal the boy from such a distance, with only His words. But He did. And amazingly, the official believed it!

God says it, and with the Son, and the Holy Spirit it happens! God tells living creatures to live on the earth, and they do!

Genesis 1:27-30 "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸And God blessed them. And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth'...

...And God said, 'Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food.' 'And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.' And it was so."

Jesus said that the official's son would live, and He does! We have a God Whose very words hold the power of life and death!

But that's not what God likes to do. By nature, He is a Creator, not a destroyer. God desires to speak words of "life", and when He does, things live!

He speaks words of life to you this day, declaring your deadly sins forgiven so that you may live for all eternity!

Often times we doubt God, relying on ourself or trusting other means which we think gives us a content life. He could speak his word of death and in an instant, your heart would stop beating, and your breath would stop.

But even as we doubt God's Word of promise and rely on ourselves instead of God, and we don't love our neighbors as we should, or help them in their time of need, God gives us the Law to convict us of our sins and point us to Jesus.

The Law says that we are by nature sinful and unclean and are damned to spend eternity in the very depths of hell.

But God is the one who saves us from our own self-destruction because we cannot save ourselves.

We are to turn and repent because the kingdom of heaven is at hand. God doesn't say to wait till tomorrow or next week, but repent now, and reconcile with your brother or sister and anyone else you sinned against.

David reminds us of God's love for us in **Psalm 86:15** "But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness."

He proclaims the gracious love of Jesus to you, who gave His life as a forfeit for yours at the cross, suffering your death, and in exchange, you have eternal life in heaven. Jesus Christ crucified and risen—for you!

God has also given us His Triune name. A name we cannot possibly apprehend by logic and learning, but a name which by faith we understand. The Triune of God is partially revealed here in Genesis, where God says in Genesis 1:26: **"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."**

It is more fully revealed in today's Gospel, in which Jesus speaks about your Baptism in verse 19: **"In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"**

And we know that when God speaks through his Word, he carries out his will. When God connects His word to simple water, it becomes a gracious water of life.

A living water which quenches your thirst for Christ's righteousness, which He gives you in trade for your sins which He bore in His body on the tree of Calvary.

When God places His word into the mouth of your Pastor, he hears your confession and by the stead and commend of Christ he proclaims you to be absolutely forgiven, as surely and certainly as Jesus' Own proclamation to you.

When God takes the words of institution Jesus spoke at the Last Supper, and they are spoken over simple bread and wine, those elements become the body of Christ given for you, and His blood shed for you for your forgiveness.

These words of Jesus' become for you words of life! God speaks, and life is created. Jesus speaks, and life is restored. Your Lord speaks to you and your life is renewed forevermore.

In verses 1-4 of the **Athanasian Creed**. "Whoever desires to be saved must, above all, hold the catholic faith. Whoever does not keep it whole and undefiled will without doubt perish eternally. And the catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity, neither confusing the persons or dividing the substance."

Herein is your salvation, dear friends: I believe in God, the Father, the Son, And the Holy Spirit. Herein lies your forgiveness: That God the Father, in order to restore His fallen creation, sent God the Son into the flesh. Jesus bore your sins in His body on the tree.

By enduring that punishment for us, the Son of God made absolutely certain that we would never have to be punished in that way.

God the Father gives us His grace, and mercy, and forgiveness for the sake of God the Son. With His sacrifice, God the Son earned forgiveness, life, and salvation for every man, woman, and child who has ever lived or ever will live.

That wonderful salvation will do us no good, however, if it is not delivered to us. That is the role of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit brings God's gifts to us. The Holy Spirit works through the Word of God to create and sustain faith in us.

In the third article of the Creed, Luther writes: *What does this mean?* "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith..."

...In this Christian church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers. On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ." This is most certainly true.

He does this as we read, hear, and study God's Word. The Holy Spirit works in us when we are sharing God's Word with our friends and neighbors, and by meeting their needs, giving them any help they might need.

He does this in our prayers, when we talk to the Lord about our needs, and concerns, and health issues that we may have. He wants us to go to him with any need that we have in prayer. He promises to hear us, and answer our prayers according to his will for our lives.

He also does that through the word of Holy Baptism, and the body and blood of our Lord that we receive with the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper.

We poor sinners who have been blessed with the gift of faith by the Holy Spirit will receive the gifts that only the Triune God can give. The gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation.

Herein lies the hope of your future: not only that **“the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them,”**

One day the original creation will all be gone, it will be destroyed, and there will be a new heaven and new earth.

Revelation 21:1-4 “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ²And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.’”

Thanks be to God who created us; for his Son who redeemed us and for the Holy Spirit who sanctifies us. Amen