

This past Friday I took my son to ride the Polar Express Train at the B & O Railroad Station in Baltimore, Maryland. To fully appreciate this outing, you need to know that:

- 1) My son is obsessed with trains.
- 2) My son is obsessed with the movie “The Polar Express.”

So, he was the most excited I have ever seen him to go on this trip with Mommy. The whole day I simply got to marvel at the amazing person that is my son and I find myself more nights than not being in awe of how beautiful he is.

The love I have for him, is but a glimpse of the love that God our Father has for us, God’s creation.

Today we continue our second week in our “Thankful for the Trinity” Sermon Series. Last week we gave thanks to God for the second person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ. We especially thanked God for the resurrection and were encouraged that through our faith in Jesus Christ that we are children of the resurrection. Today we give thanks for the first person in the Trinity, God our Creator.

We first hear about our Creator God in Genesis 1. We see that the first thing God did was create order out of chaos. Then we see that God created light out of darkness and then everything else in the world, including us. We hear in Genesis 1:27: “So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” and we read on “God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good” (Genesis 1:31). In the second account of creation in Genesis 2:7 we hear: “then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being.”

In these accounts of creation, we see that we are created in the image of God, that God called us good, and that God formed us out of the dust of the ground. Isaiah 64 reminds us of God’s creative nature: “Yet, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand” (Isaiah 64:8). I love this image of God the potter sculpting us in God’s image from only some dust and water.

God is our creator and we are God’s creation, but sometimes we are not as excited to reach back out to God the same way that God is reaching out to us.

On the front of your bulletin today is a small piece of the painting entitled: “The Creation of Adam” by Michelangelo.

The first time I ever saw this painting was in seminary, when my professor used it as an aide to describe humanity’s relationship with God. It was so powerful to me and still is to this day, which I why I wanted to share it with you. The hand on the right is God the Father extending God’s full hand toward Adam, with effort. If you see the wholeness of this picture you can see that God body is depicted as learning forward as far as God can possibly go.

On the left, you see the hand of Adam. It is limp it is not outstretched. It almost looks like little effort is going into reaching out to God. If you see the painting in its fulness you see that Adam is not even reaching forward. Even though God has done 99% of the work to reach out to Adam, Adam is leaning back and making a halfhearted effort to reach out to God.

In this, Michelangelo’s powerful painting that is on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, we see that we are made in the image of God, but that we are called to reach back out to God, not in a lackadaisical way, but with purpose.

Today we are thankful for our Creator God by recognizing that through our relationship with our creator we are blessed and sent forward with purpose. Just as in Genesis, God blessed Adam, so God blessed us with this amazing relationship with God.

God wants to be in a relationship with us: on our best days and on our worst days. We fall out of this relationship with God when we feel like we are not living our best Christian lives, but God still wants us to seek out this relationship with our Creator no matter what is going on in our lives.

In Jeremiah 18:1-6: we hear a beautiful scripture about God molding us: “The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ‘Come, go down to the potter’s house, and there I will let you hear my words.’ So, I went down to the potter’s house, and there he was working at his wheel. The vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter’s hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as seemed good to him. Then the word of the LORD came to me: Can I not do with you, O house of Israel, just as this potter has done? says the LORD. Just like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.”

Through this Scripture we see that God takes the things in our lives that we are ashamed of, that we think are messed up forever, and reminds us that the core of who we are, God’s image living in us, will never change.

Sometimes we forget that God already knows us. Even if we tried, we could not hide from God because our Creator God is all knowing. Scripture reminds us of God’s creative hands in our lives: Psalm 139:13-14 tells us that it was God who “formed [our] inward parts; [and] knit [us] together in [our] mother’s womb.” And then David goes on to say, “I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”

So, all of this Scripture reminds us that our response to our creator is not apathy as was depicted in “The Creation of Adam” painting, but praise.

Psalm 100 is a beautiful song of praise to God. Just as the people of God worshipped so many years ago, the purpose of why we gather each Sunday is to give praise to God our Creator.

We worship God to remind us who God is and who we are in light of God. If our identity is truly in God, then Christ tells us through our Scripture today in Luke 21 that we will face opposition and persecution because of our faith. And yet, here in this Scripture we see that our response to those who do not believe or respond out of fear to the gift of God is not one we don’t have to worry about.

Luke 21:14-15 tells us: “So make up your minds not to prepare your defense in advance; for I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict.”

Here we are reminded of another attribute of God our Creator and that is the wisdom that God bestows upon us to be able to know the will of God and do the work of God.

Throughout the Old Testament, we see that God offered this God-wisdom to God’s people as God’s saving action upon their lives and as a way to lead the people of God. We see this especially through Daniel. We remember the story of Daniel. How he was favored by his Father and wore a technicolored coat. We remember how his brothers were jealous of him and sold him as a slave to some people who were passing through.

Without the wisdom that God gave to Daniel to interpret dreams, Daniel probably would have been forgotten about and rotted in prison. Yet this ability given by God, allowed Daniel to raise to power and ultimately save the people of God including his own family.

The wisdom I am talking about is something God writes on our hearts. It is a way to us to understand God and what God is asking us to do.

Much like we may understand what a loved one is asking us to do without them ever having to speak a word to us, we have this creator-creation relationship with God. Again Jeremiah gives us insight to our Creator: “But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Jeremiah 31:33).

Through our faith in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, God inscribes upon our hearts God’s will for our lives. This is why anything that is not in keeping with God’s will causes us guilt or shame.

Through our faith we are so connected to God our creator, that we know when we do something that is not God’s will. What an amazing God, who writes God’s laws in our hearts, who dwells within us helping us to respond to this relationship with God.

So, today may we celebrate God our Creator. May we celebrate that the same God who created all things is that same God who created us, called us to serve, and blessed us to do the work of God and take part in building up the kingdom of God.

The good news for our lives today is that God is still molding us into the image of God and there is nothing we can do about it.

Much like the Scripture from Jeremiah 18: we know that life does not always turn out the way we would like it to. And yet, God, our Creator, continues to reform and refashion us to press on and do the work of God.

Our Creator God still speaks to us today. All we must do is be silent or go outside. God does tell us in Scripture to “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10).

In the silence we hear our own breath and are reminded that God breathed into Adam the breath of life. So, the very breath that also fills our lungs is the breath of God.

When we go outside, we are reconnected to the dust of the earth, to God’s creation and we marvel at the intricacies of all living animals in the earth and the amazing ecosystem that God set up to sustain every creature on earth.

It is in nature that I feel the most connected to God my Creator. Whether it is through the mountains or the water...I still believe that God speaks to us when we slow down and simply marvel at God’s creation.

This is why we all need to make an effort to get away from the hustle and bustle of life to reconnect with God. To get away from the screens and all our to-do lists and relish in God’s creation.

As we continue to give thanks for the first person in the Trinity today, I challenge you to continue to write down something you are thankful for from God each way as a way to remind yourself of all the blessings God has given you.

Finally, we live a life of gratitude to God our Creator when we do the things God has made us for. Instead of wasting our time on the things we are not called to do, what would it look like to passionately follow God’s calling upon our lives? What would it look like to fully live into the image of God within us through the gifts that God has given us to share?

Church, this week, give thanks for all that God the Creator has given you and this relationship that is available to you through your faith in Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Take some time to be silent and some time to go outside to reconnect with God our Creator and regain again the wisdom of God. Through this kind of discernment may we all walk away more clearly understanding how the Potter is asking us to serve at this moment in our lives. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.