

"God's Word Is Good"

Text: Genesis 1:31

4/8/2018

The other night I was at my younger brother's house, celebrating both his 50th and his daughter's (my niece's) 12th birthday. As we were visiting, part of our discussion turned to how, with his daughter having entered the pre-teen stage of her life, she seemed to have acquired an aversion to listening to what he has to say. He told me that he'd heard that was normal, even sharing a story with me about the great QB Joe Montana, who had to hire a QB coach for his sons because they wouldn't listen to what he said to them. It's a fact of life for parents that, when your kids are teenagers, they don't think you know anything.

It's a fact of life for the Parent of all parents: the Heavenly Father, as we His children act as though we don't think He knows anything. He speaks to us in His Word, only to have us all too often ignore what He has to say. We do well to listen however, and trust, in what God's Word says, because God's Word is good. At that we look now together. ..

As we do, we return to today's O.T. Lesson, where we hear again that:

"God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day."(Genesis 1:31)

With those words we hear the conclusion of the well-known creation account in the Bible, and we're reminded that God created the world - the universe and all that's in it - in 6 days. The text goes on to say that God rested from all His creative work on the 7th day, and that of course became the basis for the Jewish teaching of the Sabbath Day, the need to rest on Saturday in remembrance of God's rest from His work of creation.

There are two things about the account of God's creation that stand out when we hear it read through (as we did in this morning's O.T. Lesson) ... 1) Genesis repeats again and again that everything God made was good. In fact, no less than 7 times does it make that assertion, emphasizing it with its last assertion in today's text that: "God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good." 2) The other thing worthy of note in the creation account is the fact that God created everything by His Word. We hear throughout Genesis 1 God speaking everything into existence; He said it, and it was so:

"God said: 'Let there be light,' and there was light."(v. 3)

That would seem to be significant, especially when we turn to the Gospel of John (from which today's Gospel reading comes to us) and we hear these words:

"In the beginning (sounds like Genesis) was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being."(John 1:1-3)

"He was in the beginning," John says, and we may well wonder Who He is? "All things came into being through Him," John says - through Whom? Through the Lord Christ, that's Who. John says of Jesus later on in the first chapter of his Gospel:

"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us ... "(v.14)

and with those words John tells us that our Lord Jesus Christ is none other than the creative Word of God - the very same Word that made everything in Genesis 1, the same Word that made everything good - in the flesh. That Word of God is a good Word, as it's not only responsible for our good-creation but it's also responsible for the goodness that is our new creation, as John goes on to say that God's Word:

" ... dwelt among us, full of grace and truth ... of His fullness we have all received, grace upon grace."(vs. 14 & 16)

We owe everything to the Word of God - both who we are, as well as who we will be when that Word-in-the-flesh: Jesus Christ, comes again. God's Word is about Jesus/ it is Jesus, and so God's Word is good.

We saw that earlier in today's Gospel, where John told us about an instance where Jesus healed a man's son from a deathly illness. At the end of that reading John says this:

"This was now the second sign that Jesus did when He had come from Judea to Galilee."(John 4:54)

We may ask when we hear that: what sign? OR sign of what? The answer is that it was a sign (as are all of Jesus' miracles in John's Gospel) of God's having come to His creation in Jesus, to raise it up out of its fallenness/badness and restore it back to Himself and His goodness. Jesus' miracles, in the Gospel of John, are signs of God's Word still creating, still declaring that everything is "very good."

It doesn't seem, of course, like everything is good, and we contribute to that with our sin. Like the teenager who doesn't listen to his/her parents, we don't listen to God, and we get ourselves into all kinds of trouble. But in the life, death, and resurrection from the dead of His Son, God took all our sins and laid them to rest; He entered into our lives of trouble and, with Jesus - His Word-in-the-flesh- risen from the dead to still speak to us, He re-creates us into His good people again.

The key to that, of course (as we've heard the last couple of weeks), is faith. And God gives us faith in the re-creating Word of Holy Baptism. Today's O.T. Lesson tells us that, as He began His work of creation:

" ... the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters."(v.2)

God's Spirit still hovers over the water of every baptismal font, there washing His Name upon all who would follow Jesus, claiming them/us as His own. The Spirit of God gives us faith in Baptism, and He sustains our faith through His Word - both spoken in Absolution, and fed into us through the bread & wine that carries to us Jesus' Body & Blood. God's Word still becomes flesh and dwells among us, the Word that is the creative/ re-creative Son of God. God's Word is good. The challenge, and the task, for us is to believe it.

Do you? I'm sure you do. But I'm also sure that things sometimes happen to make you doubt; things happen to lead you to wonder whether or not you are still part of God's good creation? So let me assure you ... You are loved by God in His Son. No, you don't always listen to and do what He says in His Word; but yes, Jesus has done it all for you and paid for your failure to do it in His death. Jesus is not only God's Word-in-the-flesh of the way things should be, but ultimately God's Word-in-the-flesh of the way things are IN HIM, and also will be IN US on the Day He comes again. His Spirit lives within you, and will raise you up to live forever on the Last Day. You will see your dead loved ones again, in a New Creation that will be free of whatever it was that took them from you. God will again one day look upon all that He has made and say that it is very good, and that will include you. I can tell you that with all certainty because you are people who follow Jesus; I can tell you that with all certainty because I'm telling you what God's Word says, and God's Word is good.

And that's where we'll conclude. I mentioned at the beginning my brother's frustration over his daughter's recently acquired knack for not listening to what he says. The neat thing about that though is that he still loves her, more than ever. We don't always listen to God. But God still loves us; we have His Son's cross as a guarantee of that. With His Spirit living within us, we can listen to what God says in His Word. Listen to that Word folks, try to do what it says, and above all trust where it's leading you. For God's Word is good –

- in Jesus' ✝ Name,

Amen!