

# Sermon for The Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

**Date:** June 24, 2018

**Location:** St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

**Old Testament:** Genesis 1:1-3, 26-31; 3:1-15

**Epistle Reading:** Romans 2:5-16

**Gospel Reading:** John 3:1-21



**Sermon Title:** Good News: God Cares for You

**Introit:** Psalm 19:8,1-6; Antiphon: Psalm 19:8

## Hymns:

LSB 894 – For the Fruits of His Creation

LSB 801 – O Lord My God

LSB 817 – Earth and All Stars

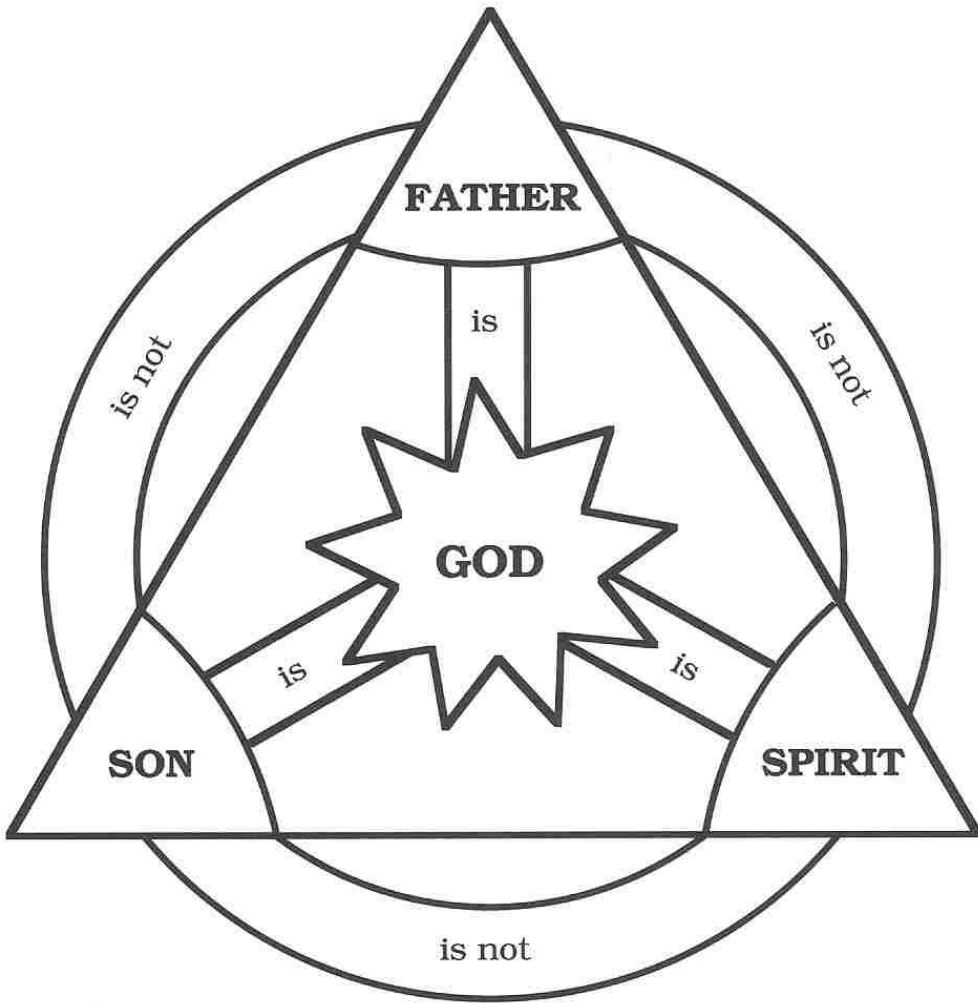
## Liturgy:

Service of Prayer and Preaching, p.260



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Grace to you and peace in Jesus' name. Amen.

As I explained a few weeks ago we are now in the season of the Church Year that is called the Season after Pentecost. The color green adorns our sanctuary representing life in Christ. It is that part of the Church Year that teaches us how to live as Christians in an unchristian world.

Toward that end, this is the first message in a series of ten sermons that I have put together. Each week I'm going to provide a list of questions that you can find in your bulletin *[or at the end of the sermon in print, or on the Internet.]* Those questions may help you as you listen to the sermon. Those questions will also be the questions we will use in our Bible study this morning. So if you've got questions come to the Bible study and get some answers.

The first message is called: "Good News: God Cares for You." How do we know what we know about God? Where do we learn who God is? The Bible says:

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky displays what his hands have made. One day tells a story to the next. One night shares knowledge with the next without talking, without words, without their voices being heard.<sup>1</sup>

The Bible also says:

What can be known about God is clear because he has made it clear to them. From the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly observed in what he made. As a result, people have no excuse.<sup>2</sup>

Can we know about God without the Bible? The Bible says, "yes." There are some thing you can know about God even if you never have the Bible to read. Look at all of creation. Look at the the sun, moon, and stars. Look at the plants and animals. Look at all of nature and see the wonder in all of it. Is there a God? The Bible says:

The fool says in his heart there is no God.<sup>3</sup>

Nature tells us something about God. There is a natural knowledge of God. In fact God's Law is written on our hearts. Not only does nature call out the truth of His existence, but our hearts, our spirit, proclaims His truths. The Bible say:

It is shown that some requirements found in Moses' Teachings *[God's Law]* are written on their hearts. Their consciences speak to them. Their thoughts accuse them on one occasion, and

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1 Psalm 19:1-3

2 Romans 1:19-20

3 Psalm 14:1

defend them on another. This happens as they face the day when God, through Christ Jesus, will judge people's secret thoughts. He will use the Good News [*the Gospel*] that is being spread to make that judgment.<sup>4</sup>

Creation speaks of a creator. All that is around us, as well as we God's most precious creation, all speak of a powerful Creator. That much can be seen by any rational, sane, reasonable person.

That however is not all there is to know about God. Nature cannot tell you how much God loves you. Nature cannot tell you that God has forgiven you. Nature cannot tell you how God has saved you. For that you must turn to one place, and one place only, God's Word.

In God's Word, God tells us about: who God is, what we are worth to Him, how He has saved us, forgiven us, and called us His own children whom He loves and cherishes. Our God is a Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We don't learn that from nature. We learn that through God's Word. Jesus Christ, God Himself, said in Matthew 28:[18-20]

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. So wherever you go, make disciples of all nations: Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to do everything I have commanded you. And remember that I am always with you until the end of time.

So we learn who God is, in part from God's creation and, in part from God's Word. Through these things we know all that we can know about God. There is no other place to go.

So that is our God, but what is God like? Is He a nice God, an angry God, a judgmental God, a forgiving God? Listen to a few quotations from Scripture:

O Lord, you have been our refuge throughout every generation. Before the mountains were born, before you gave birth to the earth and the world, you were God. You are God from everlasting to everlasting.<sup>5</sup>

"I the Lord do not change<sup>6</sup>"

"I am a God who is near. I am also a God who is far away," declares the Lord. "No one can hide so that I cannot see him," declares the Lord. "I fill heaven and earth!" declares the Lord.<sup>7</sup>

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4 Romans 2:15-16 (Paraphrased)

5 Psalm 90:1-2

6 Malachi 19:26

7 Jeremiah 23:23-24

O Lord, you have examined me, and you know me. You alone know when I sit down and when I get up. You read my thoughts from far away. You watch me when I travel and when I rest. You are familiar with all my ways. Even before there is a single word on my tongue, you know all about it, Lord. You are all around me—in front of me and in back of me. You lay your hand on me. Such knowledge is beyond my grasp. It is so high I cannot reach it.<sup>8</sup>

One more...

The Lord, the Lord, a compassionate and merciful God, patient, always faithful and ready to forgive. He continues to show his love to thousands of generations, forgiving wrongdoing, disobedience, and sin. He never lets the guilty go unpunished, punishing children and grandchildren for their parents' sins to the third and fourth generation.<sup>9</sup>

What is our God like? He is eternal. He has no beginning and no end. We learn that He is not fickle, with His mind always changing so that you cannot know what He thinks or says. When God speaks, that is the truth and, it is the truth forever. He is consistent, stable, and dependable. He is everywhere all the time. There is no place you can run, no place you can hide, that God is not there. Which should bring fear to the unfaithful, but for us the faithful of God, that is the greatest comfort because we can know that God will never abandon us or leave us. He cannot lose us or forget us.

In fact not only does He know where we are, but He knows who we are. He knows our innermost and most secret thoughts. There is nothing we can hide from Him. There is nothing we can conceal from Him. Again that should bring fear to the unfaithful, but for us the faithful that means He knows our weaknesses. He knows our regret for past sins. He knows our struggle with unbelief and doubt. He knows, and He gives us help and aid in all those things as we regularly dwell in reading and hearing His Word.

Finally, although there is much more that I could say, we learn that God is desperate to forgive all who trust in Him. However, for those who defiantly refuse to repent there will be a reckoning. People really do go to Hell everyday. Just as people really do go to Heaven everyday.

So God is everywhere, and God made everything. How did God make all this stuff? What power did He call on? What materials did He use? Well, God used God to create all things. In the beginning there was nothing. There was no dirt, no sky, no stars, moon, or sun.

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8 Psalm 139:1-4

9 Exodus 34:6-7

There was nothing. Then God said, “Let there be light.”<sup>10</sup> Then what happened? There was light. Why? Because God said so.

That is how all of creation was created. God, by the power of God, called all things into existence. There is no one greater than He. He created everything perfect, flawless, and pure.

...but He made us different.

All of the plants, animals, dirt, water, and everything else, were made by Him for us. When God made us He stooped down. He got His hands dirty. He formed us with His hands from the dust of the ground.<sup>11</sup> We were made in the image and likeness of God.<sup>12</sup> We are eternal beings. Although we have a beginning, we have no end. There will never be a time, ever again, when you will not be. You will always be, forever into the future, just like God.<sup>13</sup>

You have a free will. You can make up your own mind. You can choose to defy God. ... and that is what we did. This God, perfect, holy, powerful, and merciful, was ignored and defied. He said, “Don’t eat from that one tree.”<sup>14</sup> Adam and Eve thought they knew better. They thought they could live without reliance on God and they took a bite. It may not have seemed like much. It might not seem like much now but, in that one act all of creation was stained. In that one act we were eternally cut off from God. We were dead to Him forever.

That should have been the end of the Bible. God said, “Don’t.” We did. We’re dead.

God, however, could not endure being separated from His children forever. So God made a promise. That promise was One would come to make all things new.<sup>15</sup> One would come to save us, and make us alive again. Alive for all eternity again. So once again you will always be, forever into the future, just like God, and always with God.

Now God cares for us as we live though this life in a sinful world. He does not abandon us or expect us to find our own way. He leads us, and guides us along that narrow road that leads through that narrow gate<sup>16</sup> into the glory of Heaven. For that we give Him our thanks and praise.

This is the God in whom we believe and trust for our salvation. This is the God we worship. This is the God we praise. This is the Sovereign Lord Most High: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

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10 Genesis 1:3

11 Genesis 2:7

12 Genesis 1:27

13 John 3:15

14 Genesis 2:16-17

15 Genesis 3:15

16 Matthew 7:14

Questions:

1. From what two sources do we learn what we know about God.

Nature and Scripture.

2. True or False: The one true God is three Gods: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

False: Three persons – One God.

3. True or False: The Father existed first. Then the Son, and the the Holy Spirit.

False: God is eternally Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

4. The Bible says mankind brought sin into the world.

Evolution says sin brought mankind into the world.

5. The Bible says God created all things in (6) 24-hour days.  
Evolution says mistakes and misfires brought everything into existence in

Billions of years.

6. List three ways God cares for you:

1. Gives me the physical things I need to exist in this world.

2. Gives me health, family, friends, neighbors

3. Forgives my sins. Died for me. Saves me from Hell.

7. What is sin? Sin is not just the bad stuff we do. Sin is everything that is not perfect. Sin is every misstep, misfire, or misrepresentation of the truth.

8. Where do we find the very first promise of a Savior to come?

Genesis 3:15

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9. How did God win us back to Himself?

Through Jesus death and resurrection.

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10. True or False: God cares for us because He feels sorry for us.

False: He loves us.

11. True or False: The way to be saved is to believe sincerely in a higher being that helps us.

False: Believe in Jesus Christ who died and rose for us. God's plan, and only God's plan.

12. What can you give to God?

Nothing.

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