

Sometimes it's helpful to go back to the beginning. Well, today in God's Word, we are going back to the beginning, the very beginning.

Go Back to the Beginning

- I. Remember what God is like.
- II. Remember the Purpose that God Gave You.

First, when we go back to the beginning, we are reminded what God is like. Genesis 1:1 says, **"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."** In the Large Catechism, there is a part where Martin Luther says that you can ask a child, What is God like?¹ What if someone were to ask you the same question? Imagine if someone said to you, "What is God like?" You might say something like, "God is all-powerful." And we certainly see that here in Genesis 1. He made the heavens and the earth. Isaiah said, **"The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary" (Isaiah 40:28).** God is all powerful.

You could also say that God is kind. We certainly see that here in Genesis 1. Everything that God created was meant to be a blessing to us. He created light. That was a kind thing for God to do. Think of all the things that we need light for. God also created a regular period of light and darkness. It says, **"God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light 'day,' and the darkness he called 'night.' And there was evening and there was morning – the first day."** Commentators point out that it was very kind of God to create a regular period of light and a regular period of darkness.² A period of light so that we can be active and a period of darkness to help us rest. And everything else God created was meant to be a blessing to us. He gave us dry ground so that we can have a place to live and move about. He gave us fruit and vegetables to nourish our bodies. It says, **"Then God said, 'I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food' (1:29).**

So when we go back to the beginning, we see that God is all-powerful. God is kind. We also see that God is wise. Think of the wisdom of the one who created the sun. Think of the wisdom of the one who created the moon. Think of the wisdom of the one who created hearts to beat and minds to think. Isaiah says, **"His understanding no one can fathom" (Isaiah 40:28).**

So if someone were to ask us, "What kind of a God do you have?" We could say, "We have a God who is all powerful, all kind and all wise." That's what we would say. But do we ever act and think as though God is not all powerful and all wise and all kind?

If we go for long periods of time without thanking God for his blessings, then we are not thanking God for his kindness. Or we might think or act as if God is not all powerful. For example, do you ever find yourself consumed by worry? I'm someone who worries a lot. I worry about this and then I worry about this and then I worry about this. And someone once said that when that happens it helps to say to yourself, "Didn't God make heaven and earth?" Yes, he did. And if God is wise enough and powerful enough and kind enough to

¹ See The Large Catechism, The Creed, paragraph 11, *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, edited by Robert Kolb and Timothy Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 432. The Large Catechism, The Apostles' Creed, paragraph 11. *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions*, 399.

² Carl J. Lawrenz and John C. Jeske, *A Commentary on Genesis 1-11* (Milwaukee: Northwestern, 2004), 49. John Jeske, *Genesis*, The People's Bible, (Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1991), 13.

make heaven and earth, then I can trust in him. The next time you find yourself consumed by worry, tell yourself, "My God made the earth and the heavens."

Or maybe you are worried about the guilt of your sins. If you are weighed down by the guilt of your sins, consider this: How did God make heaven and earth? He used his Word. **"And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light." (Genesis 1:3)** God's word is so powerful it brought light into existence. God's word of forgiveness is no less powerful.³ And because of what Jesus has done God speaks that word of forgiveness to you.

Go back to the beginning. Remember what God is like. And, secondly, remember the purpose God gave you.

What would you say are the great questions in life? People who have thought about this have said that the great questions in life are: "Where did I come from?" "Who am I?" "Where am I going?" "What's my purpose?" When we go back to the beginning, we find answers to these questions. Where did we come from? Humanity is a special creation of God. Genesis 1:26 says, **"Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness" (Genesis 1:26)**. Did you notice that he said "Let us"? This fits with the full revelation we get in the New Testament that God is triune, three persons in one God. You can hear the love that triune God has for humans when he says, **"Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness" (Genesis 1:26)**.

Adam and Eve were like God in that all of their thoughts and all their desires and all their actions were completely in line with God's will. All of their thoughts, words and actions were perfectly righteous and holy. Their intellect and their emotions and their will were always in perfect harmony with God. And because all their thoughts and all their desires and all their actions were in line with God's will, they would carry out the task that God gave them in a God-pleasing way.

What task did God give them? **"Then God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground'" (1:26)**. The task that God gave them was to rule over creation. And they would carry out that task in a God-pleasing way because they were created in the image of God.

"So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27). But the problem was that Adam and Eve fell into sin. Now they would have thoughts and words and actions that were contrary to God's will. And the same thing would be true for all of their children, including you, including me. And sadly that affects the way we rule over God's creation. Instead of ruling over God's creation in a God-pleasing way we are sometimes selfish and wasteful with the things God has given us.

But the good news is that God did not abandon his creation when they fell into sin. God loved humanity. All three persons of the Trinity were active in creation. God the Father certainly created heaven and earth. But the New Testament tells us that Jesus was also active in creation. John chapter 1 says about Jesus, **"Through him all things were made, without him nothing was made that has been made" (John 1:3)**. And the Holy Spirit was also active in creation. In Genesis 1:2 it says, **"And the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters" (1:2)**. All three persons of the trinity were active in creation. All three persons of the Trinity love humanity. And all three persons of the Trinity were involved in the project to save humanity. The Father sent his Son. The Son died on the cross to take away your sins. And the Holy Spirit brought you to faith in Jesus. And now the Holy Spirit is active in you to renew you in the image of God. Colossians 3:10 says, **"You have taken off your**

³ See the hymn by Martin Franzmann, "Thy Strong Word."

old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator” (3:10). In the book of Ephesians it says, **“You were taught ... to be made new in the attitude of your minds, and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness” (Ephesians 4:23-24).** Through the work of the Holy Spirit renewing us in God’s image, the thoughts, words, and actions of our new man are in line with God’s will.

When we go back to the beginning, we see that God created people with a purpose. He told them to rule over his creation. God has also given responsibilities to us. And now that we are being renewed in God’s image, we can carry out those responsibilities in a God-pleasing way. We all have earthly possessions. As God renews his image in us more and more we can manage those earthly possessions in a God-pleasing way. We all have responsibilities. With the image of God being renewed in us we can carry out those responsibilities in a way that gives glory to God and serves our neighbor. Go back to the beginning. Remember the purpose that God gave you.

Today is Trinity Sunday. And when we go back to the beginning we see the Triune God create the world. We see that he loves humanity. He loves you and me. He created the world in power and wisdom and kindness. And he renews us in his image so that we can serve him. When we go back to the beginning we remember that we have a God we can trust in and a God we can find joy in serving. Amen.