

## **Holy Trinity Sunday June 7, 2020**

**Genesis 1:1--2:4a; 2 Corinthians 13:11-13; Matthew 28:16-20**

Roiling waters in the darkness, formless, empty, without life. This is what the wind/breath/Spirit of God sweeps across in Genesis 1:2. Chaos- without order, confused, formless, without life.

By any measure, we as a nation have descended into some form of chaos in the past week. Once again, a black man dies at the hands of a member of a police department. Once again, a people who have been punished for peaceful protest (take a knee anyone?) express outrage. Once again, we see Americans pitted one against another- police and protestors, those who seek a peaceful exercise of their First Amendment rights and those who seek only to create destruction and chaos.

A week filled with mistrust and suspicion, stoked by some for their own gain - violent, senseless, act met with violent, senseless, act.

It can be easy to feel helpless, hopeless in moments like this. But remember, my fellow followers of Jesus...remember what brings order out of chaos! God's Word. Spoken. God's wind/Spirit/breath flows across the top of the chaos and God's breath gives voice to God's Word, "Let there be light!". And there is. And God sees that it is good. And moves once again to speak creation, order, life out of the chaos.

From the beginning- God works to create something new out of chaos, dis-order, through God's Word. Jesus, as the Gospel of John reminds us, Jesus is God's Word to us- God's self-expression to us...the best view we have of who God is and what God desires. A Word spoken into chaos that has told us- love one another as I have loved you. A love that will go to the cross for the other. A love that is willing to die for the other.

As an American who is white- I need to die to myself. To my own prejudices. To my own But-I'm-Not-ism. "But I'm not racist!" "But I'm not prejudiced!" "But I'm not privileged!" Die to myself. So that, I can follow my Jesus and love my neighbor whose skin is darker than mine enough to listen to them. To absorb. And not so I can respond, but so I can learn. Not to be understood, but to understand. To hear the truth of their life.

From the beginning- God has called God's people to stand with the poor, with the oppressed, with those who have no power in society. These are the words that the Prophets bring to the kingdoms of once united Israel, if you do not do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God there will be consequences.

We see in the death of George Floyd, in the widespread peaceful protests, in the violence and looting of some, in the attacks on police by some, in the violent response by some police- we see in these things the sins of our fathers falling upon us to even the thirteenth generation now. The sin of slavery- of not only owning fellow human beings created in the image of God but the racism of thinking that they are less than human because of the color of their skin.

But as baptized children of God, the one who brings life out of chaos, who have been brought to new life ourselves through the waters, we know what to do, don't we?

It is for a time such as this that we have been rooting ourselves in the scriptures- the story of God's pursuit of God's people, practicing our faith through worship, centering our lives in Christ alone.

It is for a time such as this. That we are called by Jesus as his followers to go to all nations baptizing in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Teaching the world through word and deed, every day, when we are at home and when we are away, when we lie down and when we rise, teaching about the love of God in Jesus Christ. About what it means to love God and love each other.

It is for a time such as this that I am a Christian who happens to be Lutheran, because we are not an either/or people but a both/and people. Because we can hold many truths in tension with one another. I am appalled by the violence and looting done by some even as I can appreciate the raw emotion that it sometimes is an expression of. An outpouring of all those injustices big and little over the years. I understand it more than the violence and looting done when your sports team wins a championship or just because its Veisha. I understand it even as I condemn any attack on one who bears the image of God.

As a Christian who is Lutheran I can hold many truths in tension with each other. I can stand with the protestors exercising their first amendment rights even as I stand with the officers tasked with keeping those protests peaceful and safe.

I can do these things, we can do these things, because we have been pulled by our loving God through Jesus Christ out of the churning chaotic waters of sin that threatened to drown us. Because when we cried, "I can't breathe!" the very breath of God that is the Holy Spirit entered into us through the Word of God in scripture, through the Word of God proclaimed to us by fellow believers, through the water and the Word of baptism. That Spirit entered into us and gave us breath, gave us life.

It is for times such as these... when sin, the devil, and all the forces that defy God seem to manifest within ourselves and our fellow citizens... that we realize the ways in which the truth is not in us and we confess our own sin, our own unwillingness to be transformed in thought and action, our own self-righteousness that says, "I'm fine just the way I am!" and in that confession, that transformation -our God who is faithful and just will forgive our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

And then that same God sends us out, with the Greatest Commission ever given. Go! Baptize, Teach, Speak! And also, sends us with the greatest gifts. Paul reminds us of those at the end of his letter to the Corinthians.

The grace of Jesus, the love of God, the communion of the Holy Spirit. Be with you all.

There is power in these Words. Power freely given to us as God's hands and feet, God's means of acting in the world.

The grace and loving-kindness of Jesus. Jesus, who looked on others with love, and who spoke truth to others in love. Not to demean or insult, but so that they might be transformed. This grace and loving-kindness be with you all so that you can speak truth- racism exists in the United States. Racism specifically towards African-Americans but also to other people of color. Grace and loving-kindness to speak the truth...so that... you can see clearly the log in your own eye and pluck it out. So that...you and others may have breath, may have life.

The love of God is with you. A love so great that while we were mired in sin God sent God's only Son Jesus so that we might not die but have life. A love so great that God will drop everything to pursue us when we go astray. A love that will sacrifice and correct, that will be patient and kind. A love that inspires us, gives us breath enough to look for the good of the other before ourselves.

The communion of the Holy Spirit is with you. A fellowship with other believers, with all those who bear the image of God. A communion that extends back through time and space to Jesus and those first followers and forward in time and space to all those who will follow the Triune God. A communion that supports us when we falter, that forgives us when we sin, that strengthens and encourages us

to be who God has called us to be- bearers of love, mercy, and grace- for all people.

All this is ours, so that... so that we might be swept up into the dance, the interplay of grace, love, communion- that exists within God- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The dance of the wind of new life, the love that would die for another, the creative power that can bring order out of chaos.

It is for times such as these my fellow believers, that we have been loved, claimed, and equipped. To do the mighty acts of God by loving one another in deed and truth, by showing grace to one another, by living in community with all.

It is for times such as these...

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all... so that...