

Sermon Draft

Text: Proverbs 8:1–4, 22–31

Sermon: Holy Trinity 2019

Today is Trinity Sunday, an occasion for us as Christians to confess our faith in the triune God. We take great delight in confessing and knowing the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We have confessed the Trinity in the Athanasian Creed. But the message this morning, focuses less on the confession of the Trinity and more on the resounding delight that flows from God to his people.

If you were creating a time capsule to place in the cornerstone of the church, what would you put into the capsule? Why would you put it there?

In July 2014, St. John's Lutheran Church in Orange, California, celebrated the 100th anniversary of its sanctuary. As part of the celebration, they opened the cornerstone and took out the time capsule placed there a century ago. In the capsule, among other things, they found a German **Bible**, a German **hymnal**, and a local **newspaper**.

In these three things, we have a picture of God's work among and through his people: the Word of God, the words of his people, and the words of the world.

Here is the Word of God by which God proclaims the saving work of Jesus Christ and brings salvation to all people. Here are the words of the people, their hymnbook, by which they give praise to God. And, along with the Word of God and the words of his people, one has the words of the world. A newspaper gives a glimpse of the world out of which God calls his people and to which God sends his people as part of his saving mission.

With these small objects, those who laid the cornerstone offered a prayer for future generations, that they would continue in God's mission. In this cornerstone was buried a prayer that people would hear the Word of God, proclaim that Word in their world, and lift up to God their songs of praise.

In our Old Testament Reading this morning, we do not have a time capsule with objects in it, but we do have a rare glimpse of what was there at the earth's foundation.

Our goal is to open up this text and meditate on this song of Wisdom so that we might rejoice in the work of God.

In our Old Testament Reading, we are given a glimpse of creation. Most of us are familiar with the account of creation in Genesis 1 and 2. “*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*” Out of nothing, God brought all things into being.

What is beautiful about this text from Proverbs, however, is that we are offered a glimpse of something more when we hear the story of creation. We are given a glimpse of God: God, before his work of creation. And what we see there is delight: God’s delight. Before the world began, God was rejoicing, and his delight begins the story of our salvation.

What was God delighting in? The text answers this for us with two verses (vs 30–31). The Lord was delighting in Wisdom, and Wisdom was delighting in the people God made to inhabit the world.

The apostle Paul clarifies for us what this is all about. In writing to the Colossians, Paul testifies to Jesus. He says, “*By him all things were created, in heaven and on earth*” (Colossians 1:16).

Before creation, Jesus was with God the Father, and all things were created through him. Thus, Jesus is this figure of Wisdom, the master workman who is with the Father before the world was created. The Father delighted in Jesus, and Jesus rejoiced before the Father. The world itself was created with exuberance and joy. Father, Son, and Spirit worked together to bring all things into being, and after the world was created, God called all things good.

This delight, however, spreads from God to his creation. Jesus is seen “*rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the children of men*” (v 31). Before the world began, Jesus was filled with delight for all people and, after the fall into sin, Jesus held on to this original delight. Out of joy, Jesus came to save these people and to restore creation, which had been cursed because of human sin.

If one were to go back to the foundation of the world and recover a time capsule, within the capsule one would have the delight of God. God the Father has delight in his Son, Jesus, and Jesus, God’s Son, has delight in all people. The story of our salvation begins with this delight of God. God delights in His work of salvation.

Sometimes, people approach God as a momentary fix for a problem in life. They turn to God only when something is wrong. A divorce. A death. A disaster. And God is that temporary healer, the momentary fix for a problem in life. God unfortunately becomes very small. In sin, we reduce God. We make him fit our needs.

Opening this time capsule from Proverbs, however, gives us a different vision of God. Forgiveness is not simply a momentary fix in our lives. It is part of a much larger story. It is part of God's delight before the world began. God the Father delighted in Jesus, who was his master workman. Jesus formed us as creatures and found delight in us. After we fell into sin, God the Father still delighted in his Son. Why? Because Jesus chose to come, to die for our sin, and to rise for our salvation. By his death and resurrection, Jesus promises to bring us from this world into the new creation of God, where we will sing an everlasting song of praise.

This song from Proverbs teaches us to sing a song of praise. To give God thanks for his delight in Jesus Christ, who not only created us but also came in love to save us after we fell into sin.

When we read the Book of Proverbs, it is easy to think about us pursuing Wisdom. That is, in the Book of Proverbs, we expect to encounter short proverbial sayings that will help us in discipleship. Proverbs teaches us how to walk in the ways of God.

What is amazing about this passage from Proverbs, however, is that we don't come across words about us pursuing God. No. Instead, we come across words about God pursuing us. Wisdom goes to the crowded places, calls to all people, and sings of God's delight. Before we ever pursue God, God pursues us. Before we ever delight in God, God already delights in us.

Thus, our salvation begins and ends with God's delight.

I think most of us are familiar with Psalm 23? Do you remember how that psalm ends? At the end of Psalm 23, David looks to the future and says this about God: ***“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever”*** (v 6). The word for “follow” means “pursue.” Because of Christ, God will pursue us with goodness and mercy all of our days.

This proverb takes us to the beginning of time to see God's delight so we can faithfully look ahead to the end of time, knowing his love will pursue us all our days.

Amen