

Genesis 1:1-2:4a

Seven times in the first chapter of Genesis we hear the word *good*. God was pleased with everything He created. From the stars above to the fish in the sea; from the plants and trees in the earth to the birds of the air, everything was good. Even man God created good. And how could it not all be good? Since God is good, everything He makes must also be good.

But in the very next chapter of Genesis we are told that there is something, just one thing, that is not good. "*It is not good,*" says God, "*for the man to be alone.*" God is not alone. He has never been alone. God is one, but He is also three - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We emphasize this truth today on Holy Trinity Sunday. What God is, He desired for man; not to be alone, but to be with someone - someone for the man to love. And so God created woman. He fashioned her from Adam's rib and brought her to the man. And the man loved her.

Love is not possible unless there is someone to love. Someone, not something. God brought all the animals to Adam, but no animal could become the object of his love. We say things like, "I love my dog...I love my cat...my horse." But this is not love. We use the word love, but this emotion is something less than love.

God is love. He is love because He is not alone. He is three Persons in one God. There is love between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit for each other.

Contrast this true God with the Muslim god - Allah. Their god, they teach, is one. There is no plurality in him. Being alone it is impossible for Allah to love. Instead he is a god of anger and hatred. As he is, so are his followers. Muslims have been on the warpath from the first day even till today, and they always will be, for their god is not the God of love, nor will he ever be.

God created you and me not out of necessity, but out of love. He chose to bring us into His relationship of love. Think of a husband and wife who already have love for each other. They love already because they have each other as the object of their love. Out of their love for each other, they bring children into their relationship of love. Now their children are loved also, and they learn of love from their parents. And so God created you to bring you, as His child, into the love that He, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, have for each other.

After God created, He looked at all He had made, including man and woman who loved each other, and who loved God, and He said, "*It is very good.*" Not just *good*. Now, with man not being alone, but having someone to love, God's creation was very good.

Good and *love* - these are the words which describe how God made you. But where are these words now? God remains good, and God remains love. But not so with His creation. Not so with us. In Genesis 6 we're told that God looked and He saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth. What happened to, "*And it was very good*"? Where did the love go - the love of mankind for each other and for God?

The Serpent, who is a robber and murderer, took it. Not for himself, so as to be good and loving. For the devil, like Allah - one of his many masks that he wears - can never be good and loving. For Satan is alone in himself; alone with his evil and hatred.

Think of the devil as zero. Zero because he has nothing to give. Whenever you multiply a number by zero, you always end up with zero. Goodness and love Satan took away from God's creation; away from us. Two times zero is zero. The devil remained with nothing, but we also were left with nothing. No longer good, and no longer full of love for God and for others. This is why, when God looked in Genesis 6, He saw the wickedness of man as being great in the earth.

But though the Serpent robbed God's creation of goodness and love, he did not rob God. God is always good, and God is always love. Out of the relationship of love between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Son, Jesus Christ, came into our loveless world to be love incarnate for us. Jesus, who is good - very good - made a dark Friday *Good* Friday by accepting the wickedness of mankind and suffering the penalty for it as He hung on a cross.

If you want to see goodness and love, do not look into yourself, for you and I will not find it there. Apart from Christ there is no love - not the love of God. And apart from Christ no one is good.

We do not like to use the word *wicked* to describe people. We say their actions can be wicked, as we see with the horrors of terrorism. We like to think that there is some good in everyone, although with some you have to search for it.

But if there remains some good in us, what need do we have for our good God? If we know love apart from God, we do not understand the love we see hanging from the cross. It is only when we see how wicked we are that the goodness and love of Christ is seen for what it truly is. It is pure, selfless, always giving, never taking.

And it is for all. The goodness of Christ; the love of Good Friday, is not for those who are good and loving. It is for those who are wicked sinners. And if this is you, then it is for you. Then you, my friend, have reason to rejoice and praise God. For your God is good to you. And your God is full of love for you. Then you have a God who does not excuse your wickedness, but He deals with it once and for all. He takes responsibility for it. He forgives you. He sees you through Christ who is good for you, whose love has made you who you now are - God's forgiven child in Jesus; baptized into the relationship of love between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; no longer wicked in God's eyes, but innocent, completely pardoned for Jesus' sake.

And now you, dear precious child of God, have the privilege of coming up to the Sacrament where goodness and love come into you through your mouth. For here is where our good God comes to us, and here is where Love incarnate comes into you to keep you in the relationship of love between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.