

Genesis 1

June 7, 2020

“And God saw that it was good.” We hear these words all through the creation account. But have we heard them lately? Does God call it good when all across our nation violence breaks out; store windows are smashed, and looters rush in to steal everything before burning the store to the ground? Does God call it good when drivers are pulled from their vehicles and beaten? When officers of the law wrongly take the law into their own hands, and when officers who are doing their duty are beaten and even killed by rioters? Someone is calling all of this good, but it’s not God; it’s Satan.

Reading Genesis 1, we understand quite clearly that God is a God of order. His creation is evidence of this. Each day of creation is carefully laid out, not a haphazard free-for-all held together with duct tape. Everything God made, He designed with perfect wisdom. And it all fit perfectly into the order of creation.

Satan hates law and order. He is the opposite of God. Satan is the god of chaos and mayhem. He delights in disrupting God’s good order in creation and society. And he has an underlying purpose: to shipwreck the faith of Christians, and to keep all others away from the Christian Faith.

It seems as though the world as of late is out of order. Satan did this. He turned the world upside down by bringing sin into the world. And along with the world, he delights in turning upside down the people who live in the world.

We should not be shocked when violence and chaos erupt around us. We are not living in the Genesis 1 world anymore. That world has been flipped on its head by sin.

Is this reason to despair? Absolutely not! The Son of God, Jesus Christ, entered our world to put things back in order. Every miracle Jesus did was, in effect, turning things right side up again. Calming storms, healing the sick, raising the dead; whatever Jesus touched, He put back in its proper order.

But all these miracles were temporary. Storms would come again. More sicknesses would follow. And those He raised to life would die again. What Jesus had to do was to allow sin to turn Him and His life on its head.

“This Jesus,” cries St. Peter in our Acts reading, *“you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.”* The God who made the heavens and the earth was Himself flipped upside down by being murdered on a cross by the very people He lovingly created.

Why isn’t that headline news? Why aren’t rioters storming the streets in protest of sinful man crucifying the Holy God? It is because this sinful world thinks it is right side up, and that God belongs on a cross.

But that is not where He is anymore. *“This Jesus,”* says St. Peter, *“...God raised Him up.”* He turned Him right side up again on the Third Day. And this same Jesus says to His disciples in our Matthew reading, *“Make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”*

Do you see what Jesus is doing? He is sending out His disciples to turn, not the world, but people's lives right side up again. He did this for you in your baptism. You and I were born breach. Not physically, spiritually, for we were born in sin. Your baptism forgives your sin, for you are baptized into Christ Jesus. Once in Satan's kingdom, you now belong to Jesus. And so you are right with God, right side up, because you are in Christ. The world is still turned on its head, but not the church, because Christ is the head of His church.

But does it seem at times as though your life is still upside down? Mine does. God is a God of order, and so I sometimes wonder why my life is so chaotic. And I think I speak also for you. It is because sin still dwells in us. People think of sin as the bad things we do. True, but really sin is a power that lives in us. It is alive in a deadly way. And it keeps turning us wrong side up and turning our lives into a chaotic mess.

Here is good news for you. The perfect order of Genesis 1 is found in Jesus. He is the new creation. And though it may not seem like it, you are included in this new creation, for you are in Christ.

You and I are called to live by faith and not by sight. We may see things turned upside down, even our own life. And yes, the world is still this way. But not you. For you, all is right. God is right with you and you with Him. It is because of Jesus.

And your sinfulness? It is forgiven. Jesus took care of it for you. He died for every one of you. You are all forgiven. And the power of your baptism is far greater than the power of sin, for baptism is the power of God Himself.

Most certainly God is not calling it good that this world, in rejecting Him, is upside down. But He does call good that you are in Christ and Christ is in you. He calls it good what Jesus has done for you, and that no matter how awful and chaotic things become, He will always keep you right side up. Amen.