

**Genesis 1:1-2:4a**

When a couple is about to have a baby, before the baby is born, they will create a beautiful, comfortable baby room within their home. They may put a fresh coat of paint on the walls. They may bring in lamps for soft lighting. They will bring in a nice comfy crib complete with sheets and blankets so that their baby will have a warm, cozy place to sleep. They will fill the closet with baby clothes. They will bring in a sturdy diaper-changing table. They may hang a mobile over the crib so that their baby can watch it going around and around. They will hang pictures on the walls, and they will make sure that every square-inch of the room is clean and germ-free. They will do all these things to create the perfect environment because, even before their baby is born, they love their baby and they want their baby to be safe and happy.

And that, dear friends, is the story of the first chapter in the Bible. Even before He created man and woman, God created the perfect world for them in which to live. Before you came into existence, God made the sun, and moon, and the stars in the sky; He hung them like pictures on a wall. He created a world for you in which the pantry was full of food for you to eat, and the closets were full of clothing for you to wear. God did not create without purpose. Everything He created was for your good. With great care and flawless design He called everything into existence by the power of His Word, and “it was very good.”

And when He made us, He took great care to put us into families so that we would reflect His image—that of a father and mother loving their children and raising them in the love of God, and children respecting their parents with great honor. Genesis 1 tells us that when the “baby” came, the baby room was ready and God placed Adam and Eve into a world, a garden, in which every square inch was designed specially for them and for all their children.

And as we look today at the world in which we live, we may want to ask ourselves, “What on earth has happened to the baby’s room?” An earthquake last week killed possibly 30,000 people in China. More than 100,000 were killed in Myanmar in a great natural catastrophe. The price of a barrel of oil has gone so high that motorists are sickened at the cost of filling their cars with gasoline. Internet porn is on the rise. Sexual predators live in our own neighborhoods. Adultery and homosexuality are considered normal. The baby room which was created so wonderfully by a loving God is now a complete mess. Our world which was so safe and spotless is now filthy with sin and full of sickness, tragedy, and death. What has happened to the baby room?

And the only answer that is truthfully accurate is that the baby chose to reject his God. He chose to reject God’s loving plan and purpose. It is the baby, himself, who spoiled his own room. He did not want the food his God so wonderfully made; he chose to eat fruit from that tree which was forbidden.

What has happened to the baby room? We ourselves have ruined it. We are the baby—the children of Adam and Eve—who continue to follow in the sinful ways of our first parents. We live selfishly. We disrespect authority. We choose to ignore our loving God and reject the good gifts He gives, taking instead, what is forbidden and harmful to us. Our eyes lust after what is wrong. Our hearts covet what belongs to our neighbor. Our hands take what God has not given us, and our feet are quick to walk toward temptation. We’re lazy. We

complain. We worry. We have messed up our own world by our sinfulness, and yet we blame God for everything that is wrong.

What is God to do with such a selfish and destructive baby? We, who have grown to be children, and teen-agers, and adults, who should know better, but who continue to live rejecting God in our hearts and with our lives?

What does God do? He does not, as some would say, “throw the baby out with the bathwater.” He does not punish you. He is not angry at you. Even before He called you into existence, He loved you with a great love. And He knew just exactly what you and I would do to destroy our beautiful room; He knew we would live selfishly and reject His love for us. And so even before He put you into this world; even before He placed you into the warm, cozy crib He made for you; even before He hung the sun, the moon, and the stars in the sky, He placed a cross upon the wall, and on that cross He placed His Son, Jesus. And so when the baby came and spoiled the room God made for him, Jesus, on that cross would take the blame. When the baby came and rejected his loving God Jesus, on the cross would suffer all the punishment for that wrong.

And even though your life and mine is full of sin today, that cross is still hanging on the wall in your room; and so when you lust in your heart, God looks to Jesus on the cross and forgives you. When you disrespect those in authority over you, God does not hold anger in His heart toward you; because the cross is on the wall for you, He forgives you. Every sinful thought, and word, and deed of yours is forgiven because that cross of Jesus is always, day after day, hanging on the wall for you.

That’s what it means, friend, to be baptized into Christ Jesus. It means that God has placed the cross on the wall in your room, and no one and nothing can take down that cross. It means that even though we live in a world full of trouble with earthquakes, and tornados, and rising fuel prices, incest, rape, and murder, the cross is still there on the wall; and no problem near or far, no catastrophe, no worry, no sin, not even death itself can tear that cross of Jesus off your wall. It is there to stay. No matter what happens in the world, the truth is that Jesus died for you on the cross. No matter what sin you have done, that cross is staying put. God forgives your sin; He forgives you.

And even though our room is a complete mess, and we ourselves will one day die in this room, the cross of Jesus tells us that a new room awaits us. Jesus’ death ended in life. Life for Him; life for you. He is even now preparing a new room for you in heaven, and that room will never become spoiled. No sin will ever enter it. That room will never see worry, or tragedy, or death. And that room is for you because Jesus’ cross is for you which God, in your baptism, Himself placed upon your wall forever. Amen.