

Wednesday of Reminiscere, the 13th Day of Lent
March 3, 2010

Rev. David A. Kind
University Lutheran Chapel
Minneapolis, Minnesota

✠ Jesu juva ✠

SALVATOR MUNDI

Proverbs 30:1-9; Psalm 145; John 6:27-35

Grace, mercy and peace be unto you from God the Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen

Last week we heard about how God has created all things through the power of His Word; how He literally spoke all things into being. Tonight we are taking up a second theme found in the first article of the creed, how God as Creator continues to sustain His creation and provide for His creatures. Our God is not a creator who makes something and then stands back and lets it run on its own. He is not a detached spectator – even when it comes to the most mundane of natural processes and operations. According to the Book of Hebrews Christ our Lord, is not only the One who spoke creation into being, but continues “upholding all things by the Word of His power”.



We chanted concerning this in tonight’s Psalm: “The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all His works. All Your works shall praise You, O Lord, and Your saints shall bless You.” And again a little later, we sang words that are familiar to many of you as part of your table prayers: “The eyes of all look expectantly to You, and You give them their food in due season. You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.” Psalm 104, likewise credits God with this ongoing creative work of providing, not just for mankind and the animals, but for everything, even the parts of creation that are not alive: “He sends the springs into the valleys; They flow among the hills. They give drink

to every beast of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst. By them the birds of the heavens have their home; they sing among the branches. He waters the hills from His upper chambers; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of Your works. He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and vegetation for the service of man, that he may bring forth food from the earth, and wine that makes glad the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread which strengthens man’s heart.”

Luther captures this providential work of God as creator in His explanation to the first article of the creed in the Small Catechism. Not only has God made me and all creatures, but He also gives me “clothing and shoes, meat and drink, house and home, wife and children, fields, cattle, and all my goods; that He richly and

daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life.” And yet while God created from nothing, He does not ordinarily provide these gifts from nothing. Rather He uses the creation He has made as the instrument to provide these things. The natural processes of the earth and atmosphere; the animal and plant life, the institutions of mankind that He has established, such as parents, employment, government, and church. Nevertheless, behind these things and through them, He is speaking and giving. Without His speaking they too would cease to function or even to exist.

And in this continual giving that God does; in this providence, we see His love for His creatures. Why does He open His hand and provide for every living thing? Because He loves them. And most importantly, and higher than the rest, He loves us.

In fact, the goodness of God that we should see in the stuff of our everyday life, is meant to cause us to seek His goodness for our salvation. Notice how the Psalmist turns from God’s providing us food to providing us grace and help: “The Lord is righteous in all His ways, gracious in all His works... he will hear their cry and save them.” And earlier: “The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy.”

This is why Agur the son of Jakeh says in Proverbs: “Give me neither poverty nor riches— feed me with the food allotted to me; lest I be full and deny You, and say, “Who is the LORD?” or lest I be poor and steal, and profane the name of my God.” Don’t give me too little or too much, he says. Why? Because either one can easily lead to evil. And what’s more, the best blessings of God are not found in material needs and desires, but in Christ.

Our Lord says: “Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you.” And what is that food? It is Christ Himself! “I am the bread of life.” Jesus says, “He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.” Now clearly Jesus does not mean that we will no longer need the gifts of God’s providential care. As long as we live on the earth we will need them. But the hungering and thirsting which He speaks about here are spiritual hunger and thirst, a hunger and thirsting for righteousness, for forgiveness, for grace, for a restoration of life with God and unity with Him.

And these things Christ our Lord too has gotten for us. He has come down from heaven to feed us. And, just as with the act of creating, so now also He speaks this life to us. He speaks His Word and declares this new reality for us and makes it so. He makes us righteous, forgives our sins, and reunites us to God by the power and grace of His Word. And so that we may better apprehend and believe these gifts, He also gives them to us in material form through the Sacraments. His Word enters water that we may be cleansed through washing. His Word enters bread and wine and imparts His presence to it, so that it is His body and blood for us to eat and drink. Here are some of the most basic things

in creation, water with which to wash and a simple meal to eat, and yet through these things the greatest of gifts is ours, forgiveness and with it life and salvation. But the power of these things is still the power of the Word that Christ speaks. He has spoken this Word now to you, that you may have life. And that you may dine on him. Our God certainly loves and sustains His creation through His Word. And more important than that; He loves and keeps you through Christ Jesus; to whom be all honor and glory now and forever. Amen.

✠ Soli Deo gloria ✠

