

Life Would Not be Endurable without Faith in God

Sermon for the 4th Sunday after Easter

Sermon Text: Genesis 1:1-4, 26-31, & 2:1-4



1:1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. 3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. 4 And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. 26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have

dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." 29 And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. 30 And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. 31 And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. 2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them, 2 And on the seventh day God finished His work that He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work that He had done. 3 So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all His work that He had done in creation. 4 These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.

The destruction in Mariupol and other cities is terrible. Cities with millions of citizens are flattened to the ground in Ukraine. And even more terrible is the destruction of life. Life that we take for granted here under the Spring sunshine, is wiped out there. People like us are killed. What happens in Ukraine is unfortunately not an isolated case. Everywhere in our world, there is destruction, war, and violation of human rights. Even that has something to do with us because war that rages elsewhere, comes from the same roots and from the same seeds that we carry in our hearts. Hate, jealousy, selfishness are not only qualities of a dictator. We know them too. And we also know about war and trauma that happens in private lives. Yes, we know many examples where the threads of relationships are torn – where parents and children, husband and wife no longer saw another solution other than to separate... for good. Brokenness and broken souls are the result. The question with all of this is whether there is something that is sure, that is certain. Is there a love that extends through all times and suffering? Is there someone we can trust? To understand this, we must look all the way back in the past. We look to the first pages of the Bible. This account of Creation is the gateway to world history. And God wants to already tell us what the theme of the whole Bible is – this theme is that God loves us and that He wants us! And we can believe in God and trust Him, even when many speak against this faith. Since the first

days, there were already always people who were against the Creator. In the old days, most people believed that humans were not made by God, but rather that we were subjected to chaotic forces and powers. At that time, people believed that the stars, sun, and moon were gods who waged war with one another. And the fate of the people is determined according to the outcome of this war. Sometimes for destruction, sometimes for peace – the Bible vehemently contradicts this. Above the whole account of Creation in great big letters is: GOD CREATED! With amazement and praise, God's Word takes us by the hand and introduces us to the theme of the Bible: specifically, that God made us and everything in the world. First of all, it's about the creation of the world. The words sound like when a secret observer had sat down nearby and had written everything down what God created. In so doing, the author lets us peek into God's heart. God Himself talks from His own heart when He says: "It was good!" God Himself is delighted with His own creation. Can you relate this wonderment of God's? Especially now in this blossoming time of Spring? How wonderfully God made everything! How brilliantly He put everything together! How magnificent everything is! From the buzzing bees to the playful monkeys about which we can laugh so much... Did God also laugh when He created them? But with all these amazing things, we can't ignore that God didn't just make birds, animals, fish, lights, and plants just so He can be amused by them. No, His creation has a specific goal. He wants people. The creation of humanity is, according to this account, the ultimate crown. That's what God's point is. That's His goal. He's always thought of that this way... to make people! Everything else is just background music. In the beginning of the Bible, God wants to tell us that it's about us here! Have you ever asked yourself why God absolutely wanted people? Wasn't the world good enough without people? Without us, isn't it perhaps even better? We may also ask further, when God made Adam and Eve, wouldn't He have had to clean the slate? Both were, even without children, like a sack full of fleas that one must continually collect... No, God wanted more children! He wanted even more people to live. And even after so many generations, He didn't consider it unnecessary for you to be born. You with all your flaws and failures. The Word comes to you from God's heart too. "It was good and God wanted it this way." It is good and God wants it this way. Each of us should write this firmly in our hearts. Yes, these great words are written over your life and my life: God created you! And it was good! Whether you are too fat or too tall or too short, it's irrelevant. This is the only thing that is relevant: God made you and therefore it is good. You are, in your own special way, the image of God and thus the representation of God in the world and not just a pointless footnote... You are good! Because He wanted it so... with these words, that God created the world and us, the point of the entire Bible is indicated. Above everything that happened and will happen, is now God's Holy Will. In the Hebrew language, a special word is used for the creation that only leads back to God. This word means that God created everything out of nothing and clearly shows us that behind the entire creation is only the Holy Will of God. Only God can create something out of nothing. And God does that! And He does that because He wants it! And because He loves us! And that still applies today! And yet this Holy Will of God is not obvious but hidden. We can't always understand God's Will. We can't understand why He even allows war and why so much suffering must happen on earth. God doesn't give us definitive answers to all these questions. We are not God but His creations and must remain ignorant of many questions. We always stand between two great worlds. On the one side is this world, that is marked and tormented with sin, war, and death. On the other side is God with His good and gracious Will. We aren't in God's world, but in our world. But this world would not be endurable without faith in God. Without the faith, that God holds everything in His hand, we would now be lost and must believe that our fate is in the hands of a single dictator. But God gives us a glimpse into His world which is different than our world. Through Jesus, God shows us all of this. Jesus incarnate is

already the fulfillment of God's Will. In Jesus, we see everything that we are not and what we cannot be. We see our destiny and our goal in Him. And this Jesus doesn't leave us alone with our many questions. He even shares our helplessness and feeling of being forsaken by God. And because Jesus comes so near to us, we can have a portion of Him. His death becomes our death just like His life becomes our life too. Through Jesus, we also see again that God has a purpose for our lives. We may be a new creature in Jesus. *The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.* And that applies especially in war. God takes us by the hand even in these dark times and shows us that war and hate don't have the last word.

Without this faith in God which comes to us through Jesus, we could not endure the current time. How terrible to think that a single person can destroy the world with the push of a button. God takes us by the hand and disagrees. No, it's not like that! Faith shows us that God made the world because it wanted it! And if God wanted the world, then He always wants it. A dictator can do nothing against this Holy Will! It should therefore longer be the same for us as it was after Adam and Eve. War and hate should no longer rule over us. My life is now under a completely different sign, under the sign of Jesus Christ who has bound Himself to me. Jesus Christ who gives us new life. Amen.