

Sermon from Pastor Konrad Rönnecke  
3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Trinity  
Sermon Text: Genesis 1:1-4a & 26-28, 31, 2:1-3

*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup>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. <sup>3</sup>And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. <sup>4</sup>And God saw that the light was good... <sup>26</sup>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." <sup>27</sup>So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. <sup>28</sup>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." <sup>31</sup>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. <sup>2:1</sup>Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. <sup>2</sup>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. <sup>3</sup>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.*

How did the world come to be? Where does all life come from? Two friends are discussing these questions. The first says with great conviction, "Long ago, there was a big bang. The world began, the stars came into being as well as planets and the earth. At some point, life developed on earth – very simple at first and then more and more complex, until finally people developed." The other replies, "This sounds convincing at first, but there's a snag in your theory. Imagine that there's a huge semi-truck full of thousands of bricks driving along until it stops and dumps out the bricks. What do you think happens there? What will result from this?" The first friend replies, "There will be a thick cloud of dust." "And what of the bricks?" asks the second friend. "They're all jumbled up in a big pile, all over the place, and some are even broken." "Exactly!" says the second friend. "When a truck simply dumps out its load of bricks, no house or garage will emerge. At most, there is a huge, jumbled mess. To build a house, you need bricks but above all, you need good blueprints and someone who draws up the blueprints and carries them out. And this is the snag in your theory. An explosion at most creates a mess, like dumping out bricks – in the end, only chaos remains, a 'tohu, wavohu' (Genesis 1:2) The blueprint is missing as well as the One who has made the blueprint and carries it out." The Bible, dear congregation, introduces us to the One who made matter and the blueprint and who put it into action: God the Lord, the Architect, Creator, and Sustainer of heaven and earth. The Bible introduces us to the One who created the laws of nature, who calls us into life, who knows me and works in my life. These are the takeaway points: 1<sup>st</sup>: The world exists because God wants it, 2<sup>nd</sup>: Man exists because God calls him, 3<sup>rd</sup>: Rest exists because God has it and gives it.

1<sup>st</sup> Point: **The world exists because God wants it.** In the discussion between the two friends, the one thought that the world is the product of a big bang, a product of chance, and that man is the result of a long evolution. Such theories and ways of thinking have shaped us more than we think. Life is a "*product of chance, an accident of nature*"? How many people suffer under this phrase because life, the environment, and society constantly point out: Who are you actually? What do you want? What can you do? You are just an accident of nature. They are people who have never experienced what the following sentence means: I am wanted, I am loved, I am unique, special, precious, and I have worth. Or what about the key word "*evolution*"? If that is true, then there would be more evolved people and others who aren't yet real people. With this, people start to select and sort: What is worthy of life and what is not? Who keeps up with the times and who doesn't? Which life is worth protecting and which is not – this is a very dark chapter in history, and not just in the history of our German people. This kind of thinking still exists today, for example, in business, people are referred to as "human capital" whose value is defined solely by their performance. How quickly people are pushed aside when they don't meet the criteria. "I've been discarded" someone told me recently after a long career while pointing to their knees and hips. Or in our country, courts attempt to sort out when new life is "just a pile of cells" and when it is a person. And people who campaign for the protection of unborn life are pigeonholed and criminalized. The Bible addresses us here: Don't get carried away! Don't make mistakes! Think about the cosmos, the beautiful earth, the life of people, each individual, even the new life in their mother's womb, all people owe their being, their right to life, their worth to God the Lord.

"*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*" The account of creation shows that the Lord God is before all things and in all things. Behind everything is a brilliant designer. And in the end, it's not just good, but "*very good.*" Even in "*how*" God created the world, the Lord God reveals Himself to us. We read in the account of Creation that "*God said... and it was so.*" As parents, we sometimes wish that when we tell little children to do something, it happens, that they pay attention to what you asked and they do it. So much is said at meetings and at conferences, big

promises are made in interviews and in the end, a lot of things come to nothing. Such experiences sometimes make it hard for us to believe the statement: “*God said...and it was so.*” In this Word, we can discover the greatness of God. He speaks and it happens. From the mouth of God, the world has its being and existence. God calls man, us, into being. And not only that, but we are also able to hear God’s Word. No other living being can do that. No other creature is so free in its decisions to accept the Word of God, to orient itself by it, to live by it, to respond to it. But the reverse is also true – where this doesn’t happen, we rob ourselves of our humanity and lose the dignity from the basic human law that says: Human dignity is inalienable. So we are more or less in a state of development, are accidents of nature, optional, replaceable, subject to the power games of this world. We feel this every day, even on a personal level: we have turned away from the Creator. Yet, God remains looking towards His creation, even when we have turned our backs to Him. He speaks and it is so. Whoever reads the New Testament quickly comes to the conclusion that God speaks to us through Jesus Christ. In the Bible, we read that Jesus says to the lame man, get up and the man gets up; we learn that Jesus commands the wind and waves on the sea of Galilee and they obey Him; we learn that Jesus says: your sins are forgiven and they are; we learn that Jesus speaks and bread and wine become the bearers of His holy body and blood. The world exists because God wants it.

2<sup>nd</sup> Point: **Man exists because God calls him.** Biological arguments are often used when asking about where life and people came from – it all evolved from the animal kingdom. Now the Bible states quite frankly that man was created on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of creation – the same day as the large animals. But what does that say about man’s special meaning, his nobility, his dignity. Here in the account of creation it says: *So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him.* And Psalm 8 answers this question with amazement: “*what is man that You are mindful of him... Yet You have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor...*” Being made in God’s image doesn’t mean that God’s appearance is the same as ours. It means that people have a special, unique closeness to the Lord God above all other creatures. Only people have the freedom to follow God’s Word. God’s likeness also means being able to talk with God, to be commissioned by God to rule the earth, to cultivate it, and to maintain it. We read that “*male and female [God] created them.*” Not that there are two different kinds of people, but with this, God shows us that gender, being male or female, is a wonderful gift of God. This gift of God can and should develop in the unity of man and woman, in marriage and family. All talk of humanism and human dignity is ineffective if we don’t see ourselves as human beings who are responsible to God our Lord and Savior. Theory? Not at all! This is more relevant than ever! The fathers and mothers of the Basic Law, for example, had to learn the hard way during National Socialism what people without God can do. That should never repeat itself. On this they were united. That’s why the German constitution starts with the words: “*Conscious of its responsibility before God and man... the German people have given themselves this Basic Law.*” “Its responsibility before God” – are we aware of this responsibility before God?

3<sup>rd</sup> Point: **Rest exists because God has it and gives it.** The highlight, the goal of God’s Creation is the seventh day: “*He rested on the seventh day from all His work that He had done. <sup>3</sup>So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy.*” Our workweek goes into the seventh day, into God’s holy realm. God doesn’t rest because He overworked Himself, on the contrary: creation, including creating mankind, has the intention of completeness, of peace, happiness, and holiness, which comes from God. How far have we come from that?! That’s why Jesus Christ came. HE gives us this holiness through His sacrifice on the cross. In His presence, completion, a sigh of relief, the light of Easter morning, the New Creation are present. That’s why He invites all people to Himself: “*Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*” (Mt. 11:28) Sunday is not just a day of rest and the worship service is not just one event among many others – we come together to celebrate with God the Giver and Sustainer of life, to join in in praising God. The worship service is the place where God is present despite sin and the destruction of His Creation. Here, He lets His Word resound despite our turning away. Here is a place where the saving Word of God reaches you, and also where He speaks and things happens. A place where His Word admonishes and comforts, heals and blesses. That’s why we loudly praise God. Therefore we too open our mouths to thank the Creator for His Creation, which He continues to grant us, abundantly and everywhere. We are not an accident of nature nor a product of chance. The world and this earth exist because the Lord God wants it, people like you and me exist because God calls us and in Him, we find completion and rest through Christ our Lord. Amen.