



Good Shepherd Lutheran Church & School  
1611 E Main St., Watertown, WI 53094  
(920)261-2570  
[www.goodshepherdwi.org](http://www.goodshepherdwi.org)

---

**THE HOLY TRINITY**

**June 15, 2014**

---

## **“Created, Redeemed, Called”**

*(Gen. 2:7)*

Rev. David K. Groth

*“Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature” (Gen. 2:7).*

## **Collect of the Day**

Almighty and everlasting God, You have given us grace to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity by the confession of a true faith and to worship the Unity in the power of the Divine Majesty. Keep us steadfast in this faith and defend us from all adversities; for You, O Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, live and reign, one God, now and forever.

**Amen**

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the One who created you, the One who has redeemed you, and the One who has called you. We consider each in turn.

First, God created you. The faith of God's ancient people wavered at many times and in many different ways, but rarely did it waver on the doctrine of creation. These people knew nothing of the Big Bang theory or evolution or black holes in the cosmos. Their faith didn't have to contend with any of that. They simply affirmed the joyful doctrine of creation: that we are not here by accident or chance; all this is not just random. Instead, we are the children of a powerful, creative and loving God. The pages of Scripture are laced with this joyful affirmation. Psalm 139, "For it was you who formed my inward parts, you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

What a striking image: God as a knitter. Have you ever watched someone knitting together a Norwegian sweater with all those snowflakes and patterns? It looks so complicated. Imagine how much more so it must be to knit together a Norwegian! Regardless of your race, the Lord God knit you together in your mother's womb. You are fearfully and wonderfully made.

In Genesis 2, the work of creation is thought of in an entirely different way. The text says the Lord God "formed" the man of dust from the ground. That word "formed" is the same word that is used to describe what a potter does with clay. And in the Hebrew, that word "dust" can also be translated as clay. Later on, Isaiah would come right out and say it. "Yet, O Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand" (64:8). I like the thought of God the knitter,

but my heart does not immediately delight in the thought of being a clod of mud or lump of clay, that is, until I remember what a hands-on process pottery is, and how unique and intentional and useful it can be.

The potter begins with a lump of clay and kneads it to warm it and soften it with his hands, and remove any pockets of air. In the Old Testament era, dual wheels were used, sharing one shaft. The potter turned the larger bottom wheel with his foot, while he worked the clay on the top wheel. Imagine God's swift foot pedaling away at the potter's wheel, while his strong, creative hands mold the clay that is you, the clay that is us, the clay that is the church of Jesus Christ.

God as knitter. . . God as potter . . . in Genesis 2 God is a builder. The Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone." So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept the Lord took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh, and with that rib he made a woman and brought her to the man. That word "made", literally means "built". It's the same verb used of Noah when he built the ark. It underscores a distinction in the story. God did not form Eve out of the dust of the ground. He made her from something taken from Adam, which makes her totally suitable for Adam as a partner, and he for her. The two are made for one another. They compliment one another. One glance at Eve is all it takes. Adam is thrilled, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh."

Today it's being hammered into us that man is just one species of animal among all the animals, and in fact, a curse, a blight on the surface of the earth. The earth would be better off without us, we're told. And indeed, we have done great damage to the earth. And, in fact, we do share some attributes with animals. There's a physical affinity there.

The great difference is that man is made in the image of God. That is said of no other creature, and what that means is Adam reflected God's character but was also God's

representative in the world, his steward over all that he made. Moreover, God breathed into man the breath of life. Other animals also have the breath of life, but not God's breath breathed into them. Moreover, in the Bible, God speaks to man alone. He never speaks to the animals. You are not just another species of animal, nor are you a blot on the surface of the earth. You are the pinnacle of God's creative work. From Psalm 8, "You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands" . . . not to exploit it crassly but to care for it.

You are hand made by the Lord, custom made, one of a kind. That alone gives you value. Your value doesn't come from what you do or do not produce. Your value does not come from how smart you are, or athletic. Your value is not determined by which university you graduated from. Your value certainly has nothing to do with the measure of your waist line. All that is artificial, demeaning even. Your value comes from the One who created you.

First, he created you. Second, he redeemed you. You needed that redemption, for the Bible teaches we have all fallen far short of the Lord's expectations. Like Adam and Eve, we have rebelled against God and ignored his laws. The wages of sin is death . . . temporal, spiritual, eternal death. God is just. Therefore, he cannot simply ignore sin. It would be contrary to his just nature. And God won't simply wipe us out because of our sin. That too is contrary to his nature, for he is also merciful, and loves his whole creation. And so in his justice and mercy, he sends forth his Son, Jesus, to redeem us from sin and death. Galatians 4 says, "When the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to *redeem* those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons" (v. 4).

To redeem something means literally "to buy it back." It is to set a captive free by way of paying a ransom. Prisoners of war were ransomed in this way. Slaves could be set free if somebody "redeemed them". Normally ransoms were paid with cash, with gold or silver . . . but not in our

case. It wouldn't come so cheap. 1 Peter 1, "For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed . . . but with the precious blood of Christ" (v. 18). 1 Timothy 2 says, "Christ Jesus gave himself as a ransom for all people." No one was left behind. Not one. For him to redeem you with his own blood, that also gives you immeasurable value. 1 Corinthians 6 says, "You are not your own, for you were bought with a price" (v. 20). And because you have a Redeemer, you too can say with Job, "I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God."

God created you. God redeemed you. God has also called you. That calling of God also gives you value. First you are called to be his child. You know, we don't automatically belong to him simply because he made us. Remember, sin and rebellion has broken that relationship. However, when you were baptized, God restored a right relationship with you. It's as if God adopted you and made you his own child.

Ask any of our families who have adopted whether they love that child any less than their own biological children and they will tell you "absolutely not", and might even be peeved that you should ask such a question. The love of a parent is not tied to or conditioned by DNA. Adoptive parents are not just pretending to be parents. Their hearts are all in. Similarly, God is not just pretending to love you as his own child. He's all in. He will never go back on his promise. Indeed he cannot. You can turn your back on him and forfeit all the gifts that he is storing up for you, but he will not turn his back on you. Even when we are most sinful, he will not disown us. Again, it would be contrary to who he is. 2 Timothy 2: "When we are faithless, God will remain faithful for he cannot disown himself" (v. 13). Being faithful to those he has called is just who he is.

We are called to be his children. We are also called to be his people, his disciples, his evangelists. You're not

just a spectator sitting on the sidelines of salvation history. God wants you to play a part and is confident you can. He wants you to have mercy on others as he has had on you. And to bring the message of grace to others, as someone obviously brought it to you. He has given also to you the work of making disciples of all nations.

We don't need to go far to obey this command. How many in Watertown are not disciples of Christ? Thirty, forty percent? Maybe more? How many in Watertown feel just sort of average, or perhaps something less than average. Do you think we have a message for them? You are created by God. He knit you together. You are fearfully and wonderfully made. He has high expectations of you and plans for you.

How many in Watertown are carrying around with them a load of guilt? Maybe it was an abortion. Maybe it was an episode of rage against a child. Maybe it was a sin of their youth. Do we have a message for them? Christ redeemed you from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse for you. He loves you still. As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed your sin from you.

How many in Watertown feel they have little purpose? They feel their work is mostly meaningless, their friendships unsatisfying. They are bored and have the sneaking suspicion no one would much miss them. Do we have a message for them? God has called you to be his child, and not just his child, but also his disciple and servant, an ambassador of God's love and mercy in the world. He has called you to be part of the body of Christ, and that body has no unessential parts. Every member is important, necessary, and serves a purpose.

Three things give you value. God created you. God redeemed you. God has called you. You are: created, redeemed, called. Nothing else matters: how you feel about yourself, how others treat you, what *they* think of you. What you look like. How old you are. The size of your investments, or of your debt, what your work is or was. Nothing else matters. Father, Son and Holy Spirit: he's the

only One, what he thinks of you, what he has done for you, the plans he has for you.

He created you. He redeemed you. And he has called you. Amen.

