

Christ Church UCC, Annville PA
January 10, 2021 - Sermon
Pastor Tony Fields

Words Create Worlds!

Today we are privileged to witness in Mark's preamble the interaction of the Trinity.

Mark shares with us God's exchange to reconcile humanity to the rightful state. Speaking words of love God created us, calls to us, and claims us as God's own. Speaking words of love, we, too, can create, call, and proclaim God's beauty and glory in the world.

The power of speech flows through each of today's readings. God speaks and creation begins. God's voice thunders over the waters displaying God's glory. Paul speaks, and people are convinced to receive the baptism in the spirit's power. And in Jesus' baptism God says a blessing of love and claims Jesus as God's child. With our words and with God's name, creation began as does our product in baptism.

However, I'm asking you sisters and brothers as you are aware of our current situation things in society can be changed. I know what you are asking, brother pastor, are you aware of our current situation: pandemic numbers are skyrocketing and the deadly capital riots that happened? As I received emails and text messages people are wondering is this the end of times? First, I want to thank you for your concerns by messenger, text, and email. I want to tell you this - that as I heard these messages it caused me to just stop and be still. Although the numbers are rising when we hear about people getting COVID, it doesn't mean that this disease has the final words, nor everyone who contracts COVID is receiving a death sentence. COVID does not have the final say so. COVID itself does not hinder us from being Gods call out people. We can't downplay what is happening in our society and when we hear now the word COVID it seems its taken on a different meaning. More powerful than when we say someone has cancer. Secondly I want to say in the midst of this noisy world we as collaborators need to remind ourselves of who we are in the midst of all this chaos. Amidst a noisy world as collaborators, we should make way to listen to God. In the busiest of the days, we must find time to listen to God. We cannot rely on the media, news, friends, coworkers, nor trust in our abilities. This is why you heard me say earlier this week I was at that point I couldn't pray because I didn't know how, my spirit within myself was moaning. I was seeking wisdom from God. Understand that God reminded me of his word that he would never leave me nor forsake me. I just had to be still for a moment just to hear from God for myself. For I learned in my years of living for in listening, we will hear the truth. We are beloved children of God – God created love, God designed love, and we too are to create love in our lives.

However, in Mark's preamble, something interesting happened. Listen at this description Mark gives, he said that as John baptized Jesus and he came out of the water he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him.

Jesus saw the heavens open, and scripture says it was torn apart. I wonder do we remind ourselves of our baptism and that God will be right there with us and that even in the midst of all this chaos that the heavens are being torn apart and the spirit of God is descending upon us as we continue to put

our trust in and rely on God?

Holy God, creator of light and giver of goodness, your voice moves over the waters. It will immerse us in your grace, and transform our spirit if only we would put our trust in God. God himself created the uneasiness of the world, creating order out of the chaos of unordered matter. When the spirit came out of heaven it says the heavens were torn apart.

Sisters and brothers I'm going to pause here and then I'm going to go to my seat. It says something particular happened at that baptism of Jesus. I think that is something we need to do every now and then to remind ourselves. Because of the baptism God himself looked over and the heavens were torn apart and the spirit came down as a dove and landed on his shoulder. More importantly, even when John seen all this I wonder what was on John's mind when he witnessed all this glorious things that were happening? What was his testimony to the world? I'm asking the question of ourselves what is our testimony to the world? When we remind ourselves of our baptism that God is right there with us. That nature itself realized that there is something different that God is doing that heaven itself was being torn apart. How can we continue to be God's ambassadors and to remind ourselves that God is right there with us? Maybe a new reality has to come to the world today. Maybe God is still transforming things. Maybe our baptism is more important than we put our faith in, understanding that God is right there in our midst.

So sisters and brothers on this baptism Sunday the baptism is not so much about who we are. The baptism is not so much about the water being sprinkled on us. The baptism is more about God reminding us of his promises that he'll be right there in the midst. As we continue to be his ambassadors and collaborators as we continue to be present in the world let our face shine so that people will know who God is through us. So maybe our baptism is to transform us to remind us of the mystery that God himself had defeated death and he has rose Jesus from the dead. Maybe to remind us that together we can care about this broken world. Maybe it is about us continuing to be joint heirs of Christ that the work we have to do realizing that we can grow and continue to be God's ambassadors. Maybe our baptism is to remind us that there is still work to do here on earth. By this baptism and the waters of the earth, faith of Jesus the faith of Jesus is the reminder that as Christians we are to seek God's presence in our lives. Remind ourselves of the nourishing and the plentifulness of water and more importantly remind ourselves that God is with us even in such a time as this. The heavens were torn apart, the holy spirit descended down and God said himself this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Sisters and brothers at this point we had the triune God and the very presence of John the Baptist was that witness. So I'm going to leave you with this message. What will be your testimony as you remember your baptism? What will be your testimony not to yourselves but how will people remember you and your baptism as you look into the waters and remind yourself that God is right there with us? Maybe just maybe the words we share can create new worlds even in such a time as this.

Amen.