

January 5, 2003  
AM Service  
Patchogue Church of the Nazarene

“In The Beginning ... God”

Gen 1:1

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Jim Pellegrino gave his teen Sunday School class a piece of clay (play-dough) and asked each one to make something that reflected something about them; something that was important to them. He gave them a few minutes to finish their creations. Then he asked some of the teens what they had made and why they made it. Finally he went to his son, James, who was in his class. Jim had told his son ahead of time what he was going to do, though the rest of the class didn't know. His son had made a football. Jim asked him why a football? James started to explain that he was on the High School football team and how he loved the game and loved playing on the team. While James spoke Jim acted as though he wasn't paying attention to what he was doing and started to destroy the football his son had created. Immediately the class reacted, “Hey, look what you're doing to his football?” Then Jim said, “so what? It's just a piece of clay. Why is it so important? The answer was because it was created by James and was important to him. Then Jim made his point to the class: we have no value if we are only here by chance. But we have value because we were created by God.

**God exists:**

The Bible does not attempt to prove God's existence; it simply accepts His existence. “In the beginning God...” As a matter of fact, the Bible says in Psalm 14:1, “the fool says in his heart, ‘there is no God.’” Yet, perhaps, even worse are people who say they believe God exists but live an immoral life. The immoral person's behavior reflects a practical denial of God; he or she *lives* as if there were no God.

Can we reason that there is a God? We accept that there is a God more on faith than by reason. We can't comprehend God completely. That is why there is a need for faith to please God. But certainly reason supports the idea of God.

The existence of the universe necessitates the existence of God as the first cause of it. (In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth - makes more sense to me than believing we are here by chance. What purpose or value would we have if we are here by chance rather than created by God?). And since there is purpose in the universe (every part of creation has a purpose and plan) there must be a Purposer. The world we live in exists with every evidence of design (purpose and plan).

There is also the moral evidence for the existence of God - The moral nature of men and women. How could a non-moral, irrational, unfeeling universe give rise to creatures with conscience, reason and capacities to evaluate and enjoy?

But to me the greatest evidence for the existence of God is how I have experienced God through conversion, sanctification, worship and prayer. We know God because He has chosen to reveal Himself to us.

The Christian faith is primarily an existential relationship with God (i.e. it is personal & spiritual rather than merely intellectual). It is based on the existence and experiencing of a personal God. God has revealed Himself in nature (in His creation) and in the Bible but ultimately in Jesus Christ. Religion is a search for God and for meaning and a willingness to commit ourselves to something or Someone that we have found worthy of our devotion. Christianity is unique because it is a Revelation – (God’s Self disclosure) it teaches that God reveals Himself to us rather than us seeking Him. It is a religion that begins with revelation and ends with Redemption (we are reconciled to God through Jesus and brought into a personal relationship with the living God). What we are offered is not truth concerning God but the living God Himself. Philosophy and theology may give us knowledge about God but only in Christ do we have a true knowledge of God and His nature, resulting in personal communion with Him. I know God *is* because He has made Himself known to me through Christ.

God exists. And so, a more important question than, “Does God exist?” is the question what kind of God exists? The question is not, “Is there a God?” but “Who is God?” and what is He like?” A complete definition of God is impossible. After we have said all we can about God, there remains a great element of mystery. Yet God has revealed Himself in such a way that though we may not comprehend Him fully we can know Him truly.

(This morning I am not attempting to mention everything we can know about God, just some of the things that are implied in the first few chapters of Genesis). Just from our text we know that:

**God is Almighty** (Creator / Sustainer):

The Bible starts out with “In the beginning God created....” It accepts that God exists and implies that He always existed and always will. He is the Creator and has caused all things to come into being. Therefore, He is all-powerful, all-wise, always present. No wonder we call Him the Supreme Being. God is Almighty. He created all things, just by His word. We need something to create with. He created from nothing. And He is the one who holds the universe together. By His word it was created and by His word it is sustained and by the same power of His word He will one day say, “Enough!” and bring it to an end. He transcends us - He is much greater than we - He is holy - unique, different. He is sovereign – King over the whole world – over the whole universe. To recognize His sovereignty over our existence is to recognize His Holiness.

**God is Personal** (Who loves and wants a relationship with His creation):

God wanted you to exist. He created you. And wanted you to know Him. He is a God who is present, who is with His people. He wants to reveal His faithfulness and love. He is holy, yet He is near us, with us and wants to be in us. God desires a personal relationship with us. This is why He created us and this is why, after the fall (recorded in

Gen. 3), God made a way for our Salvation. A way to forgive our sin and reconcile us to Himself through Jesus. (Therefore...)

**God is good** (and loves what is good):

All that God created was good. Therefore all He created (and that includes you) has value. He is good and always wants what is good. It is so important for you to always believe, no matter what, that God is good. After all, as already mentioned, God loves us, created us and sent Jesus to die for us so we could be reconciled to God. God who encounters us in the person of Christ is a God who showed us this face & His heart in the cross. You have value to Him and He always wants what is good –best for you. And because He is good and because we are made in His image, He wants us to live lives doing good. He wants us to obey Him and do what is right.

God exists (Always existed / Always will exist)

God is Almighty (Creator / Sustainer)

God is Personal (Who loves and wants a relationship with His creation)

God is good (and loves what is good)

What does it mean for you in 2003 that:

God exists: He is Almighty, personal and good?

If you doubt God and His goodness you will experience terror and rage because you will want life to go your way and it wouldn't and you can't do anything about it. You will demand that others come through for you and you will hate them when they fail you (this will lead to interpersonal conflict). Or you will hate yourself and have a poor self-image because you blame yourself (thinking, "Something is wrong with me. That's why people fail me."). Then, with arrogant determination you will find some way to survive and get what you want – a foolish and self-centered style of relating to others and to life that will only cause you problems.

But if you will believe in God and believe that all things work for the good because God is good, then even when life is confusing and disappointing you will have a quietness of trust and worship rather than terror and rage. You will be free from dependence on others (Freedom). Therefore instead of demanding that others come through for you, you will want to love others by giving something to them rather than demand that they give to you. You will accept others (acceptance of others) and judge yourself when *you* fail them. Furthermore you will discover that in repentance you find rest. You will humbly obey God, cooperate with Him, and discover it brings joy. You will do what reflects your confidence in God and in His God's goodness and power. You will live wisely and other-centered leading to a more fruitful life. (The last two paragraphs are based on ideas from Dr. Larry Crabb in *Finding God*.)

Here then is a sure resting-place for our heart. Our lives are neither the product of blind fate nor the result of chance. Our lives are in the hands of a living, loving, good, sovereign powerful reigning God. What assurance, what strength, what comfort this should give the real Christian!