

Orthodoxy Corner - God, Creator of All

Question: What else did God create?

Answer: God created all things by his powerful Word, and all his creation was very good; everything flourished under his loving rule.

*And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. -
Genesis 1:31*

When we open the book of God's holy writ to its beginning pages our eyes first light upon the words, *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* The heavens and earth are opposites describing what God created, everything. Therefore, when we open our eyes in the night sky and see the hundred thousand million stars of our galaxy, or when we arise in the morning to hear the bird singing sweetly in the tree, we gaze upon the glory of everything that God has created and it's flourishing in his goodness, wisdom, and power.



It is in the work of creation that God is making himself known. The apostle Paul says "For his [God's] invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they [men and women] are without excuse." - Romans 1:20. The created world that flourishes before our everyday senses and our hearts that worship, is the mirrored pool that reflects our Creator's glory to us. John Calvin wrote, "God has given us, throughout the whole frame-work of this world, clear evidences of his eternal wisdom, goodness, and power; and though he is in himself invisible, he in a manner becomes visible to us in his works. Correctly then is this world called the mirror of divinity; not that there is sufficient clearness for man to gain a full knowledge of God, by looking at the world, but that he has thus so far revealed himself, that the ignorance of the ungodly is without excuse. Now the faithful, to whom he has given eyes, see sparks of his glory, as it were, glittering in every created thing. The world was no doubt made, that it might be the theatre of the divine glory."

As in the theater there is the time of applause, so our hearts are made to respond with thanksgiving and praise to our Creator who speaks by the Word of his power to create and sustain a beautiful creation for his glory and our good.

Let all things their Creator bless,
and worship him in humbleness,
O praise him, alleluia!
St. Francis of Assisi

Lions and Tigers and Bears, Oh My!



I like this line from the Wizard of Oz because it's an expression of fear and anxiety. That's something I can relate to. But I'm often afraid to admit that in my relationship with God. With "I Am a Jesus Follower" on the front of my t-shirt, shouldn't I have, "No Fear" on the back? When the storms roll in - situations, circumstances, relationships, bumping up against my expectations, desires, and dreams, there's the flashes of lightning and thunderous roars of fear, anxiety, and panic. How do you handle fear and anxiety in your life?

I hope it's not by humbling yourself before the "Great Oz". He's a gimmick, but so are a lot of the ways we try to handle our anxiety when we focus on symptoms. God, our Creator and Savior, encourages us to handle anxiety

by humbling ourselves before him. Humbling ourselves before God means learning to trust him. Ed Welch writes, "We trust him because he is God, not because he is going to immediately remove our anxieties or our fear-provoking situation." Jesus held out his hand to Peter from the place of the storm, and encouraged him to trust him. The storm was still raging.

I used to think trusting him in fear meant taking 'the Bible verse pill for the day'. The directions on the bottle read, "Take one a day for troubling anxiety, and more if necessary if fear and panic persist." So off came the safety top and out poured the prescribed words to calm the troubled storms of my heart. Things like...

Do not be anxious about your life...O you of little faith?...do not be anxious...But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. - Matthew 6:25, 30-33

do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. - Philippians 4:6

But what I failed to miss in these prescribed words was the certainty that God was at hand (Phil.4:5 & all of Matthew 6), that I was not humbling myself before him trusting him, and that he cared for me leading me by the hand in all places at all times. Prescribed words are not for finding life in the words, but a relationship with The Life revealed in the words.

Peter's prescribed words for our anxiety begin this way, "*Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.*" - 1 Peter 5:6-7 He assumes Christians suffer from anxiety, fear, and panic. But he doesn't tell you to stop it! He says, "Humble yourselves." That's the place to start. God is "mighty" and exalted. We're not. We're weak and under stuff, like loads of cares. But God cares for us under those loads and our reactions to those loads and he will at some point raise us up where we're no longer under the weight of the world, and He'll give us the world. But right now he wants us to humble ourselves before him when we're anxious. That's the place to start. What does that look like?

See if this helps - Keep the top on your favorite bible verse on fear,...Open the eyes of your heart to the greatness of God who's at hand,...Pour out your own heart in honest confession and repentance,...Then open the top of God's prescribed Word and pour out some sweet words and listen as he speaks to you, his fearful, anxious, panicked child, in relationship with himself.

A humble trusting prayer from our anxious hearts might begin like this...

*"Lord, you are my God and my King.
I am your child. You have given me everything in Jesus.
I trust you.
You can ask of me whatever you want.
Give me the grace of faith to trust you more.*

And then it might continue like this...

*"Loving heavenly Father, I always want things to go my way.
Please forgive me.*

With your wise, powerful, and good words you created all things, and by your Son Jesus you have and are rescuing all people.

*I want to live under your wise, good, and powerful rule.
Have mercy on me.*

It might finish like this...

*"Lord you care for me, and that kindness is beautiful.
I am not here telling you that if you take me out of this storm, I'll serve you.
In view of your mercies I offer myself to you with all my cares and anxieties.
I trust you to give me grace to love you and others in this place of weakness.
In Jesus name. Amen.*

October 6th in Church History

On October 6th 1536 William Tyndale was strangled and burned at Vilvoorde Castle (not far from Brussels) for his Protestant views and efforts to translate the Bible into English. He was an English scholar influenced by the works of Desiderius Erasmus and Martin Luther. Though John Wycliffe had provided portions of the Bible to English speaking people in the 15th century, Tyndale was the first to translate the Bible into English from the Hebrew and Greek texts. His work was predominantly found in King Henry VIII's authorization of Matthew Bible (1537) and influential in the King James Bible, New Testament 83% and Old Testament 76% (1611). Take time to give thanks to God that you have the Bible in your own language, and pray for those who don't.