

## The Sixth Day

Good Friday; Series A

**“It is finished. And he bowed his head and gave up his Spirit.”**

**John 19:30**

Yesterday, we framed our Maundy Thursday sermon with the following statement, “A lot can happen in a week.” We concluded that the two greatest events in all history are the creation of the world and the redemption or recreation of the world. Each of these events involved a great divine Week of work and a Day of rest. Creation Week culminated in the formation of mankind and accomplished the making of the entire heavens and the earth. And then God rested. The week that is called Holy Week or Passion Week, perhaps a better term would be Redemption Week, accomplished the work of man's salvation or recreation. And then Jesus rested in the tomb on the Sabbath Day.

Tonight we continue our comparison between the Week of Creation and Holy Week by reflecting on the sixth day of creation and comparing it to the sixth day of Holy Week. Tonight as we heard the passion reading from St. John describing the event of our Lord's crucifixion and we are reminded that “a lot can happen in a day!”

On the 6th day of the week, God created his human creatures. On the Sixth Day, man had been created in the image and likeness of God, the very climax and goal of God's great work of creation (Genesis 1:26, 27). Though, God's human creatures were not content to remain creatures. They wanted to rise above and transcend their creatureliness. They wanted to be like God. In that very moment, when they overreached, they fell. And when they fell, they dragged down with them the entire creation into violence, death, and decay. As St. Paul tells us, “The whole creation is groaning” (Rom 8:22).

But on *this* Sixth Day of holy week, God, made in the likeness of man, finished the even greater work of redemption and recreation. But now the Creator, Himself, had been made the Curse (Galatians 3:13; Isaiah 52:14), and it seemed as though the Creation also must die.

The Biblical scholar Dr. Henry Morris reflects on the event of Christ's crucifixion on the sixth day and the six days of creation with the following insightful words:<sup>1</sup>

“Though He had made heaven and earth on the First Day, now He had been lifted up from the earth (John 3:14) and the heavens were silent (Matthew 27:46). Though He had made the waters on the Second Day, He who was the very Water of Life (John 4:14), was dying of thirst (John 19:28).

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<sup>1</sup> Many of the reflections in this sermon are adapted from those of Dr. Henry Morris in his article, “Creation and the Cross,” from the *Institute for Creation Research* at <http://www.icr.org/article/creation-cross/>.

On the Third Day He had made the dry land, but now the "earth shook and the rocks were split" (Matthew 27:51) because the Rock of salvation had been struck (Exodus 17:6). He had also covered the earth with trees and vines on that third day, but now the True Vine (John 15:1) had been plucked up and the Green Tree (Luke 23:31) cut down. He had made the sun on the Fourth Day, but now the sun was darkened (Luke 23:45) and the Light of the World (John 8:12) was burning out. On the Fifth Day He had created life, and He Himself *was* Life (John 11:25; 14:6), but now the life of His flesh, the precious blood, was being poured out on the ground beneath the cross, and He had been brought "into the dust of death" (Psalm 22:15). On the Sixth Day He had created man and given him life, but now man had despised the love of God and lifted up the Son of Man to death."

On the seventh day God ended His work which He had made" (Genesis 1:21). Furthermore, "everything that He had made was very good" (Genesis 1:31). God's majestic work of Creation was complete and perfect in every detail.

And so is His work of salvation! This is especially emphasized in John's account of Jesus' crucifixion (that we heard tonight): "After this, Jesus knowing that all was now finished, said to fulfill Scripture, 'I thirst...' When Jesus received the sour wine, he said, 'It is finished,' and He bowed His head, and gave up his spirit" (John 19:28, 30). Jesus had finished all the things He had to do, and then He finished the last of the prophetic scriptures that must be carried out. Then, and only then, was the work of redemption completed and the price of our salvation fully paid, so that He could finally shout (Matthew 27:50) the great victory cry, "It is finished."

In one week all of creation was created. In another week all of creation was recreated. The record of God's Creation says repeatedly that the entire work of the creation and making of all things had been finished (Genesis 2:1-3). Similarly John stresses the finished work of recreation with Christ on the cross. As the finished creation was "very good," so is our finished salvation.

Then, finally, having finished the work of redemption on the sixth day, Christ rested on the seventh day, His body sleeping in death in Joseph's tomb on Holy Saturday. He had died quickly, and the preparations for burial had been hurried (Luke 23:54-56), so that He could be buried before the Sabbath so that he could rest fully, keeping the Sabbath Day. As He had rested after finishing His work of Creation, so now He rested once again, resting from his work of recreating creation—recreating you and recreating me in his image once again. He rested from his work of rescuing creation—rescuing you and rescuing me. On the sixth day "it is finished!" Amen.