

Have you ever watched a craftsman working hard at his or her area of expertise? Maybe you've watched a carpenter construct something sturdy, yet beautiful out of wood, like a bookcase or shelf. Or have watched a welder shape something strong and durable out of metal, like a railing or fire-pit? Every week right here at First Lutheran we have a group of quilters who come together to create some amazing quilts. Maybe you're like me and you had a grandma who was very skilled at crocheting and knitting,

I think it's interesting watching people put together things. You can learn a lot about people by sitting and watching them do their craft. How skilled are they? How hardworking? What is this craftsman like?

In our reading today from the book of Proverbs, Jesus describes Himself as a craftsman. Now, it's true at one time during His earthly life before His ministry, Jesus *was* a carpenter like His father, Joseph. But in our text, we see Him working more advanced crafts. Today, we're going to look at two very important things that Jesus crafted- the world, and our salvation. Our goal on this beautiful summer morning is to just sit and watch Jesus, the craftsman. As we do, we're going to learn a few things about Him. We're going to grow in our relationship with Him. As the Holy Spirit works on you, you will be growing in your faith today.

You wouldn't expect to find Jesus in the book of Proverbs. After all this is the Old Testament and most of the time we see Him in action in one of the Gospels in the New Testament. But here He is in the middle of the Old Testament in Proverbs chapter 8. The chapter starts out by talking about wisdom. Wisdom is personified. Wisdom speaks as though it were a person. Taking a look at verse 12 for example: There it says, "I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence, I possess knowledge and discretion." But then, in verse 22 of our text today, as wisdom talks, it starts to sound like Jesus. And by the time the chapter is over, you know for sure that this *is* Jesus that is talking. And that's not just a coincidence. The Bible tells us that wisdom isn't just a concept- it's a person- Christ is wisdom, and wisdom is Christ.

When we picture Christ, I think we probably picture Him as the Son of God Who started working a few short years *after* He was born on Christmas. But according to the Bible, Jesus was working long before He was born to Mary. Look at verse 23: "Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth." Jesus existed before the world began. Verse 24: "When there were no depths I was brought forth." Or verse 25: "Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth." We confess that truth in the

Nicene Creed, when we say that we believe in Jesus Christ, Who was “begotten of His Father before all worlds.” God the Father and God the Son existed **together** before the world came into existence. Now are there any questions? I admit it boggles my mind! They were two separate persons, but one God. They were closely united together before the world was made. Does that make perfect sense to everyone? Can you **fully** comprehend that? That God the Son was begotten by the Father before the creation of the world- is that something that you can fully understand?

What if I were to tell you that next fall, for our children’s Sunday School, we are going to have a rocket scientist come in, and that rocket scientist is going to explain to the Sunday School children the complexities of the rocket ships. He’s going to fill the white board with mathematical equations. He’s going to draw diagrams of engine parts. He’s going to explain how rocket fuel works. He’s also going to explain how all the things are funded. Do you think the Sunday School class will understand that rocket scientist? No- those things would be beyond their understanding, and probably beyond our understanding too.

Completely understanding God in Christ is even more complex. How do you explain that close bond, that unity, between God the Father and God the Son? There are certain times in the Bible when you just have to take a step back and say, “This is beyond me. I’m going to believe it, without trying to understand it.” When the Bible says that Jesus was brought forth, or begotten, by the Father, from eternity, don’t try to understand it. Just stand in awe of Christ, and believe, and worship Him. Many people picture Jesus as the Savior of all mankind, and that’s it. But the Bible tells us that Jesus was also involved in the **creation** of the world. Verse 27 says, “When he established the heavens, I was there;

when he drew a circle on the face of the deep.”

Verse 30 says: “Then I was beside him, like a master workman,” Or as the New International Version translates it: “I was the **craftsman** at His side.” Jesus was the craftsman, the skilled worker, crafting the world alongside of God the Father, the two of them, as one God, working closely together. Jesus, the Water of life, crafting the lakes and the oceans. Jesus, the Rock of our salvation, crafting the hills and mountains. And notice how Jesus felt after He was finished crafting His creation, verse 30: “I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the children of man.”

This next question is especially for all those out there who are in charge of mowing the lawn: Now, I don't know about you, but my favorite part about mowing the lawn is that feeling when the work is done and you can relax and look out on the neatly trimmed yard with satisfaction. Not only am I relieved that the all the work is finally over, but it's nice to look at the "fruits of my labor," so to speak, a nicely trimmed yard. In a similar way, I'm sure that whenever a craftsman, whether it's a woodworker, a metal worker, or what have you- when he or she finishes their job they take satisfaction in a job well-done. In a much greater way, that's how the Bible pictures Christ at the creation of the world. He looked at what He had crafted-nature in all its beauty and majesty, and especially mankind, the most complex creation in the world, and He took great delight.

But Jesus knew that soon, Satan would come, and along with Adam and Eve bring sin into the world. When Jesus crafted the universe, there was **nothing** wrong with it. But He saw that sin was coming He knew the big mistake that people would make, which could lead to the entire world going down. And so, after crafting the world, Jesus crafted something else- our salvation.

Verse 31 of Proverbs 8 tells us why Jesus was willing to die for us. It's because He 'delighted in mankind.' That's His unexplainable love which the Bible calls grace. In verse 35, Jesus talks about eternal life, when He says, "Whoever finds me finds life, and receives favor from the LORD." The blueprint that Jesus followed when He crafted our salvation was a very difficult one. He had to stop being the craftsman at the Father's side. He had to leave the Father, and go to the cross. There Jesus was separated from the Heavenly Father, far, far away from His Father's presence. Jesus even expressed that when He said, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me." How painful this must have been for Him! Remember, He had been at the Father's side from eternity and now He was abandoned by Him, completely alone with the weight of your sins and mine and the whole world's pressing down on His shoulders.

At the creation of the world, together, they had delighted in mankind. But as He hung from the cross, the Father sacrificed His Son. He turned His back on Him. That's how Jesus crafted our salvation- by allowing Himself to be torn away from His Father's side, dying as a sacrifice for all our sins on a hill called Goglotha.

*It's been said that great things aren't made without great sacrifice. 75 years ago this month, D-Day took place. Thousands of soldiers sacrificed their very lives that day as they stormed the beaches of France. Because of their work that day, which came at very dear price, the armies of Nazi Germany were now doomed to*

*utter defeat within a few months. It was a major turning point in World War II. Those allied service members on D-Day **made** something that day. You could say that each one of those men in uniform was a craftsman, and what they crafted was freedom. And many of them did it by sacrificing their lives.*

*It has been said that Good Friday was the “Christian D-Day.” In fact, Good Friday was **the** turning point in all of human history. On that day, Christ stormed the hill called Golgotha. He was a man, but He was also God from eternity, and He crafted our salvation by sacrificing His life. There has never been anything greater ever crafted, at such a great sacrifice than the salvation of mankind, which our Lord made for us.*

Then the Father raised His beloved Son from the dead on Easter morning signifying that He accepted Jesus’ atoning work on our behalf. And at His Ascension, Jesus went up into heaven, once again assuming His place at the Father’s side. Today the Father and the Son share with us the Holy Spirit, Who works in us, once again like a craftsman. And what is it that the Holy Spirit crafts inside of us? Faith. The faith He created in us when He was given to us at our Baptism is strengthened and renewed with His forgiveness which continues to pour out on us through His Word and Sacrament, His means of Grace.

So today, on this Trinity Sunday, we stand back in awe. All of these things, all of the mysteries of our God-in-three-persons are just too lofty, too profound, too deep, for us to fully understand. We stand in awe especially of Christ, the craftsman at the Father’s side, the Maker of our world. But more than that, He is the maker of our salvation. Today, we thank Him. We honor Him and we worship Him. Amen.