

The God of Creation

by Greg Alms

THE ORDER FOR CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION often begins with these words: “Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth.” It is a plea lifted from Psalm 124. But it prompts some questions. Why are we invoking help from God as Creator rather than as Savior? Why not plead for spiritual deliverance? Why are we looking for help from the God of creation?

This verse presses an important issue. We live in a time that easily overlooks the First Article of the Creed. We confess to believe in “God the Father, Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.” However,

But often we fail to listen. As Christians, we dare not seek to ignore or escape our created selves any more than we try to escape the cross or the physical resurrection of Jesus. It is easy to seek to locate our spiritual lives outside of what we do in and through our physical existence. We can easily regard our spiritual life and our everyday life as somehow separate. However, our tangible bodily existence is itself “spiritual” since it is given by God.

Recreating us

And what of that prayer of the Psalmist, that our help is in the name of the Lord who

God created us as physical beings, not as spirits or minds who happen to be in a body.

our culture (even churches) does not have much use for considering creation, our physical bodies, the concrete lives we lead, as that which is given to us by God.

We are much too “spiritual” for that. We suffer from a foggy Gnosticism that disregards the physical as unimportant and exalts the pseudo-spiritual. Even as Christians we are tempted to emphasize and talk about more seemingly “religious” topics than the mundane facts of our bodies.

Physical beings

But our physical lives are messages from God. They convey meaning to us from the same God who forgives and gives spiritual things. God created us as physical beings, not as spirits or minds who happen to be in a body, as if the body was some sort of optional shell or covering. The facts of our gender, our fitting together as man and woman to have children, the everyday lives of eating and talking and walking all carry theological weight.

created all things? Our eternal trust lies in our God precisely because He is the Creator. Our human existence created perfect and whole now fails, infected with sin and death. Our bodies betray us with temptation and lusts. Our physical existence plagues us with disease and disorder and death. We discover nothing in ourselves. Only the Creator can recreate us.

This He does “out of nothing” (*ex nihilo*), with no help or contribution from us. He does it in Christ, not some spiritual idea of Jesus, not some ghost or fable but in the One who took flesh, a real body. The Son of God, true God who dwelt among us, died a real death to overcome death. The Lord saves us using His creation in a material way through the blood of the cross and the resurrection.

And He continues to come to us in the created ways of voice and water and wine and bread. The Creator who is made flesh and dwells among us is the only one who can save. So it is true: Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth. **LW**

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Only our Creator can recreate us!

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