



Lutheran Church of the Master, 4800 Ramsey Road, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho
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Reformation Day, October 31, 2010
Let God be God

God is not algebraic geometry: The study of zero sets of polynomial equations.

[Polynomial: An algebraic expression consisting of one or more summed terms, each term consisting of a constant multiplier and one or more variables raised to integral powers.]

God is not a mathematical formula. God is not an abstraction. God is not a phenomenon. God is. To begin with God is – just is. God does not need to do - in order to be. God does not need the creation or you or me to be whole and to be God. God is complete all by God's self.

What has happened, however, is that God has chosen to create. Genesis, chapter one begins, ***In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth.*** In **Job 38**, God addresses Job, ***1Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind: . . . 4“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. 5Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it?***

What has happened, however, is that God has chosen to create you in God's image. In **Psalm 8**, the psalmist addresses God, ***3 When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; 4 what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? 5 Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor.***

What has happened, however, is that God has chosen to be in relationship with what God has created (including you). Jeremiah declares on behalf of God in the first lesson today [Jeremiah 31:33b] ***I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.***

And the verse in **John 3** that is called 'The Little Gospel' tells the depth of God's choosing, ***16“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. 17“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.***

God has chosen to be in relationship. Now we don't know what to do with that. Do we follow Adam and Eve and look for the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil so that we might be more like God? So that we might even take God's place and be our own self-willed gods? Do

we ignore God because algebraic geometry is not our thing and figuring out God is not our thing either?

One of the easy escapes is to make God all about law and rules. When laws and rules define God for us (not for God), we cannot see anything else about God but laws and rules. The end result is that, really, the laws and rules become our god. And God, THE God, is lost in all the consuming energy that laws and rules demand. There is no room left for God, actually. But the law and rules loom LARGE.

The opposite temptation is to make God all about forgiveness and mercy. When pushed far enough, God then comes to little substance because we do not know what to do with infinite forgiveness and mercy, except to take advantage. If we come to that, then the whole matter is still about me and what I do, not about God. I am free to do as I please, free to do to my advantage, because I have made God only forgiveness and mercy with no expectations of obedience.

The drama of Jesus' birth, life, death and resurrection was not so we could add a holiday to the calendar. It is the radical nature of God to seek relationship with that which God has created. And God has been and is persistent.

So the radical nature of God is to seek to be in relationship with you – not as unrelenting law or mushy mercy, but a living God who is a living part of your life, a God in living relationship to you. God as creator is in living relationship to you as you live and grow on this earth. We cannot avoid it. We need God's world and creation itself in order to be who we are created to be. But there is more to being in relationship with God than just surviving on plant earth. God seeks a dynamic, full relationship with you!

Now what do we know about relationships? We know they are a part of the natural order of things. You and I are in relationship to our parents; we are in relationship to the earth and atmosphere. Gravity helps keep us grounded in those relationships.

We also know that relationships that grow, expand and engage us take energy and commitment. Relationships that grow, expand and engage us are dynamic. Sometimes we struggle in such relationships. Sometimes we know joy in such relationships. We know they are always changing; they are dynamic. And that is what God hopes and longs for with you, a dynamic relationship, one that grows and expands and engages you. You see, God is already poised for such a relationship with you.

What happens when you never answer the phone call of a friend or respond to their text messages? They stop calling. Eventually they are no longer your friend; your relationship becomes strained; when you meet each other it is awkward; you are embarrassed; you don't know what to say or whether you should say anything at all. The relationship is no longer dynamic but motionless, without life.

God does not want your relationship with God to play out that way. God is ready. Are you ready? ^{JOHN 8:31} Jesus said to (those) who had believed in him, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; ³²and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." A living, dynamic relationship with God is available to us in Jesus Christ, who lived, died, and rose from the dead that we might know and live free to fully be children of God.