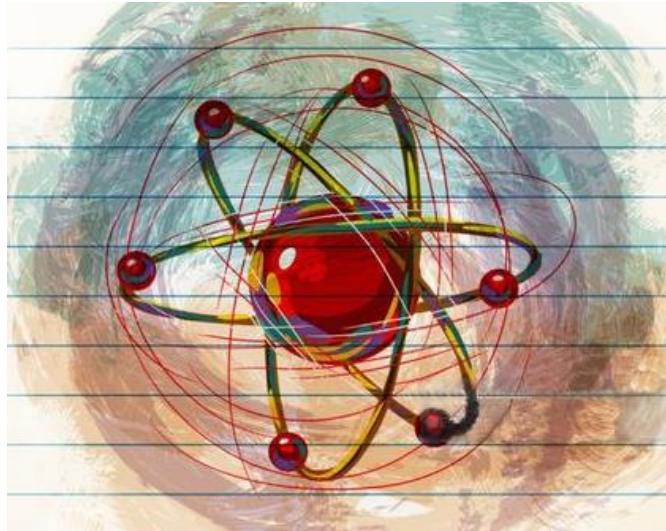


The Creation in Christ

Third Series – Sermon Twenty-Five

Original by George MacDonald

Paraphrase by Dale R. Howie



“Creation in Christ” is the first sermon about **The King** in series three of the “Unspoken Sermons.” Series one was about **The Gospel**, an overview of the Kingdom of Children in their common childlikeness and Fatherhood. Its series’ theme shows how Jesus is the “Treasure” at the heart of it all. Its final reflection in the “God of the Living” ends with resurrection Life as our final transformation and home.

Series two was about **The Way**, beginning with the rich young ruler and his need to sell all and seek the true treasure found in Jesus. This introductory sermon pointed to “Abba, Father!” the series theme with the Father’s children becoming what they are as mature sons and daughters. This sermon expands on the imagery of transformation from the caterpillar to the butterfly. The transformation from Christ in us to us as our unique expression of Christ! Its final reflection is the realization that followers follow the “Truth in Jesus” as our treasure and that through the Way, we find the Self that we were created to be!

So, back to our current sermon about **The King**, all creation is *through* and *in* Christ the King. The Trinity, like the atom, contains a relationship between the persons in which Energy and Life exist. It is within this space, through the Life of the Son, that creation exists. The Life we must choose in order to become what we are in Him! This sermon points to the theme of the series in “Kingship.” That Jesus’ Father is Good and the Kingdom’s crown and Life is to desire and live in the eternal Father’s will and Life! The “Unspoken Sermons” end with the glorious vision of “The Inheritance.” Heaven is the fulfillment of the Kingdom’s journey. Their children are coming home to their Father through the Son and the power of the Spirit. We bring our share, our unique Selves, along with everyone else’s to make up the Body of Christ in all its radiant beauty and life! The Irreducible Truth of relationship fulfilled in our union with Them in Their Life!

Outline

Life! – Creation is all about the Trinity sharing its Life with us!

What is Life? - It is the relationship of love found between the Father and the Son.

We Must Choose - We must choose Their will as our own and there find our Home and destiny in Them.

The Light became Life - There is no knowledge of the Divine Life without seeing its Light in the Son!

Life in Us - When we say with the Son, *"Thy will be done,"* we close the circle of Life.

John 1:3-4 NAS

"All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him not even one thing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of mankind." (The RSV gives an alternative reading: ". . . was not anything made. That which has been made was life in Him.")

Life!

It seems that any lover of the gospel and a person given to thought would feel the English translation at the end of verse three unsatisfactory. Let us look at how I think it should be translated and then at the meaning I believe for which it was written. Its full meaning is not dependent on this passage alone but belongs to the very truth in Jesus and magnificently expressed by John and unique to his insights. If I am correct in my interpretation, which suggested itself the moment I saw their rhetorical relation, the words *through* and *in* presenting a contradiction in the view of creation and redemption.

"All things were made through Him, and without Him was made not one thing. That which was made in him was life, and the life was the light of men." (GM)

In trying to share what I found here, I write with no desire to provoke controversy, which I hate, but with some hope of presenting it to those capable of seeing it. I am as indifferent to a correction for orthodoxy's sake as I am of despising the championship of novelty.

I believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of the eternal Father because from the beginning Jesus is the Son, because God is His Father. This statement is imperfect because we attempt to express what the created cannot grasp but believes to be true, with words incapable of communicating it. I think, however, that the Father is greater. That if the Father had not been, the Son could not have been.

I will not try to apply logic to this thesis, nor would I state it now except for the sake of this truth. We all know that our thoughts and language are unable to express the unknown roots of our existence. In saying what I do here, I am only saying what Paul implies when he speaks of the Son giving the Kingdom to His Father, that His Father may be the All-in-all.

I worship the Son as the human expression of the Divine, the only true Man, having the same being and power as His Father. Equal with Him as a Son is equal and in relationship with His Father. And He is making Himself the equal in what is most precious in the Trinity, namely, Love.

The Father desired to reveal that which is unseen by making it seen. So, the Father worked through His Son so that all that exists would be created through Him. The full knowledge of Their working relationship, no human can understand. But perhaps one day, we will come to understand it better and grow in our own creativity. However, to use the word creation concerning human genius seems to be a misrepresentation of humanity's scope, itself still in the process of creation.

Let us reread the text. "All things were made *through* him, and without him was made not one thing. That which was made *in* him was life." Are you beginning to see it? **The power by which Jesus made the worlds was given to Him by His Father. He had in Himself greater power than that which He used to make the worlds, and this something was Life, created not just through Him but in Him! Something brought into being by Him, in Himself, just like His Father would! "That which was made in Him was Life!"**

What is Life?

What was this life, the thing made in the Son, this life made by Him, inside of Himself, not outside of Him? Life made not through but in Him. The life that was His, the same Life as the Father's.

It was, I answer, the action in Him as the Son that corresponds to the self-existence of His Father. Now, what is the deepest thing in God? His power? No, for power could not make Him what we mean when we say, God. Evil, of course, cannot create even one atom. So, let us understand clearly that a being whose essence is defined by power would be the opposite of the Divine and unworthy of worship. His service could only be motivated by fear. Such a being, even if He were fair in judgment, could not be Jesus' Father!

The Father whom we love could not be righteous were He not something more and better still than we mean by the word righteous. Alas, how little can language express without seeming to say something wrong! In a word, God is love. Love is the central truth, the essence of His nature, the very root of His Being. It is not merely that He could not be Divine if He had not created creatures to whom He could be God, but that love would have to be at the very heart of His creation. Love is His right to make and His power to create as well. The love that ordains creation is itself the power to create.

Neither could He be righteous, that is, fair to His creatures, except His love had created them. Divine perfection is love! All His divine rights rest upon His love. Ah, He is not the great monarch! The simple peasant who loves his cow is more divine than any monarch whose kingdom is his glory. If the Father would not destroy sin or did it for any other reason but love. He could not be the Father of Jesus Christ.

What then, I ask again, is in Christ that corresponds with the power of God? It must also come from the love that has always existed in the Son because love is eternal and has no beginning. For the Father has always loved the Son, and the Son has always loved the Father.

The response to self-existent love is other-centered and self-giving love. This humility is what corresponds to God in creation. Love takes action and creates in self-denial, with the death of self as its inspiration. This love is the drowning of self in the life of God, where it lives only as Love!

What is life in a child? Is it not their perfect response to their parent's oneness with them? A child that is at odds with his parents, whose will is not one with theirs, is not childlike and is in the disharmony of death. This death is seen in inflexibility and distortion with their spiritual harmony on the road to chaos. Disintegration has begun, and death is at work in them. See the same child yielding to a will more authentic and remarkable than their own, and you will see life flowing from its heart to all its body. You will see the child relax and light rise into its face and eyes. Life is once again its lord!

The life of Christ is seen negatively in that He does nothing and cares for nothing for His own sake. Positively, is that He cares only for the pleasure and will of His Father. The truth in Jesus is His relationship with His Father. The righteousness of Jesus is His faithfulness in that relationship.

Fulfilling this relationship, loving His Father with His whole being, is not merely to be alive as a Son, but to give Himself in perfect submission to His Father, choosing to die to Himself and live for Him. In His obedience, Jesus released in Himself a new and higher life and realized the power to awaken Life, like His own in the hearts of His brothers and sisters. We have the same origin and home in His Father and our Father. However, without our elder brother showing us the way, we would never choose the path of self-denial, which is the way of life, and we would never come alive like Him. To choose, not from the self, but to side with the Eternal is to live.

Jesus, from this infinite origin, completed and held fast to the eternal circle of His existence and declared, "Thy will, not mine, be done!" This declaration is the submission unto death of the eternal Son. This self-denial is the throwing of Himself into the fountain of His own life with the Father. It is the life that was made in Jesus, that which in Him is life. This life, self-willed in Jesus, is the only way to create eternal life and make true life possible. This life is essential to every man, woman, and child who the Father has created to return to the inner world of His heart. As the self-existent life of the Father has given us being, so the willed devotion of Jesus has given us His own eternal life to enable us to do the same. There is no life for anyone other than the same kind as Jesus has. His disciples must live in the same devotion to the Father's will to be one in the life of the Father.

We must Choose

Because our origin is of the Divine nature and Jesus chose the divine will, then we, too, must choose the divine will and be like Him. That is to be one with God by loving and living and becoming partakers of the Divine nature, or perish. We cannot create this life, it must be revealed to us, and we must choose it. At the same time, God the Father is the origin of all. Jesus is the origin of our sonship. In Him is created the life which is our sonship to the Father. In fact, this recognition and life is the Father's claim upon His sons and daughters.

We are not and cannot become true sons without exercising our wills to His will. It was Jesus' exercise of His will to the Father's will that made Him a true son of God. He was not the Son of God because He could not help it, but because He chose it!

We also must choose to become the sons we are. We are not forced to be what we are designed to be. Sons and daughters are not made after such a fashion! We are sons and daughters by our Father's claim upon us and by our exercise of will. Herein lies our only and essential joy. Even though the working out of our salvation and the passing of it down to others is painful, doing the will of God is the realization of the eternal passion of joy.

The Life became Light

"And the life was the light of men."

The life of which I have spoken became light to men in the appearing of Jesus in whom it came into being. Life became light that men might see it, that they might choose it, and so to become it and live.

There is always more than what can be expressed. Something beyond all human and divine words, figures, pictures, and films that are but the outer expression through which the central reality shines. Light itself is but the visible manifestation of life, the life that is Christ as seen in His body. The light is what we know of Him. The life that we may become in Him. Light is to clarify the unspeakable unknown. Life must be seen as light so we can see and know it.

Therefore, the obedient human God appeared as, the obedient divine Son, doing the works of His Father. **Doing that is what His Father did, and doing it humbly before hostile and unfriendly people. The Father's Son must take on flesh, that He may be seen of men. And by it become the light of men, not that they could have just light, but life. In seeing what they cannot originate, they, through the life in them, begin to hunger after the life of which they are capable and is essential to their being. That is that the child of God may become the son of God through beholding the Son.**

Let us not forget that the devotion of the Son could never be except for the commitment of the Father. The Father never seeks His own glory any more than the Son does. The Father is devoted to His Son and all His sons and daughters with a perfect and eternal devotion, of endless unselfishness. The whole being and doing of Jesus on the earth is the shining out of that Life that men might see it. He is like the Father, doing His works and will, therefore revealing the Father in the Son that we might know Him. It is the prayer of the Son for the rest of us to be reconciled to the Father. His Father is the original good. The bond of the universe, the active unity, and harmony at the root of all things is the fact that "love is the only good in the world." Love is the life of the universe!

It is not that God created everything that makes the universe a whole. Nor is it that God is the All-in-all, that unites it, but the love of the Son for His Father. For if God were only one being, there could be no unity. There can be no oneness where there is only one. For the very basis of unity, there must be at least two.

However, without Christ, there could be no universe. The reconciliation brought by Jesus is not the primary source of unity or safety for the world. But, it is the necessary work of that reconciliation for the rest of God's family. **This unity is based on the love the Father and Son have for one another. The**

prayer of Jesus for unity between men, the Father, and Himself springs from the eternal motivation of love. The more I see it, the more I am lost in the wonder and glory of it!

Life in Us

The life of Jesus is the light, revealing the Father to them. But light is not enough. Because light is for the sake of life, we too must have life in ourselves and like Him, live! We must live as Jesus lived, giving up our selfish life. This self-denial is the most significant action open to us in making life in ourselves. Jesus lived this way Himself and so became light to us so that we could do it after Him through His originating act.

All that Jesus has given and gives is so we can do it ourselves. Until then, we are not alive, and life is not released in us. The whole strife, labor, and agony of the Son with each of us is to get us to die as He died. All preaching not aimed at this is but wood, hay, and stubble. **If I cannot say with my whole heart, Father, do with me as you will, let me be yours in any way you want. If we cannot give ourselves entirely in this way to our Father, then we have not yet laid hold of that with which Christ has laid hold of us!**

The faith that a man must put in God reaches beyond the created universe. The question at the moment is not about moving mountains, a thing we will one day do with ease, but of waking and rising now from the dead.

When a man honestly says as Jesus did, "Thy will be done," he closes the circle of life, and the life of the Father and Son flows through him. He is then one with the divine life. Then the Lord's prayer is fulfilled in him. "I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." This Christ in us is the spirit of the perfect child with the perfect Father. Christ in us is the blossoming of our true nature in us by the Lord. Whose life is the light of men that it may become the life of men, for our true nature is in our childhood with the Father. Let us comfort ourselves in the faithfulness of the Father and the Son. So long as there is harmony there, all is well with us. Everything is fine, even if we are standing in the dark for a while. God is good, and Jesus is not dead; however, it may look that way to our unfinished childlike hearts.

Thy will, O God, be done! Everything else is loss, decay, and corruption. There is no life except the one born in the Word by doing the will of the Father. Through the light, the life of men is born, the same life in them that was first in Him. As Jesus laid down His life, so we must lay down ours. That which was made in Him was life, and the life was the light of men. Yet to His own, to whom He was sent, they did not believe in Him.

CLIFFNOTES WITH ORIGINAL MACDONALD QUOTES

Life!

I believe, then, that Jesus Christ is the eternal son of the eternal father; that from the first of firstness Jesus is the son, because God is the father—a statement imperfect and unfit because an attempt of human thought to represent that which it cannot grasp, yet which it so believes that it must try to utter it even in speech that cannot be right. I believe therefore that the Father is the greater, that if the Father had not been, the Son could not have been.

The power by which he created the worlds was given him by his father; he had in himself a greater power than that by which he made the worlds. There was something made, not through but in him; something brought into being by himself. Here he creates in his grand way, in himself, as did the Father. 'That which was made in him was life.'

What is Life?

The God himself whom we love could not be righteous were he not something deeper and better still than we generally mean by the word—but, alas, how little can language say without seeming to say something wrong! In one word, God is Love. Love is the deepest depth, the essence of his nature, at the root of all his being. It is not merely that he could not be God, if he had made no creatures to whom to be God; but love is the heart and hand of his creation; it is his right to create, and his power to create as well. The love that foresees creation is itself the power to create.

Neither could he be righteous—that is, fair to his creatures—but that his love created them. His perfection is his love. All his divine rights rest upon his love. Ah, he is not the great monarch! The simplest peasant loving his cow, is more divine than any monarch whose monarchy is his glory. If God would not punish sin, or if he did it for anything but love, he would not be the father of Jesus Christ, the God who works as Jesus wrought.

We Must Choose

Because we are come out of the divine nature, which chooses to be divine, we must choose to be divine, to be of God, to be one with God, loving and living as he loves and lives, and so be partakers of the divine nature, or we perish. Man cannot originate this life; it must be shown him, and he must choose it. God is the father of Jesus and of us—of every possibility of our being; but while God is the father of his children, Jesus is the father of their sonship; for in him is made the life which is sonship to the Father—the recognition, namely, in fact and life, that the Father has his claim upon his sons and daughters.

We are not and cannot become true sons without our will willing his will, our doing following his making. It was the will of Jesus to be the thing God willed and meant him, that made him the true son of God. He was not the son of God because he could not help it, but because he willed to be in himself the son that he was in the divine idea.

So with us: we must be the sons we are. We are not made to be what we cannot help being; sons and daughters are not after such fashion! We are sons and daughters in God's claim; we must be sons and daughters in our will. And we can be sons and daughters, saved into the original necessity and bliss of our being, only by choosing God for the father he is, and doing his will—yielding ourselves true sons to the absolute Father. Therein lies human bliss—only and essential. The working out of this our salvation must be pain, and the handing of it down to them that are below must ever be in pain; but the eternal form of the will of God in and for us, is intensity of bliss.

The Light became Life

There is always something deeper than anything said—something of which all human, all divine words, figures, pictures, motion-forms, are but the outer laminar spheres through which the central reality shines more or less plainly. Light itself is but the poor outside form of a deeper, better thing, namely, life. The life is Christ. The light too is Christ, but only the body of Christ. The life is Christ himself. The light is what we see and shall see in him; the life is what we may be in him. The life 'is a light by abundant clarity invisible;' it is the unspeakable unknown; it must become light such as men can see before men can know it.

The Son of the Father must take his own form in the substance of flesh, that he may be seen of men, and so become the light of men—not that men may have light, but that men may have life;—that, seeing what they could not originate, they may, through the life that is in them, begin to hunger after the life of which they are capable, and which is essential to their being;

It is not the fact that God created all things, that makes the universe a whole; but that he through whom he created them loves him perfectly, is eternally content in his father, is satisfied to be because his father is with him. It is not the fact that God is all in all, that unites the universe; it is the love of the Son to the Father. For of no oneness comes unity; there can be no oneness where there is only one. For the very beginnings of unity there must be two.

That God and Christ are one, are father and son, the Father loving the Son as only the Father can love, the Son loving the Father as only the Son can love. The prayer of the Lord for unity between men and the Father and himself, springs from the eternal need of love. The more I regard it, the more I am lost in the wonder and glory of the thing.

Life in Us

But light is not enough; light is for the sake of life. We too must have life in ourselves. We too must, like the Life himself, live. We can live in no way but that in which Jesus lived, in which life was made in him. That way is, to give up our life. This is the one supreme action of life possible to us for the making of life in ourselves. Christ did it of himself, and so became light to us, that we might be able to do it in ourselves, after him, and through his originating act.

If I say not with whole heart, 'My father, do with me as thou wilt, only help me against myself and for thee;' if I cannot say, 'I am thy child, the inheritor of thy spirit, thy being, a part of thyself, glorious in thee, but grown poor in me: let me be thy dog, thy horse, thy anything thou wilt; let me be thine in any shape the love that is my Father may please to have me; let me be thine in any way, and my own or another's in no way but thine;'—if we cannot, fully as this, give ourselves to the Father, then we have not yet laid hold upon that for which Christ has laid hold upon us.

When a man truly and perfectly says with Jesus, and as Jesus said it, 'Thy will be done,' he closes the everlasting life-circle; the life of the Father and the Son flows through him; he is a part of the divine organism. Then is the prayer of the Lord in him fulfilled: 'I in them and thou in me, that they made be made perfect in one.'

