

Easter Vigil 2018
03/31/18

A few years ago, I shared some reflections by Frederick Buechner from his book, *The Magnificent Defeat*. He talks about American poet James Weldon Johnson's attempt to re-create, in one of his poems, some of the great power and sheer gorgeousness of an old-time black preacher's sermon on Creation. Let me share his thoughts with you again tonight.

And God stepped out on space, and He looked around and said: I'm lonely – I'll make me a world. And as far as the eye of God could see darkness covered everything, blacker than a hundred midnights down in a cypress swamp. Then God smiled, and the light broke, and the darkness rolled up on the one side and the light stood shining on the other, and God said: "That's good!"

Then God reached out and took the light in His hands, and God rolled the light around in His hands until He made the sun; and He set that sun a-blazing in the heavens. And the light that was left from making the sun God gathered it up in a shining ball and flung it against the darkness, spangling the night with moon and stars. Then down between the darkness and the light He hurled the world; and God said: "That's good."

Buechner goes on to suggest these lines describe the creation in the only language fit to describe it really, the language of poetry, which is a language made up of metaphors and music, of great intensity of feeling and inventiveness. He concludes by asking a haunting question: are there in us, you and me and everybody, that recklessness of the loving heart, that wild courage, that crazy gladness in the face of darkness and death, that shuddering faithfulness even unto the end of the world, through which new things come to pass?

If not, God have mercy on us. If so, then we, even we, will have some part in the new heaven and the new earth that God is creating. So let's all of us go out tonight and make us a world, a world of light not darkness, a world of love not hate, a world filled with the love of Christ. If we do that, I can guarantee God's response will be: "That's good."