

GOD PROMISES BLESSINGS AND BEGINNINGS

Genesis 1:1–2: 4a

Creation.

Creation always seems to me a very small word when given all the different things that it holds. It holds for us this amazing story we received from our Scripture about different stages of the movement of God in Creation. And it also holds for us a lot of the Commandments from our Scripture to tend to one another, to take care of creation, to be good stewards.

Creation has taken up a lot of space in the debate of religion versus science, which never really makes sense to me mostly because I was taught by my Sunday school teacher we have no idea how long a day was back then. So when my science teacher said ‘Well, that took a million years,’ I thought ‘That was a pretty long day!’ (*Laughter*)

Then at the same time, God is God. God kind of does everything in an overwhelming, splashing over the edges kind of way. This is the God who said: ‘You are forgiven.’ That would be before the humans even confessed their sin. God’s grace and love, like Creation, abound and abound and abound.

So the idea that a triceratops and tyrannosaurus rex needed to roam the earth before I got to get my feet wet is just fine. For me it makes God more of a kindergarten teacher than a ruler. Someone who has just brought out all of the things from the cupboard and put them on the table and said ‘Have at it!’ But as part of God’s Creation, we often think of the riches that we receive, the abundance of species, the abundance of amounts of fruits, the kinds of bugs and butterflies. But, one of the most important things that God did in Creation was given chaos order. He took chaos and created seas. He took seas and created land. He took land and seas and created sky, light and darkness. And as Creation ever expanded, nothing got deleted. Instead it multiplied, ever expanding into ever more complex life forms, ever expanding relationships.

The first relationship we had is with God, but in the midst of that exact moment of Creation, we also become related to all of Earth. God does not say ‘You are here and amazing, oh, I should make you an Earth.’ God creates order and seasons and food and sustenance, and then creates a relationship with human beings that is based on our relationship with God and the Earth,

space and roots, light and dark. Over the coming weeks we will be celebrating Creation. Many of the denominations – the Anglican, the Lutheran, the United Churches - have realized that Creation (and its caretaking that we are called to do) can be neglected if we focus all of our religious seasons on Biblical stories other than this one. And that is why there is a whole season of Creation now – that runs from September to mid-October. That is why the new colours and images that have been created by this congregation for this congregation. And during the season of Creation, we will be celebrating aspects of Creation.

Next week we will be celebrating the fact that God thought to include seasons and cycles as part of the rhythm of life, both human and worldly. And we will talk together about what our place is in Creation.

I wanted to begin with the first gift of Creation, and the first transgression of Humanity. The first gift God gave us was an order to things. A way to fit in. And a way that was always including. There were days in the midst of my life when I wondered why God had made darkness anyway? And why, dear God, did you make Edmonton winters? (*Laughter*) Here is something that I can question!

And so, it took a lot of teachers working their way on me to realize that if you do not have Edmonton winters, you do not have the amazing mystical magic of an Edmonton garden in summer time. And, as Christians, we must always remember Jesus lived! Yes! Jesus loved and healed! Yes! And then Jesus walked into darkness and said Yes!

So we must wrap our minds around the fact that God did not just say “It is good” when the nectarine came to be. God said “It is good” when black flies came to be, mosquitoes. And whatever a platypus is, God said “Yeah...yeah...that!” And I know you might not remember the day you were born, but on the day you were born God said “Ahhhhh...whoahh....how awesome is *this* one!” (*Laughter*) Yes even for Altos! (I know...it’s amazing! Oh, how I have missed making fun of the altos behind me) (*Laughter*) (*our choir was back this week from summer holidays*).

So God’s first gift to us is an order and a diversity and a balance, and the first and most usual transgression of a human being is to walk over them, to eat off ...oh yeah, the only tree you shouldn’t eat from, and that’s the one we pick!

One of the only boring parts of the Book of Genesis is all about the boundaries of Eden. So you skip over it – it’s boring. And then you have to go back and you realize that the scripture writers are saying boundaries are important. And when we walk over them, there are consequences. One of humans’ most favourite transgressions, and mine as well, is to think: “Well, God is big and all, but really I know better.”

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The 'I am God-like' syndrome. It's the one that says that my thoughts are big enough to impact the whole world, that I know better than God, and that I really know better than God's creatures - even the really smart ones. It's one of those classic boundaries we walk over. It is the fruit we ate without permission: the wisdom of knowing all.

We cannot know all. And the worst place a human can be is the blind place where we do think we know it all. The place that does not allow us to reach across our imaginations and walk in another's shoes, imagine another person's life. It is difficult to hold in our self both, "I am an absolutely amazing child of God", and "I am just a child, and as smart and wise and mature as I get, I will still end each day with 'Why?'".

I will come to each church meeting hoping that someone will figure out the exact answer to a question. All of us actually live lives where the bottom line is "we have no idea." And this is for good and bad things. I don't know if I am going to get that job. I don't know if I'm going to be able to help that person. I don't know how it is that God allowed me to be here. I have no idea what this place holds in its future. And it is a temptation to cross boundaries and to say "Well then fine, I will just give you that answer. I'll tell you what the question is, what the answer is, and what's the Magic Bullet." That phrase always bothered me: Magic Bullet. Everyone likes the 'Magic' word, but I was really stuck on the second word. Bullets are not life giving. And so, any easy answer probably isn't life giving.

Instead we need to sit together in community with all these odd people that God loves. We must sit with big questions that have no simple answers. And we must hope that our small ways of helping make big differences.

There is both good news and bad news this morning. The bad news is you are not God. And the good news is GOD IS.

Amen.