

The Glory Of Creation

Bible Reading:
Genesis 2: 4-25
Psalm 8

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THE MAGNIFICENCE OF CREATION

This past summer, as many of you know, my family travelled to the West Coast. On the prairies we were able to listen to coyotes howling just outside our tent, and watch prairie dogs bark and chatter at us. We stood on top of the huge Columbia ice fields, dwarfed by towering mountains, chilled by howling winds, but a speck on this glacier. We dipped our toe into the Pacific Ocean, stretching out before us for thousands of miles.

All of this - created by God.

As are the little tadpoles which will – when things thaw out this Spring – wriggle and swim in the Ottawa River inlets by Andrew Haydon park, growing into frogs. God made those tadpoles, and those river inlets.

Over the first few weeks of 2004, we as a congregation have had to lay to rest two precious people - people with complex, inter-connected body structures, DNA chains, and genetic sequences. These people, with all the days that they walked and talked and worked and played, were made by God.

God made it; God made it all; God made it from scratch.

WHY DID GOD DO IT?

Have you ever stopped to ask – "Why?"

"Why would God go through all the trouble of making all this, a vast creation that He knew wouldn't only require His care and attention at the beginning, but all throughout time?"

Why did God bother to do it?

Psalms 8 asks that kind of a question. It is a song that sings the praises of the Maker of all this magnificence,

"O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!"

And it asks,

"When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him...?"

"O Lord, **why** did you bother making us – or *this* for that matter?"

THE ANSWER

We will never know the full answer to this question, but one of the fundamental reasons is the deep, deep love of God. We don't have time to explain why, but let me simply state that love, true love, needs and wants and hungers to be shared with others. I invite you to read 1 Corinthians 13 and reflect on this statement as you read that chapter of Scripture -

true love needs and wants and hungers to be shared with others.

It is the love of parents who make room in their hearts and homes for children.

It is the grace and welcome of hosts who invite people into their homes,
making *room* for them in generous ways.

[Plantinga *A Sure Thing*]

God, in His perfectly pure and holy love, desires and - dare we say it - even hungers for that sharing, welcoming, togetherness.

In perfection He has had it from all eternity as Trinity - Father, Son and Holy Spirit as three divine persons who were totally open to each other in will, and work and purpose, in eternal ways to the point where they are joined as One.

Then Trinity creates time.

And in that time created space.

And into that space placed a cosmos - an ordered universe.

Finally,

As crowning piece of that universe,
the Holy Trinity God created humanity - male and female.

God calls that humanity into relationship with Himself.
He calls them to make room in their lives for relationship with the cosmos.
He calls them into relationship with each other.

These relationships are unfolded for us in the second chapter of the opening book of the Bible, *Genesis*.
Notice in our very first verse, 2.4, the words, "*This is the account of....*"
Pay attention to those words.
If you have your own bible with you, underline them.
That phrase is the touchstone throughout *Genesis* - repeated 10 times.
And it means "*Here is the history of....*"

In 2.4 we read "*This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created.*" In other words:
"*Here are the heavens and the earth - created by God - and here is what happened to them after that fact of the Creation Event.*"

Chapter 2 of *Genesis* is not, as I've heard some people suggest, a variation on the story of the creation of the world. Instead it is the unfolding and presenting of the beginning of the history of Humanity in the newly created world.

In the description of chapter 2 we have presented to us three essential, foundational paradise relationships that God created for human beings to experience in this wonderful new world.

Just as God, in His Trinitarian being, created the Cosmos out of His loving desire for relationship outside of Himself, so He created Human Beings to function the same way – to have relationships outside of themselves:

1. The relationship between people and their Creator
2. The relationship between people and Creation.
3. The relationship between one person and another.

Each of these three are reflected in the quilt out in the fellowship hall, shown up here on the screen.

I want to look at these relationships, and consider together how these, formed in Paradise, affect the relationships that we form in our lives.

THE GOD-HUMANITY RELATIONSHIP

First, then, the Paradise Relationship, the Relationship that was meant to be, between people and their Creator. It's a relationship that begins when the Living, Powerful Creator makes the first move.

God **formed**.

God **breathed**.

And Adam was.

God, forming, is – in forming – the Maker.

God, breathing, is – in intimate contact – giving human life and breathe.

God took some of the common ingredients that are found in the rest of creation; He took ingredients and design patterns used to make so many other creatures that roamed the earth, and He formed the crown piece of the cosmos;

- the piece created in His own image
- the piece called into relationship with Himself
- the piece called to assist the Holy One in caring for, nurturing and developing what had been made.

And so the relationship began - a relationship begun by God, made by Him to be alive, active, and two-way; a **morally responsible** relationship.

That moral responsibility is shown to us in the symbols that He planted in the garden; the symbols of two trees.

First there is the **Tree of Life**. When you take into consideration other places in the bible where it is referred to, it becomes clear that this tree represents choices made by humanity – choices which create life, support life, enhance life, develop life. And such choices can **only** be made out of a close, constant, growing relationship with the One who created life in the first place -- the Lord God.

Eating from the Tree of Life is the symbol of a life that is in constant communion with Him, based on Him, drawing from Him, depending in entirety on Him, obedient to Him.

The Tree was there.

And the way was clear for our first parents to take the fruit, to choose to live in the way this tree represented.

Then there is the Tree Of The Knowledge Of Good And Evil. It is the antithesis, the exact and dark opposite, to the Tree of Life. It represents the opposite of life in submission to and focussed on the Lord.

It is the symbol of self-made life, a life of getting knowledge and values from the created world in defiance of the Creator. It is the "*I'm going to do it myself, do it my way*" tree.

The Tree was there.

"*Don't choose to take it*" said the LORD God.

Moral responsibility in action.

The God-Humanity relationship.

It's a relationship that each one of **us** has been created for, as well.

God made me to be in relationship with Him.

God made you to be in an open, vibrant, living love relationship with Him.

He desires to be with you.

Loves you.

Is gladdened by your presence.

He longs for you to make choices that bring you closer -

Tree of Life choices.

Part of what we do here every Sunday is helping to reinforce, to celebrate, to soak up that relationship with God - the worship event of love, adoration and praise; of prayer and blessing...

Preparing us to go into a week of living, 24/7, step by step with the One who loves us more than any other

Closer

Never leaving us

Passionately concerned about us

Our Creator - our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Understand that, friends.

Celebrate this.

And live with confidence because of it.

THE HUMANITY-CREATION RELATIONSHIP

Grounded in that first relationship, secure in a relationship with the living God, we can face the second Paradise Relationship,

a relationship between humanity and the earth.

God, the divine parent, puts people into relationship with the world he created.

God put us into relationship with this creation in two ways:

- a) For Cultivation, Use, Enjoyment --
 Creation was pleasant to look at,
 the first art gallery,
 a natural one, with God as the artist.
 In that pleasure it was also a source of nourishment.
 And God said in v.16, "*It is for you to enjoy.*"
- b) For Dominion, Development, Maintenance:
 God also called humanity to develop creation and maintain it in a careful manner: As you are enjoying it,
 work the earth....
 Explore, develop, cultivate, link, grow, expand it.

The air that we breathe;
 The trees we cut down and turn into homes and furniture;
 The paint brushes or fabric we take in hand to mould artfully;
 The gas we burn in our cars and furnaces;
 The electron microscopes focussed on molecular level interactions;
 None of these just are - they are not without value, not value neutral;
 They matter.
 They have value.

Handling all of this in our week to week life routines is our challenge.
 It's our privilege.
 And the Holy One who is in relationship with us,
 who loves and cares for us
 also
 loves and cares for what we do.

THE MAN-WOMAN RELATIONSHIP

God has created us, and equipped us -
 To go into our lives in a day-to-day relationship, living, love relationship with Him.
 To go into our lives in awareness that we do so with a day-to-day relationship with the creation around
 us, a creation we steward and develop.

AND

– third point –

God put us into these relationships, **not** as individuals, but as a community.
 We are **not** meant to relate to God **alone**.
 We are **not** created to care for and develop creation **alone**.

The third Paradise Relationship -
 God created humanity to be in relationship **with each other**.

We are given the focus in 2.18:
"It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."
 Not a plaything.... or pet.... or beast of burden;
 No slave.... or servant.... or maid.
No!
 God created a suitable helper.

The Hebrew word for "suitable" is one from the root
"opposite of; counterpart to".

She is one without whom man could not get along in life, one who would join with man, two as one, each complementing.

What the one is good at, the other lacks;

What the other is good at, the first lacks -

together they are whole.

“A suitable helper” from the rib of the man.

An ancient rabbi commented on these verses:

the woman is made from the side of the man,

not from the head that she should dominate,

and not from the foot that she should be dominated,

but from the rib to walk side by side through life with man.

These two helpers are joined together in the first wedding, with God both officiating, and being the Father who walks His daughter down the aisle.

Man and woman - belonging together.

Meant to bond together as husband and wife in complete union -

leaving – breaking from, the parental home

and beginning a home of their own.

And **cleaving** – completely joining with, one another.

Deeply Loving,

Fully Enjoying,

and

Completely Open with each other.

There is a perfect, naked love between them.

Physically, emotionally and spiritually -

completely open to each other in every respect....

.....and they felt no shame.

A Paradise relationship.

Husbands and wives - here's how God created you to be.

This kind of sharing is His potential, His opportunity.....

It is His gift - wonderful, beautiful gift.

And beyond just the husband - wife relationship –

There is the vision for us all in our relationships with each other.

Let's take time this morning to rejoice that we're not in faith alone.

Let's take time to thank the Creator for this beautiful community called Calvin CRC:

Where we can share our joys.

Where we can share our sorrows.

Where we can share our hopes.

Where we can share our frustrations.

What an amazing God -

Granting us such wonderful grounding for our lives.

And making it a reality today,

even though we are in a world that is not pure or perfect or right.

God still gives us the Paradise Relationships through the presence of Jesus Christ.

Jesus:

- who brought heaven to earth,

- who connects us to the Father Creator,

- who renews and makes holy our weekday activities
- who brings new colour and life to our relationships with each other.

Next week, we'll talk more about how sin distorted these three Paradise Relationships.

Today we give thanks that these relationships were created.

And, with our hearts and minds and hands open to Jesus,

we can, with courage and confidence,

live in those relationships.