

Sermon / 4 June 2023/ Genesis 1:1 – 2:4a, 2 Corinthians 13:11-13, Matthew 28:16-20/ It's All Good

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Creation is good. We are good. Let's remember that and make it true.

God created the heavens and the earth and God saw that they were good.

God created the light and dark, the day and the night, the sun, moon, and stars and God saw that they were good.

God created the waters and the dry land and saw that they were good.

God created all the creatures that dwell in the waters and all the beings that live on the dry land and all the winged critters that fly in the air and saw that they were good.

God created humans and God saw that we are good.

Creation is good. We are good. Let's remember that and make it true.

But this makes me wonder.

If creation is so good as God created it, then why do we find ourselves in such a mess these days? On a scale of one to ten, how "good" do you feel creation is right now?

Greed runs rampant. Our leaders cannot agree on anything. People flee their homelands for safety and are treated with indifference (or worse) when they seek shelter in another country. Climate change is threatening our planet. Gun violence ravages our country. Hard-won rights for people are being taken away. Books are being banned. Hateful rhetoric is heard more and more frequently.

But – as God made it - Creation is good. We are good. That's why I say, "Let's remember that and make it true."

Genesis tells us that God SAW that all creation was good, but it doesn't specifically tell us any words God may have thought or said at the times of creation.

Maybe God said, "That's good," or "That's sure good." Maybe God got carried away and said "Wow! That is soooo good."

Or maybe God was the first to utter the phrase, “It’s all good.”

I am certain God would have said it more like.... “It’s. All. Good.” God would not have looked at the marvelous universe that had just been brought into being and offhandedly said, “It’s all good.”

We hear that a lot, “It’s all good. It’s all good.”

That phrase is often meant to say, “Actually, everything isn’t right. There’s a lot of problems around here. But I’m going to deflect attention from those problems and pretend it’s OK. Look over there. Nothing to worry about.”

Isn’t that how it sometimes feels in our world today? Nothing seems to be right but we keep getting the run around. Fingers are pointed. Blame is placed. But nothing changes. Even within our own minds, we need to block out all the bad around us. Perhaps, as a coping mechanism, we even tell ourselves, “It’s all good.”

But – as God made it - Creation IS good. We ARE good. Let’s remember that and make it true. Let’s turn “It’s all good” back into “Its. All. Good.”

As Christians, as followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to do this. To make Creation “good” for everyone. I repeat myself over and over, but this is what it means to bring God’s kingdom here to earth. That’s what we are called to do.

That’s sound great and I know we all want to do that. But it’s hard Deacon David. How do we do it.

Today, Rachel read a ridiculously short scripture passage from Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians. It’s just the last two verses. It almost seems inconsequential. But it isn’t.

Paul wrote this letter to a struggling church who couldn’t get their act together. Things were not good. In this short sign-off to the letter, he tells them his three hopes for them.

Put things in order.

Listen to my appeal.

Agree with one another and live in peace.

Put things in order. Theologian William Barclay interprets it like this: “Work your way onwards to perfection.” In other words, MOVE. We can’t stand still. If we,

as Christians, are not moving forward in the pursuit of God's kingdom here on earth – making sure Creation IS good – then we are slipping backward. Forces that want to make things good for them - and only them - and not for everyone - will gain ground. Put things in order. Get our ducks in a row. Move onward. Together.

Listen to Paul's appeal. The church in Corinth thought they knew what was best and were failing miserably when the members could not reach consensus. Paul told them to follow what Jesus taught us – and not to think they knew what was best. Jesus told us to love God and to love our neighbors as ourselves. Listen to that.

Agree with one another and live in peace. Paul says we cannot love God if we do not love one another. As Christians we cannot worship the God of peace if we hold bitterness or hatred toward another human being.

We must follow Paul's advice:

Put things in order. Get our act together and get things done. Move!

Listen to the words and commandments of Jesus. These are words of love, not division.

Agree with one another and live in peace. Love. Peace.

Changing "It's all good" to "It's. All. Good" is daunting. We are called to do so much more than show up here for worship each Sunday morning. Each and every thing we do must be part of our calling to make sure that Creation is "good" for everyone.

Pray. Start with prayer. Always pray.

We pray together each week, "God's kingdom come. God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Pray for the earth.

Pray for the poor and the marginalized.

Pray for those who are treated as "less than" and for those in power.

Pray for an end to violence and abuse.

Pray for those whose rights are being taken away and for those who are taking away people's rights.

Pray for us.

Pray for yourself – that we may have strength and courage to put things in order and move forward.

And then go out there into this wild, marvelous, confusing, beautiful, messed-up creation and make sure everyone knows that it is good. Make it truly BE good for every single person.

Start small. One person can't change everything overnight. One person can't take on all that needs to be made good. But together – as Christians who follow the message of love and acceptance for everyone that Jesus taught us – we can bring God's kingdom here to earth.

There are people in this very congregation who spend their days helping immigrants and asylum seekers. That is good.

There are people here today who help people with mental illness and addiction. That is good.

There are those among us who teach children the ways of love and respect for our siblings on this planet. That teaching takes place in school and at home within families. That is good.

Some of us work to change laws that are unjust. That is good.

We feed the hungry. That is good.

We help those who are sick – professionally and as next-door-neighbors. That is good.

There are artists among us who create beauty to sustain and energize us for the work we are called to do. That is good.

We write letters. We attend protests. We stand up for what is right. That is good. It's. All. Good.

This is a lot of work. It can be overwhelming. But today's Gospel told us that Jesus is with us always, even to the end of time. We are not doing this alone. God is among us. God is with us.

God the Creator. The Creator who told us we are good is always with us.

God the Redeemer. The Redeemer who saved us from our sins and told us how to live is always with us.

God the Sustainer. The Sustainer who was sent to be our guide and comfort us is always with us.

Let's share the power and strength of Jesus at the table this morning and then go out and change the world.

Creation is good. We are good. Let's remember that and make it true.

It's. All. Good.