

“Caring for God’s Creation”

Job 12: 7-10

I will tell you that I struggled to write this sermon this week, which is odd for me because creation care is such a huge part of my call as a person of faith as well as such a huge part of our own community of faith’s vision of welcome as we continue to proclaim the Kingdom of God here on Earth. Earth Sunday, Earth Stewardship- that should be such an easy sermon to write but as the week passed on, I couldn’t figure out why the Holy Spirit was staying so silent.

It wasn’t until I followed Job’s advice and truly listened to creation that I discovered the reason the sermon wasn’t coming to me. I invite you to listen to Job’s advice as we now turn in our Bibles to Job 12: 7-10.

(Read text)

After reading Job’s advice, I realized something. It wasn’t that the sermon wasn’t coming to me. The Holy Spirit was speaking just fine. The problem really was that I wasn’t listening. You see, the reason why the sermon wasn’t coming to me this week was because I was listening to all the other noises in my life, none which were the right ones, none of which would really allow me to hear God’s message, none of which really helped me hear God’s voice.

Let me explain: the no-brainer moment of my sermon writing came to me when I realized that I was trying to write a sermon about creation without being connected to creation. I was trying to write a sermon about the beauty and mystery of God's creation while ignoring the beauty and mystery of God's creation. The problem was that I was writing about God's creation from inside my office. And you know-It is really hard to listen to what creation is telling us about our Creator when we are sitting behind thick brick walls, listening to the clicks of our computer, listening to the phone ring, listening to our generated, human made type of noises that fill and overtake our lives.

I will tell you, that when I realized this simple thing-that we have to get out into creation to hear God's voice, it seemed like such an obvious revelation. It seemed so obvious: We have to get out of our offices to hear the voice of the Spirit, to hear creation, to experience the mystery of God. But we never do. Instead it is a sad commentary on the reality of the world we live in today as people of faith.

Majority of our time is spent indoors behind our desks. Majority of our time is spent underneath harsh fluorescent lighting. Majority of our time is spent only looking out at God's creation through the panes of glass that we have in our lives: office windows, car windows, home windows. I have often told Jim Leer and Marlin Mitchell that I am envious of their work as farmers. Well maybe not all the

parts of their job but at least the part where they get to spend their days so close to nature, get to spend their time so connected with the earth. The part where they know, day end and day out, that they are a part of God's creation.

And I know that I am not alone in this sentiment. Several of you have told me that you feel the closest to God when you are working in your gardens, digging in the dirt, pulling out the weeds, eagerly anticipating what will pop up from the seeds you planted. It is in those moments that you feel completely connected with God's creation. You feel completely connected with the creative nature of our God.

But sadly moments like those are far and few between for the majority of us. Let's be honest, we take our vacations sometimes to feel like we can get back to nature. But what are those vacations really? Hotels, with swimming pools. Even camping-we can take our RV's that have every convenience of home, even the kitchen sink.

The sad reality is that nowhere in our lives are we really connected with nature. We have compartmentalized our lives so much. We have worlds in which we work, and worlds in which we live. But nowhere, nowhere do these worlds intersect with the world in which we truly experience, truly celebrate the beauty and mystery of God's creation. The sad truth is that in our everyday lives today, there is a growing disconnect between us humans and God's creation. And it is not

just us adults who are feeling this disconnect. Our children are spending more and more time indoors as video games and video systems become more readily available. Our children are forgetting what it is like to go outside and play, to make mud pies, to get dirt under their nails.

And because of the artificial worlds that we have built, there continues to be a growing disconnect between God's creation and us humans. It is a disconnect that we've created and it is deepening with each passing moment that we stay indoors in our artificial worlds. And unfortunately, this disconnect is breaking the gentle strands that connect us to the web of creation.

As humans, we are in danger of beginning to believe that we are no longer just part of creation but instead we are beginning to believe that we are the creator. In this artificial world of ours, this artificial world that separates from God's creation, it seems like there is no place for the beauty and mystery of God and even worse than that, it seems like there is no place for God either!

With each passing day, we slip farther and farther away from what centers us, from what gives our lives meaning. We slip farther and farther away from our connection with creation. And soon we will come to the point where we are no longer part of the whole. We will come to the point where the only noises we will hear filling our lives will be the honks of car horns and bings of text messages. We are in danger of no longer appreciating God's creation.

We are too caught up in the noises of our artificial world, the noises that drown out the teachings of the animals, the noises that drown out the stories, the stories as old as time, stories told to us by the fishes in the sea and the birds of the air. We are too caught up in our false artificial world that is filled with rings from cell phones, clicks from text messages, beeps from emails flooding our inboxes. All these noises that fill our artificial world silence the lessons told to us by the very earth itself, lessons of love, lessons of grace, lessons of hope.

As humans, we are so disconnected and we are struggling to grasp the meaning of life. All because our world, the world we created, the real world in which we reside is so full of NOISE! We have forgotten what gives our life meaning all because we have forgotten that we are not the creator. We have forgotten God. And we have forgotten our connection with God's creation.

Unfortunately, in this disconnected between God's real creation and our artificial world, we have ignored the very basics of life: love, compassion, hope and grace. We have forgotten the beauty and mystery that surrounds these things. We have forgotten that we are the creature, not the creator. We have forgotten to feel the grass under our feet. We have forgotten to feel the wind in our hair. We have forgotten to listen to the song of God's creation.

The thing we as people of faith have to realize is that the disconnect is not so far gone that we cannot overcome. There is still hope. All we have to do is step

away from our artificial world and once more become part of the wider circle of life.

Because when we truly listen to creation, when we allow it to teach us about the basics of life, when we allow creation to remind us that God made it all, we learn so many life-transforming things. We learn balance. We learn to begin to appreciate the cycles of life in all their varied forms. When we truly listen to the lessons found in God's creation, we learn patience and perseverance as we watch birds build their nests. We learn about the beauty and mystery of life as we listen to the wind blow through the trees. We learn that the true blessing of life, what gives our lives meaning and hope, is that we know we can fully rely on God through all of life's ups and downs. Through the lessons found in God's creation, we come to understand and embrace that We are held in God's hand. No matter where life leads us, no matter what journeys we may be on, God holds the life of every living thing. God breathes new life into every human being. God is moving among creation, still bring life from the chaos.

All we have to do is look towards creation, listen to them, and we begin to understand what they already know. Creation doesn't worry about getting ahead. Creation doesn't worry about having enough money. Creation doesn't worry about what clothes to wear. God has taken care of it and has provided for all its needs.

All creation has to do is enjoy life. All creation has to do is become the best that God created it to be.

From the tiniest seed to the largest whale, God holds all of it in the palm of God's hand. And as we listen to the lessons from the animals and the fishes, from the very earth itself, we soon discover the wonderful life-giving news that each day is a gift. Each moment is a miracle. The best part of it all is that we know and can celebrate that God is a part of our lives each and every day.

when we take time to listen to creation, we realize that this life changing is the new. It is a song as old as Creation itself. We only have to open our heart and our ears to its melody. God has not only written the Gospel of the good news in the Bible but God has also written the Gospel of grace and love in the trees, in the flowers, in the clouds and in the stars. God is filling our world with the good news that we are claimed and named as God's own Beloved children!

As we listen to the Gospel of God's creation, we are reminded that God holds it all in God's hand. We are also reminded that God's hands are the same hands that brought this world into being. God's hands are the same hands that created the trees for the birds to build nests. God's hands are same hands that created the mountains for the goats to have a place to play. God's hands are the same hands that made the rivers and the streams flow to provide drinks for all the wild animals. God's hands are the same hands that formed us in the womb, that

shaped us in God's image. God hands are the same hands continue to guide us through life. When we take the time to notice the handiwork of our Creator, we realize that God's hands are the same hands that comfort us, that bring us peace, that show us love and now they bear the mark of the nails.

As we look around at creation, we realize that God's hands have shaped and formed a world for us out of love. We realize that God's hands have created for us a world full of beauty and mystery, a world where there is plenty, a world where there is grace, a world where there is joy. All of God's creation is held in God's hands, no matter what life brings our way.

The Gospel of creation calls us to celebrate and to praise our God as master designer, our God is as master architect, our God as master artist. The animals, the fish, the very earth itself teaches us that God has created an earth for us, created for all of God's creation and has provided for all our needs. God takes great joy in God's creation. God savors God's creation. Our God who is always creating, our God who is always renewing, our God who is always restoring, receives great delight from God's very own creation. And this God is the same God, Our God who has claimed and named us as God's very own.

Rejoice! Celebrate! Give Praise to our Maker! Can't you just hear it?! That is what creation is telling us if we would only stop and listen! All of creation is

singing for joy! All of creation is chirping in celebration. All of creation is lifting its praise to God, the Creator. And we are invited to join in with their praising.

Because when we join in this song of joy and delight, we discover what the animals, the fish and earth itself already knows! God is in control and all of creation, including us humans, are held in the palm of God's hand.

Today, and all days, let us join in with creation as it sings out with promise and with hope. Let us step out of our artificial worlds and hear the beautiful music that fills this world. Let us join God in God's work of caring and tending creation, so that we can begin to live out the promises of the resurrection and new life and share the good news with all of our brothers and sisters who have forgotten this life changing news.

The thing we as people of faith need to realize is that when we model the kind of love and care for the Earth that God has shown toward creation, towards all of us, the experience of the Kingdom of God becomes even more real. It becomes real for us as people of faith in our everyday lives and we once again feel connected with God's Spirit and God's creation.

So this week, I invite you to listen. Listen to what the animals can teach us. Learn from the birds of the air. Listen to the stories that the fishes are sharing with us. Learn the basics of life from earth itself. I invite you to step out from behind the walls of the artificial worlds we have built, I invite you to step out of the office, I

invite you roll down your car windows, I invite you to turn off the AC and open up the house, I invite you to bridge the disconnect, to rediscover God's creation and to join in the celebration.

We are a part of God's creation. And we are called to live out the promise of hope, grace and love. We are called to proclaim the real beauty, the real mystery of the Kingdom of God here on earth that is available for all of God's children if we would open step out of our artificial worlds and join in the celebration of praise.

May we continue to find ways to bridge the disconnect between us humans and God's creation and may we always sing praise to our Maker as we join in the celebration of the good news found in God's creation. Amen.