

“Humanity is Not the Center of God’s Creation”

Job 38:25-27; Job 41: 1-8; 42: 1-6

This week, we continue with God’s response to Job. As we learned last week, God has waited for Job to finish speaking before God begins to speak up. And as we also learned last week when God actually started speaking, Job sat up and took notice. All because Job was literally blown away by what all he experienced and saw when he encountered the wholeness of God’s creation.

As I said before, Job had an encounter with God and surprisingly, lives to tell about it. This encounter with God changes Job, transforms Job and helps him realize that although he has worshipped God all his life, Job has never really understood his God and the depths of God’s love.

Before Job’s encounter with God, Job imagined that his God only existed to serve him and all of humanity. Job believed that God’s main purpose in life was to keep God’s children happy and to take care of their wants and needs. It takes a whirlwind and an encounter with the Almighty to open Job’s eyes for Job to see just how wrong his assumptions about God really are.

Because as Job travels in the whirlwind with his God, Job realizes that he is seeing things now from God’s perspective and imagine Job’s surprise, as he discovers that humanity is not what holds this universe together. Humanity is not

what gives creation its purpose or meaning. Imagine Job's surprise when he is listening to God describe the beauty and wonder of God's creation, telling all the details from the tiniest bug to the largest sea creation, imagine Job's surprise when he realizes that as God is describing the beauty and wonder of God's creation, humanity is not mentioned once. Imagine Job's surprise when he discovers that humanity is not the center of God's universe.

I'll let that one sink in for a while.

As I thought about this discovery for Job this past week, I began to wonder just when exactly did we start assuming that we, humanity, were the center of God's world. Where did we get the idea that the world revolved around us? When did we start believing and living out our lives like God needed us to survive?

I think it all goes back to that moment in the beginning of our faith story, that moment when we were told, and yes, continue to still tell ourselves, that we were created in the image of God, a truly beautiful, life-changing and life-giving moment for humanity but I really wonder if God telling us this idea was such a good thing for our egos.

Don't get me wrong. My whole spirit finds healing and wholeness in the fact that I am created in the image of God, that I am a beloved child of God, that God placed this honor upon my shoulders but guess what. God did the same for everyone else I encounter. Sometimes, I think we believe this honor only applies to

us as individuals, not as a collective group and I also think we take this honor for granted. We don't appreciate the fact that God loved us so much that God took the time to form us in God's own image, and just look around: each of one of us different. Each one of us is unique. Each one of us is made the image of God. That is a huge gift and we, as the people of God, take that gift for granted.

Or we go to the other extreme. Sometimes we take this gift too far. Sometimes, we tend to let this understanding go to our heads just a bit. We tend to think that just because God created us in God's own image that we must be more important than the rest of God's creation. We must be more important than anything else. We must be more special to God than the rest of God's creation.

I believe it was Carl Sagan who said that when God told us that we were created in the image of God, what humanity heard instead was that the Creator of all the Universe looks just exactly like me. Isn't God so lucky?

Think about it. Sometimes we base our whole lives, we base all of our interactions with others on the fact that God looks exactly like me rather than the other way around. As a whole, humanity tends to act like we are better than every other creature. Well, because God created us in God's own image. As a whole, humanity tends to treat each other as less than the Beloved children of God because well, let's face it. God can only look like one race. And well, we all know Jesus was white with blond hair and blue eyes. As a whole, humanity tends to treat

everything and everyone is if it only exists to serve us because well, the Creator of the Universe does look exactly like me.

God said, “let us make man and woman in our image” and what we heard was the Creator of Universe looks like me.

Yes, I know this seems like a few minor grammatical details but it is how we as people of faith live out these minor details in our lives that make all the difference in the way we live out our calling to be the people that God created us to be.

Let me explain: As we all know, at some point in our history, everyone believed and accepted that the Sun revolved around the Earth. It was a given fact. No one questioned it simply because well, the Earth had to be too important to be a follower. It must be the leader, because God gave it to us, you know the ones that the Creator looks like.

And along with this thought, humanity also started believing that God created the world for our use, simply because well, just like the Earth, we were just important. God saw to our needs. God saw to our wants. God took care of us. God needed us to survive.

But somewhere along the way, someone started asking questions. People began to notice that patterns in the night sky shifted. They noticed that the sun seemed to stay in one place while the Earth seemed to be moving. Somewhere

along the way, science and reason began to observe that no, the Sun did not revolve around the Earth but it was the other way around.

Once again, I know this seems minor and it is just something we take for granted nowadays but just think about it, in the huge scope of time, it really was not that long ago, humanity held this position, held this belief. So when the idea that the Earth revolves around the Sun first came out, it was earth-shattering for humanity. It was a complete shift in our way of thinking. What do you mean, the Earth revolves around the Sun? How can this be? What do you mean humanity is not the center of the universe? What do you mean everything doesn't revolve around us?

Once again, I know this just seems like a minor detail and it is something we take for granted today but at that time, people were killed for even suggesting such an idea. Lives were lost because this idea was so radical. And the Church didn't help the matter either. It did everything it could to keep this seeming disruptive idea quiet, even doing some of the killing itself just to keep this radical idea quiet.

Now, I know this seems silly to us because we have distance on our side. We also have advanced in technology and science since the Dark Ages but let's face it, there are some who still believe that everything revolves around us.

And if we were to say that humanity is not the center of the universe, if we were to say that everything doesn't revolve around our wants and needs, we would be considered just as radical and disruptive.

What do you mean God doesn't need me or my approval before handing out God's grace or God's love? What do you mean that I can't treat the earth any way I want because after all, didn't God give us dominion over it? What do you mean that I'm not the center of the universe and I can't treat people any way that I want? If the Creator of all the Universe looks exactly like me, why can't I? I must be that important if God created me in God's own image.

Yes, I know these seem like silly questions but in all honesty, these are the questions we hear and say in some shape or form all the time as a society. These are the things our world tells us are important. These are the things that we as a society have come to hold as Truths.

And let's face it, even in our modern day, with all its science and advanced technology, people have been killed because they have questioned the way this world works. They brought forward ideas that were too radical and they had to be silenced. People have died because they have flat out said that the way we live our lives is wrong. They told us that the Creator of all the universe does not think and act like us. People have died because they were just too radical when they told us that we were not the center of the universe. Martin Luther King did it and he was

killed. Gandhi did it and he was killed. Oscar Romero did it and he was killed. But more importantly, our Lord and Savior Jesus did it. And we all know how humanity hushed him up, all because he told us over and over again that we were not the center of God's universe. All because he told us that the way we were living out our lives was not what God intended for us as God's people. Jesus was silenced and killed all because he reminded us that we were made in the image of God, not the other way around.

And let's face it, it really is a radical idea. It tells the world that power and might will not win the day but that love will always win. It tells the world that God is in control and that there is nothing that this world can throw our way that God's grace cannot overcome. It tells the world that the kingdoms of this world will fall, but God's kingdom here on earth is forever. This really is a radical idea. And it is time we start living out this idea as the Beloved children of God.

God doesn't need us to survive. I'll let that one sink in for a bit. God doesn't need us to survive. It is actually the other way around. Maybe it's time we start living our lives in a way that shows we hold this as our Truth instead. Maybe it is time the Church stopped trying to keep this radical idea quiet and started proclaiming it from the mountaintops. Maybe it's time for us as the people of God to start shifting the way we think and realize that God doesn't need our approval before God takes care of God's own creation.

All because we know that Humanity is not the center of God's universe. We are made in God's image. Not the other way around.

For us to start living our lives like we truly believe this radical wonderfully life-giving idea is true means that we can't use and abuse God's creation like it is something only here to serve us and keep us happy. It will mean that we have to start seeing each and every person, the people who look like us and the people who don't look like us, as beloved children of God, all made in the image of our Creator. It will that we will have to start being the people that God created us and calls us to be: people of compassion, people of grace, people of peace, people of mercy and yes, more importantly people of love.

It will mean that we have to shatter some tightly held ideas that hurt and destroy. It will mean that we will have to break down some barriers and realize that yes, the Creator of the Universe does not look like me. Instead the opposite is true.

There is an old saying that goes something like, when they find the center of the universe, a lot of people are going to be disappointed that they are not it. But as I have lived with this text this past week, I have wondered if the opposite of that is actually true. I wonder if it will be just as life-giving and life-changing to realize that we are not the center of God's universe. Maybe this shifting in the way we think will open our eyes to an opportunity to experience God's grace and love in a new and life transforming way.

Because now we can start embracing the idea that although we may not be as important as we once thought we were to the survival of God's creation, we still have an important part to play in the process. God entrusted us with the responsibility of caring for and tending to all of God's creation.

We are told that God placed us just below the angels. Think about that. God loves us so much and respects us so much that God gave us a place of honor but this place of honor comes with responsibility. God trusts us to tend to God's creation, to take care of God's creation, to be good stewards of God's creation. God is counting on us to bring healing and wholeness to God's creation.

And more importantly God is counting on us to share God's grace with all of God's creation. And when I say all, I mean all. From the tiniest bug to the largest sea creature. All means all. From the people we like to the people we don't like. From the people who drive us up the wall to the people we only tolerate because they are our family. All means all. God is counting on us to share God's grace with all of God's creation.

Even though we are not the center of God's universe, even though the Creator of the Universe does not look like us, God is still counting on us to recognize that all are created in the image of God and that all are precious in God's sight.

So today, and all days, May we celebrate the fact that we are not the center of God's universe, which leaves us open to always strive to make God the center of ours. Amen.