

April 25, 2010

Scripture: Romans 8: 18-28

Sermon: "The Creation Waits"

"Going Green" seems to be the new catch phrase these days. Everywhere you turn, people, organizations, communities are all talking about going green and what we can do to help the environment. This talk usually centers on saving our environment for future generations but there is also an undertone of this phrase: "Going Green." It is not really obvious. And it is not really harmful. It is well, just there. The undertone of the phrase "Going Green" and usually its biggest selling point is that the consumer will save money!! That is why everyone should go green because you will save some green for your pockets.

Now, let me say: I am all for going green to save some green. I try to do my part. And in this crazy economic time that we are all in, we are all looking for ways to increase our savings and to stretch our dollar just a little more. And I am not arguing that "Going Green" to save some green for our pockets is a bad thing. It is marketable and it is eye-catching. And yes, in the end, the environment is being saved for future generation.

So why does this undertone of "Going Green" bug me so much? Why do I get frustrated that the Fortune 500 companies have found a way to "make a quick buck" by selling "Going green"? I mean, in the end, does it really matter why we go green? There is an effort to go green right? So why do I as a person of faith get a knot in my stomach every time I see a commercial that says, "Go Green and Save 20% off your purchase? How we just turned our environment into another marketing ploy? How we found one more way to abuse God's creation and save money off our purchases once more? And what is our response to this "new marketing tool" as people of faith? Why should we go Green? Why should we care about how we get the environment saved as long as it is being saved?

And the response that our Scripture lifts up is that as a people of faith, "Going Green" means more than saving some green. It means more than saving the environment for future generations. At the very heart of the matter for a person of faith, our Scripture reminds us that creation waits for us to get it right. Creation waits for us to realize that we are called to continue the task of "reconciliation that Jesus Christ began. Creation waits for us to be the people that God created us to be and to live "out our call to do justice and love mercy." Creation waits for us to realize "that every breath we take, every sip we take, every bite we eat, and every bit of light that illuminates our days are a witness to God's life-giving, creative power." Creation waits for us to understand that we are all connected as God's creation in a web of wonder and grace.

We are reminded throughout all of Scripture, Old Testament and New Testament that God is revealed "through the beauty, power, abundance, and mystery of the natural world. Throughout all of Scripture, God is celebrated as God creates and preserves all things, as God controls the heavens and the seas with just one word. Throughout all of our Scriptures, God is celebrated because God is in control and in charge.

Throughout all of our Scriptures, we are also reminded that we are dependent on God for everything: for the grass that feeds our cows, for the waters that quench our thirst, for the grain

that becomes our bread, for trees that become our shade on a hot day. We are dependent on God for everything, just like the rest of God's creation.

God created the trees for the birds to build nests. God created the mountains for the goats to have a place to play. God made the rivers and the streams flow to provide drinks for all the wild animals. God made it all and all of God's creation is dependent on God. No matter how much we human beings strive to be independent, at the very core of our existence remains the fact that we are dependent on God for everything: The air that we breathe, the water that we drink, the food on our tables. We are dependent on God.

Dependence on God. No one part is more important than the other. And as a part of the whole, we as human beings do not have license to abuse God's creation. God may have given us dominion over creation but that does not mean that it is ours to destroy. Creation is God's and we are just a small part of the whole picture. When God told us that we had dominion over the creation, God didn't mean for us "to bulldoze and exploit, but to act responsibly, caring for the earth as its creatures as God does." God gave us a huge responsibility of being care-takers of God's creation, of keeping the delicate balance of God's creation in place. God trusts us to respect and care for all of God's earthly community and that doesn't just mean the human race. "God's earthly community means every gnat, worm, flower, snail, star, weeping willow, watershed basin and endangered wetland." God trusts us to care for God's web of wonder and grace.

God is a master designer, master architect, and a master artist. God has created an earth for us, as part of God's creation, and has provided for all our needs. And God takes great joy in God's creation. God savors God's creation. God who is always creating, renewing, and rejuvenating, receives great delight from God's very own creation.

And we as caretakers are invited to experience this joy, this delight with God through God's creation and hear the "enthusiasm with which Creation would greet us if we were to live in the glorious way that God intended, if we were to live in harmony with all of Creation, our brothers and sisters living in poverty, the environment which surround us, all of God's children, and all of God's creation."

"In Genesis, God created everything and declared it good. In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God again reconciled all of Creation back to God. Finally, God enabled us, as God's children, to be revealed to Creation through the power of the Holy Spirit." And now Creation waits and wonders: Will we live out our calling of justice, mercy and care and reveal ourselves to the rest of Creation? Will we act in "ways that promote abundance and no longer perpetuates the reinforcing and interconnected cycles of climate change and poverty, but rather pull all Creation out of those cycles and renew it once again?"

The Creation waits. The Creation groans. The Creation waits for us to be revealed as the true people, the true children of God who live out their calling of justice, mercy and care. Creation welcomes us as people of faith to experience a "movement where we move into sense of wonder and awe, to wait and receive, and to savor the goodness of God and the world." It

prompts us as people of faith to want to experience the same joy, the same delight with our ever Creating God.

And when we do this, we not only rest and relax; we also go forward in the “Going Green” movement. This moment of joy, this moment of awe, this moment of wonder at God’s creation “entices us to move out of the mode of using and into the mode of revering.” This moment of joy and awe inspires us to celebrate our dependence on God and to live our calling as care-takers of God’s creation. This moment of wonder reminds that we are just a part of the whole picture of God’s creation.

Our Scripture today tells us that Creation is groaning, moaning, and waiting for us to realize that “God the Creator has given us [this home, we call Earth, to inhabit with creativity and responsibility”. Our Scripture celebrates the fact that we cannot, by our own efforts, "save the earth." Only God, who is the Creator, Sustainer and Redeemer of all creation, can do that. And our response as people of faith is to join God in that good work. In our homes, at our places of work, in our times of recreation, and in our congregations, we can begin to model the kind of love and care for the Earth that God has for us and for all creation.”

And when we as part of the whole creation reveal ourselves as true children of God, continuing the task of reconciling all of God’s creation, we will sing with promise and with hope. And when we join God in God’s work of caring and tending creation, we will live out the promises of the resurrection and new life. And we model the kind of love and care for the Earth that God has, then we will experience the coming of God’s Kingdom. It is only then at that moment when we recognize and acknowledge our dependence on God, can we truly live out our calling of Going Green.

So the next time that you are marveling at the trees in your yard, or standing on the top of a mountain, or simply digging in the dirt in your garden, remember that Creation waits. So the next time that you wonder why God created mosquitoes and gnats, remember that Creation waits. The next time you hear the phrase “Going Green, remember that Creation waits for us to “work to heal creation, to obtain freedom from the bondage of environmental health hazards, to heal the most extreme impacts of climate change and to recover from the loss of diversity and beauty.”

Because “God writes the Gospel not in the Bible alone, but also on the trees, and in the flowers, and clouds and stars.

Creation waits for us to be the people that God created us to be. Creation waits for us to realize that the “health of humanity hinges on the health of the Earth. The Creation waits for us to realize that ecosystems are becoming less and less able to provide the things that all creatures need to survive. Creation waits for us to claim and live out our calling of justice, mercy and care.

May we commit ourselves to discovering new ways to care for God’s creation. Amen.