

The Earth is Drenched in God's Affectionate Satisfaction"

Psalm 33: 1-9

Our text this morning is not one that would normally be preached on at a celebration for Earth Sunday. In fact, compared to other Scriptures in our Bible, this psalm barely mentions creation at all. In this psalm, creation just gets a few lines towards the middle. The psalmist doesn't talk about the beauty of the earth. The psalmist doesn't talk the wonderment that comes from looking at the night sky. The psalmist doesn't even really mention anything about the world that God created. So why is it our text for Earth Sunday?

Because although it doesn't specifically mention creation directly or go on and on about creation verse after verse, this psalm does something important. It reminds us that the Word of God brings forth life. And that is why it is our text for Earth Sunday today. You see, the psalmist understands something that we have all forgotten over time. The psalmist understands and celebrates the fact that creation is not here to serve us. Rather, he lifts up the fact that creation is here, surrounding us each and every day. The psalmist understands that creation is here to remind us of the many ways God brings new life into our lives, to remind us of the many ways that God tells us over and over again that our God is gracious, that our God is

loving. The psalmist understands that Creation is here to remind us that our God is still working in this world and he offers us the opportunity to claim this understanding in our lives as well.

Let me explain: Think about some of the Bible stories that we were taught as children. When we think about those stories, we realize that creation was used in these stories as signs of God's promises of new life and light for the people of God. In the Bible, Creation becomes a way for God to interact with and reassure the people of God. In the stories found in our Bible, stories that we tell over and over again, we realize that Creation becomes a way for God to show God's love and grace to the children of God.

Right off the top of my head, the first story that comes to mind is the story of Noah's ark. Now in this story, we may remember that God had destroyed the world in a flood. Yes, I will admit, not God's finest hour, but the story of Noah's ark goes beyond telling us about the power and might of God. It also tell us about the grace and love of God. And it does this by telling us how God gave a sign, a sign found in creation to always remind people of God's love and grace. That sign was a rainbow.

In the story of Noah's ark, we are told that all the earth was full of darkness. It was full of churning water. And then suddenly the rains stop, and the light began

to dry out the land. The light began to overcome the darkness. The Light began to overcome the chaos. And in that moment, when chaos and darkness was no more, God gave a sign, a sign of love and grace found only in creation, in that moment, God gave a sign to remind the people always of God's promises. In that moment, God placed the rainbow in the sky to show God's people that out of the darkness, light and life will burst forth. God placed the rainbow in the sky as a promise to the people of God that God will never destroy the world again. God used the rainbow to show the people and to help them experience the love and grace of God in their lives always. So now, every time we see a rainbow, as people of faith, we remember. We remember the promises of God. We remember the love of God. We remember the grace of God. We remember the word of God and how it brought forth life.

The rainbow becomes a sign for all of God's children throughout time that in the midst of chaos, God will always make a living space for the people of God. The rainbow becomes a sign for all times that God will always make a space for grace and new life. It becomes God's way of reminding God's people, that no matter what dark waters may be churning in our lives, threatening to overtake us, God will always make a way for hope.

But this is just one story. Another story is the story of Abraham and Sarah. They were told by God to leave their homeland and to travel to an unknown

country just so that God can establish a new nation for the people of God. Once again, maybe not God's finest hour. I'm sure that Abraham and Sarah were scared out of their minds, not knowing what to expect, probably wondering what on earth they were getting themselves into, following this God, getting pushed out of their comfort zones, just because God asked them to go.

But once again, to alleviate their fears, God uses as sign found in creation. God tells them to look out at the night sky and count the stars. God then tells Abraham and Sarah that the number of their descendants will surpass the number of stars in the sky. This is a great and comforting sign, especially for two people who have no children but the stars become more than signs of new life for them. They become signs of hope for Abraham and Sarah as well.

I imagine that God wanted them to see how the bright lights of the stars stood out against the night sky. I imagine that God wanted to remind Abraham and Sarah that once again, even in the midst of the chaos that they were experiencing in their lives, chaos that comes with leaving everything familiar and traveling to an unknown place, chaos that sometimes come when we are asked to follow God and leave our comfort zones, I imagine that God wanted Abraham and Sarah to look up at the night sky and see the bright shining stars and remember that God would always be with them, to realize that they could not travel anywhere without God being with them.

I imagine that God wanted Every time that Abraham and Sarah looked at the night sky, to be a reminder that in the midst of chaos, God was making some living space for them. God was making it possible to hope. God was filling their lives with love and grace, regardless of where their unknown journey would lead them.

And the same holds true for us today. All we have to do is look up at the night sky and see the stars blazing bright against the darkness and remember that God is always here for us, guiding us and leading. Once again, creation becomes a sign for all time for the people of God to know that God was always surrounding us with God's love and grace.

Now, These are just a few stories that come to my mind when I think about how creation can be a sign of hope, a sign of new life for us, how creation can be a way for us to hold onto the promises of God even in the midst of the chaos that we may be facing in our own lives. As people of faith, we need to realize that Creation is not here to serve us. Bur rather it is a way for us to remember that God is always making space for hope, making space for love, making space for new life for us in our sometimes chaotic and fear filled lives. All we have to do is to take a look at the beauty and wonder of the creation that surrounds us and we immediately know this is true. When we look at creation, we know, not just realize, not just understand but know deep in our hearts that God is in control, and know that no

matter how crazy our lives may get, God will always have the last word, and that word is a word that will bring forth new life.

I honestly think that's why I like gardening so much. I know that regardless of what I do or don't do, ultimately it is God who will bring forth the new life. I can plant the seed. I can water it. I can feed it but God will be the one who brings forth life.

When I look at creation, when I dig in the dirt, when I go for walks, when I just sit and breathe in God's peace, I am constantly reminded of a very important lesson, a lesson that creation knows and celebrates but a lesson that we have forgotten.

As people of faith, we cannot control the events of our lives. No matter how much we plan, no matter how much we rearrange things, we cannot control the outcome. Now I know this sounds really depressing and probably downright scary but as a person of faith, this gives me hope. Because ultimately, even though I know that I cannot control life, although I cannot prevent the chaos from finding me, although I cannot eliminate the darkness, I know that through the grace and love of God, there will always be opportunities for new life. There will always hope to anchor me in the storms of live because I know that God is in control. I

know that God will make a way somehow. It may not be the way I expected but it will always be a way of hope and grace.

That's why with Every tiny seed that I put in my garden I am constantly reminded even in the midst of darkness, even in the midst of chaos, even when I may not be able to figure out which way is up, my God, our God is there, anchoring us in love, anchoring us in hope, anchoring us in grace. With every tiny seed, I know it is our God who nourishes us and strengthens us. With every tiny seed, I am constantly reminded that is Our God who is making a way for new life to burst forth.

The signs of God's grace and love surround us each and every time. They fill our world because they are found in the midst of God's creation. Every time we see a rainbow, every time we see the stars at night, every time we experience the gift of spring after a long winter, every time we greet the morning light, we are invited to remember the promises of God, promises of hope, promises of love, promises of grace and more importantly the promise that no matter where our journey may take us, we will always be surrounded by the presence of our God.

I think that is one of the reasons why the psalmist barely mentions creation in the first place compared to other Scriptures. He doesn't need to go on and on about creation because he doesn't take creation for granted. It just is for him. It is a

part of his world. It is a part of his being. It is a part of his faith. For the psalmist, creation isn't just about its beauty and wonder, filling his senses. It is also about the healing and wholeness it offers for the people of God as well.

For the psalmist, creation serves to remind him and to remind us that life and all the resources that sustain life are gifts, are signs, are promises given to us by our God so that we might always experience the healing and the hope found by living connected to God's word and God's world. Creation becomes our way of knowing that God is still working in this world

For the psalmist it is not just part of God's creation but all of God's creation that reminds us God's love is filling the earth. All of Creation is God's gift given to us, to reassure us, to give us hope, to shower us with grace and love. All of Creation is God's way of bringing joy into our lives. For the psalmist, it is not just one piece of God's creation but all of God's creation that is God's sign to us that sadness, hurt, pain, tears, chaos, will not overcome the life and love given to us by our God. All of Creation tells us that there is hope, that there is grace. All of creation, not just one piece, but all of God's creation tell us that there is always the possibility for new life to burst forth in our lives, even in the midst of our darkness.

That's why we should lift our praises to our God. Regardless of what this world tells us, we know that God is filling our world with God's love. We know

that God is filling our world with signs of life. We know that God, our God, is making it possible for new life to burst forth. That even in the midst of the chaos that we may be experiencing in our own lives, creation is there, telling us that God will never leave us alone. Ultimately, creation serves to remind us as people of faith, that our God has been, is now, and forever will be in control, creating opportunities for hope in our lives as God's people.

We celebrate today the fact that we are surrounded by God's creation because it serves as a reminder of the promises of God. Every time we experience creation, we are called to remember that in the beginning God overcame the darkness and chaos and we are invited to remember that our God is still overcoming them today.

Just look outside and know. God is still working. God is still redeeming. God is still filling our world with new life. Just feel the warmth of the sun upon our faces and know that Darkness does not have the last word. Chaos does not have the last word. God has the last word and it is a word of hope, a word of grace and a word of new life for all the people of God.

This week, I came across a fascinating article that shared how an artist shared with others this life-giving understanding of hope and new life by bringing

in 28,000, yes you heard right, 28,000 potted plants into a particular building and capturing those moments through some really amazing photographs.

Now, what really caught my attention about this story, was that this building was not just any building. It was a former mental health center. And the artist observed that in psychiatric settings, there seems to be an absence of flowers. She shared that flowers are given to the sick when they are bedridden or confined to a hospital but in mental health facilities, patients receive few if any flowers.

The artist said that this building meant many things to people. It was a workplace, a refuge and a place of confinement. But I would go one step farther and say that this place may have also been a place of darkness and chaos for others as well, the type of darkness that is real but we never talk about it in polite society.

So this artist took these 28,000 potted plants and allowed them to become ways of healing, ways of hope, and more importantly ways for life-giving and life-changing conversations could happen for many people, allowing them to name their darkness and to celebrate the way light came into their lives.

I would also say that these 28,000 potted plants become ways for creation to once again remind the people of God of God's promises: promises of hope, promises of healing, promise of love, and more importantly promises that reassure of God's presence through all of life's varied circumstances.

I like to think that these 28,000 potted plants became ways for all of creation and for all of us to shout out to this world that no experience is too dark or too chaotic for the love and grace of God to overcome it. Because in the end, every time we look at creation, we know as people of faith that it is word of God that brings forth life.

in the end, God tells us every day that we are loved more than we could ever imagine. in the end, God tells us every day that we are immersed in God's grace. In the end, God tells us every day that even in the midst of the chaos and the darkness that we may be facing in our lives, we will always be grounded in the hope and love of God.

All we have to do is take a look at creation to know this is true.

May we always never forget or take that for granted any more. Amen.