

You are the message

A sermon by the Rev. Frances Savill
Sunday July 4, 2021

Mark 6:1-13

This morning I want to take a side trip to Genesis, a quick visit to Exodus, before we get to Mark's gospel.

In Genesis after the creation of the world, God says:

God created human beings; he created them godlike, Reflecting God's nature. He created them male and female. God blessed them: "Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Earth! Take charge! Be responsible for fish in the sea and birds in the air, for every living thing that moves on the face of Earth."

²⁹⁻³⁰ Then God said, "I've given you every sort of seed-bearing plant on Earth And every kind of fruit-bearing tree, given them to you for food. To all animals and all birds, everything that moves and breathes, I give whatever grows out of the ground for food."

And there it was.

³¹ God looked over everything he had made; it was so good, so very good! (Genesis 1)

God created the world, God created everything in it, God created people male and female, made us godlike, reflecting God's nature.

And then God brought the man and woman into partnership with God. God charged the man and the woman with caring for the earth and being responsible for it.

God is the Creator, and ruler over all things, and all powers, but God gives authority and wants to share the world and the work

with the people he created in his own image, the people he loves.

In Genesis 2 the man names the animals, again a partnering with God and God's work.

We were made to be image-bearers of God.
We were made to be agents of God's will on earth.

We are not God, we were not intended to be God, but God invites us to this place of responsibility and caring for the earth, and for each other.

That is the beginning of Genesis.

We know what comes next, the woman and man rebel against God and God's authority, they want to define good and evil, and everything starts to go horribly wrong.

Our reign of the earth is marked again and again by personal and corporate poor choices.

Skip forward to Exodus, God's people were enslaved, God raised up a leader who will represent God to the people, who will care for the people and speak God's word, and lead the people to freedom out of Egypt.

Moses was the leader, and he was called and used by God, given God's authority, God's power, and Moses led God's people out of Egypt and eventually to the promised land.

When the people enter the promised land they were free to live and work in a way that glorifies God.

From Exodus to the end of the prophets we have the stories about how God's people, and God's leaders sometimes succeeded more, and sometimes utterly failed at living and working in a way that glorified God.

Then God sent Jesus, the one who fully revealed the image of God.

Jesus went about living fully the kingdom of God.

Mark shows us that Jesus has the authority of God to cast out demons, to bring healing life even to the dead, and Jesus even has the power to forgive sins.

Jesus lived under the authority of God, even while God's authority dwelt in him.

Jesus accomplished God's will not his own, he lived in a way that glorified God, bringing life and healing and wholeness to all people.

And this morning, just in Chapter 6 of the gospel, Jesus sends the disciples out in partnership with Jesus.

The disciples are not bystanders, or people who God just acts upon, all of us are invited into God's work.

All of us are needed.

As we were part of the work and partnership with God in this world in the beginning, so we are still included in God's work and plan and partnership as Jesus made clear by sending out disciples right from the beginning of his ministry.

"They preached with joyful urgency that life can be radically different; right and left they sent the demons packing; they brought wellness to the sick, anointing their bodies, healing their spirits." (Mk 6:13)

Every day we are invited to serve God's mission in the world, to **be** a message of hope and healing.

We are in Jesus, we are being made new, and Jesus sends us into our work, into our homes, into our families, into the places we shop, and live, to reveal Jesus in those places.

We bear the image of God, God's image is being restored in us, And the world, the people around us, see what God is like from us.

We are God's people, co-workers with Jesus in this world, who are to be like him; bringing the healing, help and wholeness of God.

We are the message God is sending.

So we come to the table of the Lord for communion, to confess where we have gotten it wrong, to be strengthened and forgiven to begin again, we come knowing that we do this work together as part of the body of Christ and continue the journey as God's people.

Thanks be to God.