

“Creation and re-creation”

By Rev. Frances Savill

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Readings:

Genesis 2:18-24

What strikes you first as you hear those words, and the picture of creation is painted for you?

Humankind living in this wonderful garden, full of abundance, so close to God, and living together unafraid, and unashamed.

Does it seem a long way off from the world we live in?

Some of it does to me, but some of it I still see. Here in northern Ontario, we see trees and shrubs that are beautiful to the eye.

We see trees and shrubs that produce good fruit.

This time of year, we are blessed to have markets filled with the produce of the ground.

We see the abundance that earth produces.

Colour and beauty surround us, the bounty of the world that God created, blesses us.

But the picture of order and harmony, of the joy of the relationship between the humans and God, the humans and the earth, and the humans and each other can be a long way from the world we live in.

Some of us might live in some harmony with God, and we are learning to live with each other, but when we look at our larger world, and how we live in this world together- it's a mess.

There are few other things that catch my imagination as I situate myself in this story.

In Genesis 1 we hear the words that God created order out of the chaos, light out of the darkness and humans are created in the image of God, and we were made to rule with God over God's wonderful ordered creation.

In Genesis 2 we hear of this intimate creating. God forms the human, and then God breathes life into the person.

God plants the person in the garden- and the person God creates partners with God in the care of the garden, tilling the soil, and tending the garden.

The human then names the animals.

Naming is part of determining the identity of the creature.

Naming is part of the ruling over the creation and part of the partnering with God.

Psalm 8 reminds us that we were made “a little less than God.”

C.S Lewis reminds that we have never met any mere mortals.

“There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations - these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub and exploit - immortal horrors or everlasting splendors. This does not mean that we are to be perpetually solemn. We must play. But our merriment must be of that kind (and it is, in fact, the merriest kind) which exists between people who have, from the outset, taken each other seriously - no flippancy, no superiority, no presumption.”

We were made for partnership and care and ruling. In Genesis 1 & 2 we don't learn what that means exactly – it doesn't tell us how to rule, how to partner with God and live together. And in taking matters into our own hands, in choosing our own wisdom and our own ways, things become bad very quickly, and death is introduced into creation and our hearts are corrupted completely.

What eventually in scripture we learn is that God's ways are not our ways.

Our wisdom, our striving, our plans are corrupt, and evil is always crouching at the door of our hearts.

But God gives us his law, and in Jesus, God writes that law on our hearts, and Jesus gives us the clearest example of how we are live together rightly related to God, rightly related to each other. We learn that ruling looks like serving.

We learn that God orders our time in a way we would not- providing a day of rest.

God orders our care of the poor, the widow, the orphan, the vulnerable, those in need.

We learn to make provision for each other, we learn justice and compassion.

The picture at the end of Genesis 2 is of man and woman being together, bone of the same bone and flesh of the same flesh.

They are together and they are not ashamed.

Can you imagine be unashamed- no hiding, no secrets, no manipulating, no guilt before each other and before God.

Being together, fully accepting ourselves and fully accepting the other.

We were made to be unashamed, unafraid, knowing that you are made in the image of God, and so am I.

You have value and worth because you are a son or daughter of the King, but I also have worth and dignity because I am also a son or daughter of the King.

We are not in competition but are in partnership together with God.

This is how God created us- this is how we are being recreated in Jesus.

This is what we celebrate today as we join with Christians from every place in the world. You, we, all of us, made in the image of God.

We are invited poor and rich, male and female, young and old, from every language, tongue, tribe and nation, because we are part of the body of Jesus the Messiah.

We are marked as Jesus' own, we are all invited to come to His table because He has invited us. Each one of us honoured guests at the table of our Lord..

Here the playing field is leveled, here we are forgiven- all of us- here we are partners in the gospel, a new community in Christ, together serving God's mission in the world.

So as we prepare to come to our Lord's table, I invite you to reflect on what God intended for us together.

We are invited to come unafraid and unashamed. Jesus is our peace with God, and teaches us peace with one another.

Let us pray:

Lord, we see what you intended for us and for our world and we confess how far we have fallen. So we come to you, seeking hope, seeking your ways, so that our world might be healed, so we might be healed and made whole. Help us to join hands with you and with each other, in Jesus' name. Amen.