

# Made from Love to Be Love

Sermon by Pastor Patrick Fish  
Season of Creation 2  
Humanity  
September 15-16, 2018  
Genesis 1:26-28  
Philippians 2:1-8  
Mark 10:41-45

*Grace and peace to you from God, our Creator. Who created us to be interconnected with all of creation. Who calls us to stewards and servants of the Earth. Amen.*

## **Move 1: Season of Creation—a time to pause**

This weekend, we continue our Season of Creation series. During the remainder of September, we will focus on God as Creator and our relationship with God, others, and creation.

Summer is over, and we are entering a new season. My favorite season is Fall. And, with Fall, comes cooler, crisp air. We can open our windows in our homes. Drive with the windows down. Trees changing colors. Yellows, oranges, and reds. Harvest and apple picking.

Yet, with Fall also comes busier schedules. School has started. Parents again are running around. The hustle and bustle of life is back.

I can count on one hand the amount of days I just go outside and stand in nature. Just allow myself to breath. Not worry about a task or child running into the street.

I walk my dog, Luther, every morning. But rather than enjoy my walks with Luther, I'm rushing because I have to get the next meal ready for the girls. When I'm outside with my girls, I'm constantly thinking about

the next things we have to do once we get inside. When I'm driving, rather than take in the view, I'm yelling at street lights to hurry up and change so I won't be late. Life.

We take a moment during these next few weeks to intentionally pause. To breathe. To intentionally take a step back and reflect on God's goodness. To take in all that God has sculpted and created in our world. And allow our souls to be refilled again. Renewed again. Returned again to our Creator God.

Today, on our second week of our Creation series, we focus on humanity. It's Humanity Weekend.

## **Move 2: Humanity Weekend**

I'll be honest. At first this inclusion of humanity during our series on Creation seems to be at odds with one another. Let's talk about the Earth, sky, wind, oceans, mountains. All the beautiful elements God sculpted out of nothingness.

But, hey, we don't want to forget about good ole humanity and how great we are. After all, I mean we are number one on the hierarchy. So make sure people aren't forgotten. The Earth was created for us, don't you know.

I hope you catch the sarcasm in my tone of voice. Because as I reflected and researched more this week, I realize how brilliant it is to include humanity within the larger theme of Creation.

Earth isn't ours to occupy. Earth isn't our stomping ground or pit stop before heaven. Earth is our home. [1]

Earth is not ours alone. It's God's and all that God has created. We are equal inhabitants of this home. Humans were created from the Earth. We were placed here with a particular purpose of serving the Earth. [2]

We are Earth's children. We are her stewards. Meant to care, love, and nurture her as she does for us.

The intention of Humanity Weekend is not to stress humanity's importance over and above the Earth. It's not to make ourselves separate from the rest of creation.

Instead, by including humanity in our series, we emphasize humanity's togetherness and belonging to the rest of God's creation.

We aren't disconnected from God's overall plan. We are interconnected and woven together with all the rest of the elements of God's beautiful creation.

So it's not humanity versus trees, animals and rivers. It's humanity and day, night, and stars. It's humanity with streams, grass, and flowers.

Our present and future forever connected together.

### **Move 3: "One with Creation"**

Both my parents are in horticulture. Unfortunately, I am the furthest thing from that. I don't have the green thumb. Anytime my mom gives me a plant, I kill it.

My parents tried desperately to get me to like gardening and know the difference between a hosta, ginko tree, and mum. But all I see is plant, tree, and flower. All I remember growing up was the yard work. Weeding, spreading mulch, raking leaves—and complaining.

But from an early age, I admit my parents instilled a love of nature in me. I've always found nature calming. I find God in nature. In all of its beauty. It helps give me perspective of the wideness that is God and allows me to stand in awe of all God continues to do and create in our world.

My parents taught us the importance of not being wasteful and conserving. Composting. Being careful how much water we used. Recycling. All that.

We grew up between two farms. Lots of country and space. Our closest neighbor was one or two acres away. So my dad, being a guy, taught us boys how to pee outside. My brother, Joe, and I loved it. We were free. We were cool.

When my mom found out, she was furious and yelled at my dad. His response was, "Hey, we are saving water and hydrating the Earth."

He thought he was clever. Soon he would eat those words. A week later, my mom took me to the McDonald's in Montgomery. I finished my Happy Meal and asked to play on the playground. My mom agreed and took a quick phone call for work. Soon she started seeing a crowd of people gathering around the fence.

She couldn't find me, so she went to see what all the commotion was about. There she found little Pat peeing on a tree. Mortified, she walked back in McDonald's pretending not to know me.

As soon as I was done, I ran back inside and shared loud enough for all to hear, "Mommy, I watered the plant and hydrated the Earth!"

I was truly one with creation at that moment. Proud parent moment, that's for sure.

God wants us to be connected but maybe pick better ways to show that recognition of togetherness with creation.

We approach scripture today through that particular lens, the lens of Creation. From the perspective of the Earth. We, as humanity, are a part of the larger whole. We are Earth's children.

Our readings point to what it means to be her children.

#### **Move 4: In God's Image**

Our Genesis passage is a continuation of last week's reading on the Creation story. A story we've heard countless times before. The story of God creating humankind in God's image.

The only and first creature to be described in such a way. [3] Up until this point, God has created day, night, waters, sky, ground, trees, plants, fish, animals. But none of them are made in God's image. Humankind is.

And because of that, this passage has often been interpreted to mean God views humanity as special. Set apart. Placed above everything else.

Humanity has used this to justify exploiting and subduing the Earth. People with this view think of themselves as king and the earth as his/her slave.

This type of thinking views humanity as rulers put in place to rule by God. To control and conquer. To have power over and to exercise our authority in whatever way to advance humanity. Even if it means exploiting our home.

However, this weekend, we take a moment to challenge this type of thinking. These types of understandings of our Genesis passage.

Being made in God's image doesn't mean we are little gods here on Earth. It describes the deep and intimate relationship that we have with our God.

It describes God revealing Godself within creation and wanting to be involved with the happenings here on Earth. This isn't a God who creates once and sits back from a distance to watch. The God we worship, the God we have a relationship with, is a God who continues creating. Who is intimately involved. Who works in and through us to care for the world.

Being made in the image of God means we mirror God to the world. We love as God loves. We care as God cares. [4]

We are given dominion by God. Dominion is much different from domination. We aren't placed here to dominate the Earth and all her elements. Dominion isn't about power. It's not about status. Or exploitation. It's about service. It's about caretaking. Nurturing. Tilling.

We are placed here. We dwell within our home, the Earth, to mirror God in preserving and serving the Earth.

Our second reading and Gospel reading reinforce that. Paul talks in his letter to the Philippians about redirecting humanity to be humble and to consider our God-given responsibility to care for creation. Being made in the image of God isn't about power; it's about relationship and connection to all life." [5]

Same for Jesus. He addresses the issue of power and reminds us it's not to be abused. We use our authority, giftedness, and platform to serve the greater good of all creation. [6]

God created each and every one of us in God's image. No one is by accident. And we all have different stories and gifts. And with those gifts, we are called to be stewards of all God has given to us. Not just for ourselves and our families, but for all those who are vulnerable—which includes people and our Earth.

We were made from hands to be hands.

We were made from love to be love.

We are created to be God's hands of love. To care, tend, and be stewards of our great and beautiful Earth.

Amen.

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Resources:

[1] Habel, Norman C., and editors David Rhoads and H. Paul Santmire, *The Season of Creation: A Preaching Commentary*, Fortress Press, 2011.

[2] Habel, Norman C., *The Season of Creation*.

[3] *Seasons of the Spirit*, September 9, 2018.

[4] *Seasons of the Spirit*.

[5] *Seasons of the Spirit*.

[6] *Seasons of the Spirit*.

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*REFLECTIONS:*

- *In what ways do you feel interconnected with God's creation? What ways do you feel distant?*
- *What does it mean to have dominion over the Earth vs. domination over the Earth?*
- *How have you lived your life: as a ruler or compassionate servant?*