

Sept 10 - God's Hospitality – Part 1

1. What does belonging mean to you?

2. Is there a place of belonging? Why or why not? What would be one step we could take as a community to deepen our shared sense of belonging? What would be one step you could take as an individual to deepen your sense of belonging?

Read Genesis 1:1-5; 26-28; 31, Proverbs 8:27-31, and John 1:1-3, 14, 18

3. The writer of Genesis uses a plural name for God (Elohim). In the beginning the God of relationship, the God of community creates. Reflecting on these passages what can we say about this community and the relationship that exists between them?

4. "Let US create humankind in OUR image". What are the implications of our being created in the image of this community?

Genesis 3 tells the tragic story of humanity's rejection of the relationship out of which we were made. Our turning aside from a life of mutual self-giving love to desiring for life to revolve around us. For that is what sin is – human nature deeply curved in on itself.

Read Matthew 3:13-17

5. Here we have another clear picture of Elohim at work. This is considered the beginning of the ministry of Jesus. Reflecting on this scene what can we say is the work God is doing in Jesus?

We are created in the image of Elohim, the God of community. There are many things that image means, but one of the primary things it means is reflection. We were made to reflect the goodness, character and love of God out into the world. As a mirror only reflects what it is oriented toward, our lives will not reflect the character and goodness of God unless we are oriented toward the God of community in worship.

6. Worship is defined by James Torrence as participating through the Spirit in the Father's relationship with the Son. Discuss.

7. While we need human community to flourish we must enter into that community from a place of belonging. How does knowing who we are in Jesus shape our relationships with others?