

May 4/25 – Leaders Guide - Genesis 1-2 / Matthew 3 “Spirit of New Creation”

1. At the beginning of the sermon Tim shared a story of the former archbishop George Carey who had an encounter with God at little t that transformed his life. The person that first shared the story believed that this story was important for us as a church now. Upon hearing the story why do you think it may be important for us now?

By way of reminder. Carey, before he was archbishop, was visiting family here in Canada. He had received many invitations to speak. He accepted only one, here at little t. The night before he was to speak they put him up in the community housing that is now the little t annex. After being shown his room he looked through the bookcase and found a book on the holy spirit which was very popular at the time. As he skimmed it he “seethed with indignation at the author’s interpretation of the work of the spirit” and in disgust through the book across the room where it hit a picture sending it crashing to the ground. As this was out of character Carey began to reflect on his response remembering a time where his faith was alive. He yearned for it once more. He sat in silence for quite some time and then began to pray, prompted by the Spirit. He repented, laid down what had triggered his anger, that is his intellectual pride, his self sufficiency that had left him unable to hear God’s voice.

Carey went on to share how this moment stirred up in him deep joy, a season of incredible growth and creativitiy, where the power and presence of the Spirit was with him.

Why might we need to be reminded of this story? Each and every one of us is hanging on to other things that keep us from receiving the fullness of what God offers by his Spirit.

Perhaps the question this story prompts for us is: Am I, are we, in a posture to receive?

Read Genesis 1:1-3, 26-28; John 1:1-4; Proverbs 8:22-31

2. In the beginning God (Elohim) created the heavens and the earth. Elohim is a plural name for God. Some commentators see in this a glimpse, a foreshadowing of God the trinity, the relationship, Father Son and Spirit. Where do you see evidence of the trinity in the first chapters of the bible? What is the nature of the relationship?

Father – the one who creates

Spirit – who hovers over the waters – hovered is an evocative word picturing a mother bird fluttering over her nest seeking to coax her young to flight.

Son – God creates by his word – the word in John is defined as the son – Jesus.

Nature of the relationship? Love – love was primary between them for Jesus was in the bosom of the Father. We see that each of the members of the trinity are orbiting around the others pouring love, delight, adoration into one another. The early church had a word for this – perichorisis – in which is our word choreography – they were picturing an beautiful dance of love within the relationship that is at the center of the universe.

3. “Let us create humankind in our image” What are the implications of being created in the image of Elohim, the God of relationship, of trinity?

We were created by love – for love.

We were created out of the life of the trinity to enter into the life of the trinity.

We will find our greatest satisfaction in relationships – if we put anything other than relationships at the center of our lives we will crash against the rocks of ultimate reality.

Read Matthew 3:13-17

4. What are the connections between this text and Genesis 1? What do we learn from these connections?

Elohim is once more present. The word, Jesus, Son of God comes up out of the waters of the Jordan. The spirit flutters like a dove over the waters and the voice of the Father is heard to say – you are my beloved in whom I delight.

God is about a new creation in Jesus.

In Jesus we are being drawn once more into love.

John protests but Jesus says this is to fulfill all righteousness – meaning by this he will put all things right again.

Read Genesis 2:7-8

5. It is God’s breath (Hb Ruah – Spirit) that gives us life. What are the two implications in the text of what this life entails?

He places humanity in Eden. Eden is a word that means pleasure and delight. God has given us every good gift to enjoy, to delight in.

He gives us a task. Have dominion after his likeness. We were created to steward God’s good creation. To as a mirror reflect his nature and character out into the world to bring life, to bring flourishing to all.

Read John 20:19-23

6. What are we being shown here about the person and work of Jesus?

Jesus is none other than one of the persons of the trinity, one of the persons that makes up the community that is Elohim.

We can see from the links to Genesis that Jesus is bringing us to life by his breath – his ruah – his spirit.

Conclusion

7. Carey had to lay down his pride, his self-sufficiency to be in a posture of reception.
What may you need to lay down to have your hands open to receive more of the life God longs to give you by his Spirit? Pray for one another in this vein.

Reflect on perhaps what came to the surface when this question was asked during the sermon and the guided prayer Tim led you through.

How can you support one another in laying that thing down?

How can you pray for one another as you lay it down?