

Introduction

Check-in & Introductions

Humanity

Gospel Lesson

Genesis 1:26-31 (NRSV)

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

²⁷ So God created humankind in his image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

²⁸ God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." ²⁹ God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. ³⁰ And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. ³¹ God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Bible/Sermon Focus

This week Pastor Andy pointed out the aggressiveness that we find in first story of Genesis. In Genesis 1, the earth is an adversary to be conquered and subdued. Some of the most profound work in ecotheology around this domineering and controlling view over creation (as opposed to working *with* creation) arises in an area of study called ecofeminism. Ecofeminism is not a hard idea to wrap our brains around. Ecofeminism compares the way that humans have worked to control, subdue and dominate the earth; to the ways that we have also worked to control, subdue, and dominate the female body. Think of how the following words have been used to describe actions on the land and actions on the female body: To drill, to nail, to plow, to pursue, to hunt, to take, to explore, to legislate. When Genesis 1 and 2 were written women were property, bought and sold. This is not a far leap. Women and the earth have a lot to handle.

It is pretty amazing that even though women are also considered made in the image of God, that one gender has historically had rights, power, and privilege over another.

In reality the image of God is filled with diversity, difference, and contrast. And we people are left with a choice. We can choose to view the earth and each other as things to be dominated or we can choose to be tender and work *with* each other.

When we choose to work *with* creation and *with* our neighbor, we can begin to view each other not as adversary, but as partners. We can witness other, fellow stewards of creation in our

human siblings. And we can witness to the diverse beauty between us. That doesn't mean we will always get along. Ada María Isasi-Díaz popularized the term *Kin-dom* of God.

Being kin, being siblings, isn't always easy but to be Kingdom of God people, means that we claim that mess. And who wouldn't want to be part of this Kingdom, this Kin-dom that we are making *with* God? Everyone wants to experience the peace of home and of belonging. A place where we can be ourselves authentically. A place where even in our diversity, whether in age or ability, we can belong.

We can choose tenderness. We can choose to make a home out of a wilderness working *with* creation and each other.

Discussion Questions

1. What images and ideas does the word Ecofeminism bring to mind for you?
2. How are some bodies treated differently than different bodies?
3. Reflect on this quote from Maya Angelou: *"The ache for home lives in all of us. The safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned."*
4. What does "homecoming" mean to you?

Prayer

God of creation, we mourn how we have harmed your planet. We repent of our taking endlessly until there is nothing left. We ask that you teach us to work with you, with creation and with each other. Teach us tenderness Help us to make this place a home for all. Amen.

"The ache for home lives in all of us. The safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned."