

Devotions for June 20-26, 2011

Monday, June 20, 2011: *Us* Daily reading: Genesis 1:26-27

Who is “us” and “our” (26)? Some say it’s the Trinity, the relationship in which God exists from the beginning: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Others say this language reflects an ancient understanding of heaven as a court in which God presides. Job 1:6-12 also reflects this vision of heaven. Satan is present in that scene because his name means “accuser,” the prosecuting attorney. In John 1:1-5, it’s clear that “us” implies all three persons of the Trinity working together from the beginning of time. Jesus does not just appear on the planet at birth, but is present all along. Trinity Sunday (this past Sunday) is a celebration of the truths we express in the creeds. The heart of our faith is that we have experienced the God of creation; this God is revealed in Jesus Christ and works in us and through us by the power of the Holy Spirit. Ask God to reveal this mystery more fully.

Tuesday, June 21, 2011: *Likeness* Daily reading: Genesis 1:27-28

What does it mean that humankind is created in God’s image and likeness? There is a huge diversity of opinion, including: 1.) Our God-consciousness, or consciousness of eternity. Pondering the mysteries of space and time are God-like qualities. 2.) Self-awareness. Our intuition about ourselves and our meaning in the universe are God-like qualities. 3.) Our ability to morally deliberate. The human capability to struggle through ideas and actions that lead to consequences are God-like qualities. 4.) We bear many of God’s attributes: mercy, justice, love, etc. As humans, we have the capability to extend these attributes into God’s creation as the created. How are you bearing the likeness of God? Ask God to work through you in some new way to bear God’s image to the world.

Wednesday, June 22, 2011: *Stewards* Daily reading: Genesis 1:26-28

Humans are given the work of stewardship, to subdue the earth. It’s clear that the evaluation “good” does not mean that the creation is perfect in the sense of needing no further development or attention. The word “subdue” suggests bringing order out of disorder, drawing the world along to its fullest potential. Creation is understood not as a static state of affairs, but a dynamic situation in which human activity is crucial for the development of the created order (*from workingpreacher.org*). The text also says that Adam and Eve have dominion over the earth. “Dominion” is a royal word. It’s what kings have over their kingdoms. It implies protection and leadership more than “power over.” This speaks to Adam and Eve’s stewardship, and ours. We are called to care for, not exploit, that over which we have dominion. How can you better steward the creation around us? Ask God to guide you to better stewardship of all that you use and own.

Thursday, June 23, 2011: *Blessing* Daily reading: Genesis 1:29-31

While we talk a lot about original sin, we very rarely talk about the original blessing. God blesses Adam and Eve. God declares them “very good,” calls them to be fruitful and fill the earth, provides everything they need, gives them meaningful work. The text implies that God invites Adam and Eve to be co-creators. The garden is not static. The animals need to be named, and God seems to delight in partnership. “It’s like God the artist is stepping back and evaluating the work of art, trying to decide whether it merits completing or whether to start over. And when God sees that this work of art – creation – is good, indeed very good, God is blessing it, affirming that it is good in and of itself. It’s the blessing of a loving parent who says to a child, ‘You know, you’re really wonderful’” (*“Making Sense of Scripture” by David Lose*). Do you see all of creation as blessed by God? Ask God to open your eyes to the goodness of creation.

Friday, June 24, 2011: *True?* Daily reading: Genesis 2:18-25

Are Adam and Eve historical figures? Knowing that ancient Israelites taught through story has persuaded some that Adam and Eve represent all humanity. Their story is our story; they are symbols of the human experience. The power of their story is not that it happened in history, but that it happens over and over again in our lived experience. But this perspective raises problems. Luke traces Jesus’ genealogy to Adam. Paul seems to think that Adam and Eve are historical, and bases much theology on that perspective (“Adam’s sin”). It might not matter either way; this story is profoundly true because it reshapes us, and our world, every day. It’s why God created, not how. Can you believe this story to be profoundly true? Pray for faith to believe the truth in the biblical witness.

Saturday, June 25, 2011: *Co-creators* Daily reading: Genesis 3:20-24

What is the purpose of Adam and Eve’s story? On one hand, it’s meant to teach us about God’s relational and creative nature. But the story is also meant to teach us about ourselves, especially about our relationships with God, one another, ourselves and creation. We are created to love God, one another, and all that God has created, and to serve God’s purposes. We’re co-creators with God. Adam and Eve are sent from the garden with a purpose and given meaningful work: to co-create, co-redeem, and co-restore everything in creation until Christ returns to complete this work. Are you co-creating with God today? Ask God to show you specific places to be a co-creator.

Sunday, June 26, 2011: *2 R’s* Daily reading: Genesis 3

“2 Rs” emerge in this chapter. **Relationship:** We were created for relationships, and need to nurture them as part of our nature and calling in life. This includes our relationship with God, one another and all creation. We are loved and blessed! **Responsibility:** We are called to be stewards of the earth. Genesis 3 teaches that we are responsible for our actions because they bear profound consequences. Nurturing our relationships in prayer, Scripture reading, worship and small group are important ways to live well with the responsibility God has given us. Are you aware of the importance of your relationships, and the responsibility you carry with them? Ask God for direction about how to be more accountable in the “2 Rs.”