

Sermon Notes



Series: EXTRAordinary

Sermon: Naamah

Genesis Selections from 6, 7, 8

The Lord saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth. And the Lord was sorry that he had made humankind on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. But Noah found favor in the sight of the Lord. And God said to Noah, “I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence because of them; now I am going to destroy them along with the earth. I am going to bring a flood of waters on the earth. Everything that is on the earth shall die. But I will establish my covenant with you; and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you. And of every living thing, of all flesh, you shall bring two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you. Also take with you every kind of food that is eaten, and store it up; and it shall serve as food for you and for them.” Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him.

And Noah with his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives went into the ark to escape the waters of the flood. And after seven days the waters of the flood came on the earth. [God] blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground. Only Noah was left, and those that were with him in the ark. And the waters swelled on the earth for one hundred fifty days.

In the six hundred first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and saw that the face of the ground was drying. In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry.

Then God said to Noah, “Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons’ wives with you. So Noah went out with his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives. Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And when the Lord smelled the pleasing odor, the Lord said in his heart, “I will never again curse the ground because of humankind. nor will I ever again destroy every living creature as I have done. As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.”

Monday: Read Genesis 1:26-28

This God is the God who is in the process of creating a world balanced, structured, and deliberate. God creating order out of chaos. The Hebrew word for dominion does not mean “to dominate” or “to exploit.” Rather, it means “to take responsibility for,” as a caretaker would be responsible to assure the well-being of those they care for. In this first creation story, human beings were created last, not as the so-called “crown of creation,” but in order to exercise responsibility for the well-being of the garden Earth. According to Genesis 1, exercising responsibility as part of God’s creation is the main reason humans were created. Therefore, being stewards of creation is foundational to what it means to be human. Caring for creation is not an add-on, not a sideline, not related just to part of our calling. It represents our proper human relationship to Earth. In what ways do you “care” for the Earth? What are ways you can be a better steward of creation today?

Prayer: Creator God, may we become good stewards of your creation. Amen.

Tuesday: Read Psalm 104

Psalm 104 is a song about the timelessness of creation and its Creating God, as it moves beyond the “me first” concept and “my” importance in the great scheme of things; to rejoice in the wonder and glory of God’s creation and taking an ageless approach to the life of the universe which was not created for my or even our benefit. Was all of creation simply about God’s extravagant splendor and a demonstration to all creation the infinite capacity of God? The biblical writers invite us to delight and to love creation. We are invited to love creation as God loves it: not in the abstract, but concretely as we live in this world **with** all that God created. How do you celebrate all that God created? Where do you find delight in the world around you? Take a moment today to appreciate the gift of life beyond yourself.

Prayer: May the glory of the LORD continue forever for I rejoice in the LORD. Amen.

Wednesday: Read Ezekiel 37:1-12

Many of us have our own “valley of dry bones.” We have circumstances, relationships, communities, and groups that are torn asunder and falling apart. We have families shattered by betrayal and anger and abuse and addiction. We have churches divided over theology or worship style or ministry goals. We have a country separated by partisan politics, by rhetoric, by the color of the state, and by our stubborn refusal to even hear the other side and to try and work together for a common good. Sometimes we’ll look around at these shattered relationships, these crushed dreams and hopes, and we’ll assume that’s the end of the story. But the prophetic vision here in Ezekiel is one of restoration, of re-creation, and maybe even reconciliation. Maybe those things that divide us and leave us as the “dry and cut off bones” of the body of God’s people are not insurmountable. Maybe we can be restored, we can be reconciled to each other and to God, and we can be re-created and resurrected into the kinds of communities, families, and people that God desires us to be. How is God working to re-

create you? In what ways have you experienced restoration in your “dry bones?”

Prayer: O God, create new life from our dry bones. Amen.

Thursday: Read John 11:17-50

If you had the capacity to give life to someone, to enable them to live more fully, more vibrantly, more meaningfully – to discover what it means to be truly alive – would you do it, if you doing so would cost you your own life? Perhaps what we most learn from this story is that life always comes at a cost. To bring life to others, as Jesus did, costs us something of our own life. To trust another, as Mary did, costs us something of our independence and our right to judge and accuse. To take life up and embrace it fully, as Lazarus did, costs us something of our freedom to spend it on frivolity and meaninglessness. What are you willing to sacrifice to experience this resurrection life that Jesus offers?

Prayer: Jesus, help me to live as you lived, no matter the cost. Amen.

Friday: Read 1 Corinthians 15:3-8

The resurrection of Jesus changed the world forever. In that singular event death was conquered. The empty tomb contained the victory of life that we, and the whole world, needed. This story of redemption and restoration and resurrection is the overarching story of the scriptures. Over and over and over again it looks like God has been defeated. Over and over again it looks like the story is over. It appears that God had a good run, but the Cinderella story has to come to an end. And each time, God prevails. Seemingly defeat turns into amazing victory. That is the story of God. How have you experienced God’s love “prevailing” in your life?

Prayer: Jesus, we give thanks that your life, death, and resurrection brings life to the world. Amen.

Saturday: Read Genesis 9:8-17

There are two important aspects to this text which have a profound impact on people of faith. The first is God’s promise never again to destroy life on the planet. There are no conditions established, no set of requirements to fulfill. The second is the fact that this promise is made to everybody. Depending on how one counts the recurring phrases of “every living creature,” “all flesh,” and “all the earth,” there are at least six different iterations of the unmistakable notion that there is no living thing anywhere that will ever exist anywhere that is not covered under the scope of this covenant. So great is God’s love and so wide is God’s mercy that God establishes the very first covenant with the sign of a rainbow as a reminder for God of the promise made, not only to Noah but to all generations to follow, and to all of creation itself. What does the rainbow mean to you?

Prayer: We give thanks for rainbows that remind us of the magnitude of your grace. Amen.