

TOGETHER AGAIN

[This message includes the involvement of the youth acting the parts in the creation story passage]

In a beginning, God created a wonderful garden, and from the soil / from the ground, God created a human. God put into this human the breath of God - Ruah--God's Spirit.

This human was to care for God's garden. Before long, God noticed that the human was not content, and so God realized that the human needed a companion-- a co-worker....."a partner".

The first human is identified as Adam. Adam has come to mean "human", yet the name originally meant ground or the earth.

Also note, that in the Bible "Adam" is used in different ways: sometimes NO gender is inferred, sometimes it is used in the collective (representing all humans), and sometimes, as it is in this case, it refers to the first human.

So, God called out to Adam, "ADAM", and asked Adam to sit down and select a fitting partner from the creatures that God would form from the ground. []

God made all the creatures of the earth, and each was paraded by Adam to see if Adam liked that creature as a partner.

Adam was to choose one for a partner.

As each creature went by Adam gave them a name.

God made an insect with wings..... [], and Adam called it a fly.

God made an amphibian that could hop real well,..[]. and Adam named it a frog.

Then there was a bird, but this bird couldn't fly very well []
Adam called it a chicken.

So, God made many mammals, even one that was fast and strong []

And, Adam said it was a horse.

But, none of these animals were selected by Adam to be his partner.

So, God put Adam into a deep sleep [sleep], because God had a better idea.

God decided to in essence clone Adam because one cannot make another masterpiece. It didn't make sense to create another human. God already did that, and besides ...two masterpieces may be tempted to see who is better.

Instead, God continued to create one masterpiece.....another from one, and so on.

From Adam a partner was made. A partner that is equal to the other because they were one and are to be one.

Granted, there are some minor anatomical differences, but that's not a factor until chapter 3.

So,..... God woke up Adam [], and asked, "What do you think?"

[light shine off stage suggesting woman's presence there.]

Adam said, "WOW. I like what you made. She's just like me; she is me..... yet.... different in a good way.

Adam left to be with his partner.

The one became two, but were really one.

[Adam leaves]

It's a good thing verse 25 was not included in our reading, today. That's the part about both being naked.

Two humans were created, but it was one masterpiece.

Two were equal, and the two were partners, and note: gender or procreation were not issues, at this point.

Two humans were equal partners, and they were **one** serving God, in God's garden.

God valued equality / fairness when God made humans.

Moreover, God's concern for Adam's wellbeing and happiness, reveals also that, from the beginning, God is a compassionate and loving God.

*God is a God of fairness, justice and love, ...and God is a God of grace, too.

God did not give up trying to find a perfect partner for Adam.

In addition, the rest of this creation story which includes rebelling against God, also reveals God's grace.

God made adjustments; God allowed them to live, and God provided for them.

The humans sinned / hurt their relationship with God, yet God did not give up on them.

In our Mark 10 text, Jesus shares this devotion to justice and equality in his response to the Pharisee's entrapping question.

And, we need to remember the context of Jesus' words, when we read this passage.

Jesus is responding as a lawyer would, and he is using the scriptures against the Pharisees, too.

They had sort of.... taken liberties with the Mosaic law that allowed and was intended to control divorce.

In his answer, Jesus voiced his profound concern for stable family life and for children. In Roman society, marriage had one purpose - to provide a legal heir who would inherit a man's property.

In Jewish society, men could divorce their wives for any reason, or even on a whim, and to add insult to injury, the man could come back later, at any time, to reclaim his "former" wife.

Wives had no such right without their husband's consent.

Women were treated as property; they were not equal.

In vv.10-12, Jesus put women on an equal footing. Jesus "returns" women to the place of equality that God intended.

Moreover, Jesus then "rightly" applied the same standards to women, too.

God does not desire partners to be broken apart.

Of course not, the tearing apart is usually painful, and sometimes ugly.

God creates. In fairness and equality, with love, God creates.

God does not advocate destruction, and that is what divorce is about.

It is counter to God's will when we humans fight and separate from each other.

God had a beautiful garden in mind for us, not hardships and suffering.

Yet,.....in the spirit of Thanksgiving,..... we can be eternally grateful that God is also a God of grace.

God is gracious.

A bountiful, rejoicing life can happen after rebelling against God,...after divorce,... after we mess up,.... and after Jesus was killed,.. when we **try again** to commune with God, creation and each other.....when we repent and live justice and grace.

Today is also World Communion Sunday. Christian believers around the world will be partaking in communion today.

However, in the spirit of today's passages, let us regard our gathering as a pledge to be IN Communion with all of humanity,... with God's creation,.... and of course with God.

This is the life and message of Jesus: a passion that includes everyone as equals under God's justice, love and grace.

As we take in the bread and the cup,.... let us consider the experience an invitation to be as Christ..... to live and proclaim justice and grace to all,..... including with our partners.

{Instructions for communion}