

WOW! This morning we have a monumental task set before us, in fact 3 Herculean tasks:

1. God formed all the realities we know and everything we could ever imagine out of Chaos, Waste and Darkness, charging us to finish it. We have been so intimidated by the task, we describe all humanity as originally sinners incompetent of even keeping a single promise.
2. Jesus commissioned us to continue his life work, Baptizing, Teaching, Preaching to ALL the World.
3. Paul commands us that everything people devote their lives to are meaningless, compared to the task at hand, which we have been so afraid of, we have relegated these words to only being read as poetry in Weddings.

What if... If we took all these poetic words of Worship, phrases only chanted at Weddings, at Baptisms, and on Earth Day... what if we took these words as being our Prime Directive, our Instruction Manual, not just for being Presbyterians... being Christians... for believing in GOD... NO, for being Human?

Each of these COMMANDS were given during the messiest of times!

When each of us came into being, there was a world, culture and traditions already established, TRY to imagine what WAS before anything else... In the Time before Time, the absolute darkness of space without Sun, Moon or Stars, in the Waste and Void without bedrock foundations of firm Reality, when the oceans were tossed in Chaos,

God's Spirit brooded over and in very Ordered WORDS God called each connected thread of life into being.

In all of the Scientific Theories of the Enlightenment, in all human knowledge we have come to this same "order" for Creation. For LIFE to have taken place, FIRST there had to have been LIGHT, there needed to be BALANCE, there needed to have been a SEPARATION: a Firmament in the Heavens, an Atmosphere; all of which was essential before PLANTLIFE; before fish and birds; before small mammals; before beasts and cattle; all of which was before whatever was the first Human could exist. Peeling back all these interdependent onion skins of Creation, with Physics, Geology, the Hubble Telescope and now the James Webb Telescope, SCIENCE has declared "SOMETHING UNKNOWN HAPPENED" and we have the Theory of A BIG BANG! What amazes me is that Thousands and Thousands of years ago, the HEBREWS, the first Humans to have had a written Alphabet of LETTERS and WORDS, knew that very ORDER! However, instead of "SOME UNKNOWN THING" they affirmed "IN THE BEGINNING: GOD."

GOD did not snap God's Fingers and everything was Created Perfect and Complete...

Instead, after creating each of the interdependent building blocks of Creation, THE CREATOR named us the Earthlings formed out of the Earth, the Humans from the Humus, in Hebrew THE ADAM of the ADAMA, TO BE CO-CREATORS with GOD. There is a misconception, that after 6 Days of Work GOD was tired and The CREATOR Stopped CREATION! NO! In this first Act of CREATION as we know it, GOD Created all this, then GOD went on to Create and continues to CREATE TODAY; while at the same time, GOD Challenged us to fill Creation, much like coloring within the lines.

When we were 3 and 4 and 5, more definitively when we graduated High School or College, we had visions of our Vocation. For some of us, that Career has changed two, three five times. So, HOW MANY OF US today have retired from those Careers? What if, all that we prepared for and we were working at for all those decades, was training for this stage in our lives? If our VOCATIONAL GOAL for the rest of our lives, is as CO-CREATORS with GOD? Co-CREATING by Living our Lives in trust and relationship with GOD.

The SECOND THREAD began with Jesus, who according to John's Gospel was there with GOD in CREATION. Often Religions understand Jesus as being both the INCARNATION of GOD WITH US, AND ALSO the ATONEMENT for the SIN of the World. JESUS' GREAT COMMISSION to his Disciples never mentions SIN!

Jesus final words to his disciples are not to re-examine their lives through the RESURRECTION.

If the first thread is for us to be Co-Creators with God, our second thread is to Baptize and Teach and Heal people different from ourselves, extending and perpetuating the Life's Ministry of Jesus.

Given everything going on in the NEWS Today about RUSSIA, it seems hard to remember back 35 years, in nearly all of our memories to 1987, when the Soviet Union collapsed, and States like UKRAINE were set free. Under Gorbachev the National Policies were Perestroika & Glasnost: REFORM and OPENNESS. In October of 1987 I was invited on a PEACE & JUSTICE TOUR through the Presbyterian Church, to visit 8 different Cities, to witness first-hand the Churches and Judicial System and discuss with Church and Government leaders, Lawyers, Judges and Priests, and people on the street, about the Church and the State. While there were many American Churches who intentionally went to the Soviet Union to try to evangelize and convert Russians to their denominations, what we witnessed was that for the history of the Soviet State, there were believers who had continued teaching and living their faith underground. In the early days of the Communist Revolution, Marx and Lenin had been asked what to do about the Christians? Their response had been "Do Not Worry About those 70 and 80 Year Old Grandmothers!" The reality is that throughout the next 70 years, those 70 and 80 year old Grandmothers took their grandchildren to their Sanctuaries, and used the ICONS on the Walls to teach their babies the teachings and healings and Sacrifice of Jesus. While oppressed for generations, when the Soviet State died, the 70 & 80 year old Grandmothers were still BAPTIZING, TEACHING & HEALING in the name of Jesus.

The THIRD THREAD we know through the Apostle Paul's LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS. Because this names LOVE, this Chapter has routinely been read at Weddings, having nothing to do with Marriage! PAUL was writing to the Christian Community at Corinth, very much like us in Green Valley. First the Greeks, then the Romans, had each removed the indigenous people from this isthmus, because Corinth was a prime location for Trade. Each culture had brought in refugees from other parts of the world to do jobs here that no one else wanted to do. Consequently Corinthian Christians saw as their goal in life to have MONEY, Gold and Silver; to acquire KNOWLEDGE especially the philosophies of other cultures; or as a heritage from the GREEKS, to give away all that we have, even our bodies to DONATE to others. In Response to which, PAUL instructs that those are meaningless, what matters is FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE.

This 1st SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST is often called TRINITY SUNDAY, because we have already focused on GOD, CHRIST & the HOLY SPIRIT. What I am intrigued by this morning is that, a close reading of the OLD TESTAMENT teaches us about FAITH IN GOD. The Life of JESUS in the 4 GOSPELS teach us to LOVE. So I wonder if living our lives in response to the HOLY SPIRIT are about what it means to live in HOPE?

I am also amazed, that in these great passages that are GOD'S ORIGINAL BLESSING of CREATION; the GREAT COMMISSION from JESUS; the TEACHING On FAITH, HOPE & LOVE the greatest of which is LOVE; there is no mention of SIN! We are created by GOD, to care for one another and for GOD's Creation as if CO-CREATORs with GOD! We are to Baptize, Teach and Heal carrying on the work of Jesus TO ALL PEOPLE! And we are to live for FAITH, HOPE and LOVE, the greatest of which is LOVE.

Our FOURTH THREAD is revealed to us in our Practice of Communion. All of our Beliefs, Theology and Practices are REVEALED in breaking Bread, sharing the Cup and FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER as we are Forgiven.