

March 18, 2012
Psalms 8
Creekside COB
Pastor Janet Shaver

“Loving the Things God Loves”

JOKE:

I was working on this sermon this week and reading the Psalm, David says the God has made us just a little lower than God and that we are crowned with glory and honor. I asked Byrl, “If you were the king of creation what you would do. Being the lover of music that he is, he went right into song, singing a verse from Jeremiah was a Bullfrog and it goes like this. “And if I were the king of the world , I tell you what I would do. I’d throw away the cars and the bars in the world and I’d make sweet love to you.”

That is not quite what I was looking for.

COB VISION STATEMENT

Today we are talking about being good stewards of God’s Creation. You can see behind me that we have the entire COB vision statement.

WHY DO YOU THINK WE SHOULD TAKE CARE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

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.

STEWARDSHIP IS OUR CALLING FROM GOD

God calls us – it is our vocation in life – It is God’s desire for us to take care of the good he creates.

SUSTAINABILITY

We need to live off of creation. We need it to sustain life while preserving at the same time. Yes, we shall live off of it. We’d better take care of it or our children and their children will not have the goodness that we enjoy.

IT IS A LOT OF WORK

ILLUSTRATION: BOY TAKING OVER THE FARM

A man telling a story talks about his dad. He says, “More years ago than I care to remember, my dad worked most of one morning tilling the ground for the garden he planted every year. After working the soil, he would spend a few days planting seed. Then there was the setting up row markers, stringing lines for the peas and other tasks that took many days.

I was quite young as I watched him year by year and there was always that look of satisfaction when dad would have the whole garden laid out, seed planted and everything was ready for the season of growth. He would wipe his brow and lean on the top of his shovel and look out over his work for the longest time. As I think back, it was a kind of, *“And he looked over all he had made and it was good.”*

And I *watched* it all as a boy. I was a spectator.

Then one spring everything changed. I think I was about 12 years old give or take a year or two. I was watching dad watching his garden when he called me over. He put his arm around my shoulder and said, *“This is all yours to take care of now!”*

I was stunned.

Suddenly my role went through a radical transformation. What was once a regular back yard garden now looked like acres and acres of garden to care for! Besides - how could I even begin to take care of

something that seemed to appear almost magically year by year and how could I be responsible for that absolutely wonderful harvest of fresh produce we had each fall? I would never manage the brilliant planning dad always did with his garden so that we were harvesting for the longest time. The tomatoes alone fed us during the fall and the canned version lasted most of the year.

"This is all yours to take care of now?"

It seemed like the most impossible of all tasks. How in the world could I even conceive of taking care of something that only my father could produce?"

ILLUSTRATION :

Our Garden – Hard work

It is hard work and that is why we have to be motivated by something more powerful, something deeper and meaningful.

PSALM TODAY

There is epiphany of praise here today. Have you ever had a praise epiphany like this one? I remember something happened to one of my seminary classmates. She had to go before a group of ministers for her ordination and she had heard the one minister was tough and she felt nervous about it but when she got into the meeting, she saw that something had closed this minister's mouth – not a question did he utter. She was so astonished and taken aback, she said she came out of that meeting and without any intention but a natural response, she began singing the Doxology. A standard offertory response in all Methodists churches.

WHO IS DAVID

I see David in that today. So, if you ever have been in that place, you can enter into his emotions and his deep abiding love.

Spending time with God in the fields – Good foundation

It is said that the most precious time you can spend with God is with as little material around as possible. He spent much time in nature and surroundings.

This is the foundation of David's reverence for God

Although he messed up in his life, we know without a doubt that David loved God.

Not just a reverence as we might find in the Psalm today but a deep and abiding love.

DAVID'S REFLECTIONS OF GOD

This is an epiphany.

Obvious that he loves God

There is a reverence for God he places in a paradox the God's majesty and this is how much you love us this is how much.

He is in love with God and has a wonderful awe for God.

SURVEYS

When we got those surveys back from the church about where did we meet God and where does God meet us and where do we meet God. The majority of the answers were in nature.

It reminds me of a story that I read about a rabbi and his son.

The son would enter his house after school place his backpack on the dining room table. Leave the house through the back door and head into the woods behind the house. At first, the rabbi gave little thought to his son's ritual. But it continued for days and then weeks, every day, out in the woods for almost a half hour. The rabbi grew concerned. "My son," he said one day. "I notice that every day you leave home to spend time in the woods. What is it you are doing there?"

"Oh, Papa," the son replied. "There is no need to worry. I go into the woods to pray. It is in the woods that I can talk to God."

“Oh,” the rabbi said, clearly relieved. “but as the son of a rabbi, you should know that God is the same everywhere.” Yes Papa. “I know that God is the same everywhere.” “But I am not.”

Something happens when we are in nature. When we get in touch with nature we are in touch with God in a pure way. IN a way that sometimes in our material places we cannot. We're different.

CAMP MACK

That is why so many of us love Camp Mack. Because transformation happens there for many children and adults. We are in touch with God in the most natural space. The less material things and the more natural habitat gives us a greater opportunity to be with God.

Sometimes we can't help but have to be in our time with God inside but it is nature in the most complete state that brings us to a full awareness.

THERE IS AN INTERRELATEDNESS IN THE SPIRIT OF GOD

We are in the center of God and God is in the center of creation – nature and humanity God – We belong to God and God permeates the very being of creation and God loves it.

No distractions – let our minds open – let God take us to what God wants us to know.

We find a place of Oneness – and it makes sense. We have an epiphany.

DAVID WHO SPENT HIS TIME IN NATURE AMONG GOD'S CREATION

That is what happened to David today and to us when we come into a Oneness with God in nature.

It is there where we might break into a praise as a inherent response.

MINDFULNESS

You might say David becomes mindful of the things of God.

That is what the Psalmist says about God with us.

3 When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; 4 what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?

ALICE STORY

Mark Rullo writes:

Calvin Trillin's lighthearted and best-selling tribute to his late wife, Alice, can make some husbands nervous. Ordinary husbands the ordinary, absentminded kind. You know the kind of husbands that are not mindful of any of their wives lives. Trillin wrote books about her and she appeared in many of his *New Yorker* columns. Throughout their 36-year marriage, Trillin catalogued her sense of humor, her sense of style and her childlike sense of wonder. He noticed little things about Alice that most spouses let slide like fish over an open dam. This may explain why a young woman once wrote Trillin and con-fided that "she sometimes looked at her boyfriend and asked herself, 'But will he love me like Calvin loves Alice?'"

MINDFUL OF HIS WIFE

We might say that Calvin Trillin was mindful of his wife Alice. We might say that his love for her never dimmed but continued throughout their lives together.

David loved the things of God and he was mindful of all that was around him.

You might say we become mindful while we are in nature.

We become mindful of God's love for all his creation.

We become mindful of our interconnectedness in the universe.

We might say that:

To Love the things that God loves we are mindful of who God is in creation – in humanity and in nature.

LOVING IN MINDFULNESS

A love that isn't distracted

MINDFULNESS OF LOVE IS:

**A love that refuses to be disinterested
A focused and attentive love.
Mindfulness delights in its beloved**

**That is what God wants from us to love the things he loves.
To stay mindful on the things of God in and out of nature .**

**We are to bring that mindfulness and praise and live it out.
We are to live out our salvation in mindfulness of the things of God.
The things that God cherishes and delights in.**

The things that God is mindful of – the things that God loves.

SOMETHING HAPPENS IN OUR MINDFULNESS

Something happens when we discover the oneness in nature – in our interconnectedness.

It is like an Epiphany

Not because God commands us or for our own sustainability

**We begin to:
love God and the things God loves.**

SPIRIT LED ACTIONS – LIVE OUT OUR LIVES IN PRAISE

Our actions become spirit-led – we grieve and delight in the things that God does. Not just in nature but in all creation – the injustices of humanity.

**We might grieve with God
When we see some of things happening in our environment – a righteous indignation rises up in us – the oil spills – toxic waste.**

**We might grieve with God
The human trafficking of men, women and children all over the world and into the U.S.**

We might delight with God

Each time we take a stand and do something to care for the environment

We might delight with God

Each time we choose to stand up and against homelessness in the U.S.

I don't have to give you statistics. You see the devastation and the injustices.

IN AND OUT OF NATURE

When we remain mindful of the things of God – when we remain mindful of the things of God in and out of nature.

Whether we are sitting out in the prayer garden or in Camp Mack, we continue that mindfulness – with the same epiphany truth.

Our lives are lived in praise. Our lives are an inherent response to God's goodness.

We live out our lives in praise – living out our lives with a sense of wonder.

CLOSING:

We know that God commands us to care for creation.

We know that we need it for our sustainability and to our future generations.

But it is when “We Love God and the Things God Loves.”

We will live out our salvation loving all creation.

We will be the loving stewards of God's creation – interconnected in the majesty and wonder of it all.