

And on the 8th Day
Genesis 1 & Mark 1: 29-39 February 5, 2012
Evolution Sunday

I. And on the 8th day God looked at all of creation and God said,
“Oh Lordy, what have I done.
It was all going so good until, until I went and tried to get fancy and make something in my own image.
Now what?
Did I mess up or what?”

A. It started out good.

1. On the first day God created the earth, but it was a little hard to judge what a day was, since there was no sun yet – or even the dome for it to travel across.

Nope, God wouldn't get around to the sun until the 4th day, or the dome until the second day, but on the first day God did create light and separated it from the darkness.

2. On the second day, God made a dome to separate the waters on the earth from the waters in the sky.

3. On the third day God separated the waters on the earth so that there was some dry land.

And so far everything was going really GOOD.

And now since there was some dry land God put vegetation on the earth and trees and fruit;

and the earth brought forth more vegetation.

And still everything was so GOOD.

4. Finally, on the fourth day God got around to creating the sun.

Now how there was any measurement of a day up until now or how the plants grew without the sun, this is a real mystery.

But in any case, God did finally create the Sun and the moon and all the other lights that shine in the heavens.

Yes, the earth preceded all the other lights in the sky.

And still everything was really GOOD.

5. It was on the 5th day that God created the animals in the sea and in the air.

6. On the 6th day God created all the animals that lived on the dry land.

And up till now everything is still really GOOD.

Then it happened....then it happened.

Still on the sixth day God decided to create an animal in God's own image.

Getting fancy.

It was the crown of God's creation.

God gave this creature responsibility for taking care of the rest of creation.

7. And God was so happy with what God had created and so on the seventh day God rested and said that on every seventh day everyone should rest.
8. But on the 8th day seeing how horribly the creature God had made in God's image was behaving and how devastatingly horrible it was doing at taking care of God's creation, all God could say was, "Oh Lord, what have I done."
 - a) The creature God had made in God's image, instead of caring for God's creation, they just abused the creation, they fought and killed each other, and they were arrogant and full of hubris.
 - b) And, instead of using their intelligence and freedom to find ways to improve creation and fulfill God's plan; they instead found ways to just serve themselves and exploit and devastate the creation.

B. Did God mess up or what?

II. Well as we shall see in the coming weeks, the Jewish answer as found in the Hebrew Scripture was,

“Yes, God messed up when it came to the humans.”

- A. Right from the start God had to start finding ways to try to fix the mistake.
- B. So according to the Hebrew scriptures, after humans proved to be such a poor excuse as an image of God, God started by kicking them out of the Garden, then by killing off all but a few who God thought would give a fresh start and then God decided to give them a whole bunch of laws to follow.
- C. Without a doubt, the Jewish answer was that God messed up and made us imperfectly by giving us freedom.
So right away God gave these children rules and laws they should follow.

The Hebrew answer was that we must try to be perfect by following the law God gave us if we want God to love us.

Be the good child – not the prodigal one.

- D. But a good millennium after the Law was given along came Jesus who had some good news for us; namely, that God will love us even with our imperfections – in spite of our imperfections.

III. Which means, we need an “in spite of” faith.

- A. As the theologian Paul Tillich pointed out, those three words – in spite of – are the holiest in the English language. Tillich observes, the answer to every religious question always contains some element of “in spite of.”
- We are forgiven in spite of our sins.
We believe in spite of the lack of evidence.
We love our neighbors in spite of their flaws.
Or, on a more fundamental level,
we get out of bed every morning in spite of the inevitable approach of death.
There is a huge gap between “because of” and “in spite of,” and in that gap lies the difference between a life of cold reason and a life of faith.
- Tillich points out that, most of the time we operate in because-mode.
Banks lend us money **because** we have good credit histories.
Our employer pays our salary **because** we contribute to the bottom line.
Economic life depends entirely on “because.”
- The religious life, though, operates in “in-spite-of” mode, and so does family life.

We love our children not because they are good and successful but **in spite of** their achievement, or the lack thereof.

We love them **in spite of** their behavior.

“In spite of” makes a mockery of cost-benefit analysis.

It makes no sense and that is precisely why we need it. [Man Seek God: My Flirtations with the Divine, p. 127.]

- B. It seems that Jesus, who turned out to be a really good reflection of God, in fact some would say he was perfectly in the image of God;
anyway, what Jesus revealed was that God actually loves us **in spite of** all our foibles and hubris and arrogance and stupidity.

IV. And so I ask you, “Did God mess up?”

- A. Do we buy into the notion that God messed up?

Or, did God know what God was doing all along?

1. Certainly, this creature called human has done some really horrible and devastating things.
 - a) This creature time and again has refused to use its freedom and intellect to build God’s Realm and co-create with God.

- b) In fact, it has used God as an excuse for killing each other and many have used their religion as an excuse for denying what the smartest and brightest of their species tell them about the world and the cosmos.
2. But then again this human creature has also done some wonderful, marvelous and truly loving things.
- a) We have found out what was really behind those “demons;” such as epilepsy, diabetes, post traumatic stress, schizophrenia, and so much more, and we have healed millions of people.
 - b) We have found how to curb malaria and AIDS and TB and scurvy and polio.
 - c) We have discovered how to control our population growth and control our urge to exploit and destroy this creation.
 - d) We have discovered what it means to love and respect all people.
- B. I would have to say that God knew what God was doing all along and despite all the evil that our freedom and intellect have brought this creation; it has also brought us goodness and beauty and love.**

- V. What is your freedom and intellect worth to you?
- A. Would you be willing to trade your intelligence and freedom for peace and the end of human suffering?
 - B. Did God mess up by creating us in God's image – that is, creating us with freedom and intelligence and the capacity to love?
 - C. That's what we'll look at in my next sermon as during the upcoming Lenten season we will be looking at some of the truths found in the opening chapters of Genesis, which are known as the pre-historical chapters.
 - D. In the meantime, consider...
What is your freedom and intellect worth to you?
AMEN.