

## Facing Creation's Brokenness

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Rev. Todd R. Lattig / General

A NEW CREATION / Creation; Sin; Evil / Romans 8:19–27

Humanity's sin and brokenness has had devastating effects on the world for which we are called to care. As earth's stewards, living into our resurrection hope involves reckoning with our failures and working for the freedom of all creation – human and nonhuman alike.

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## Focus Statement

- Humanity's sin and brokenness has had devastating effects on the world for which we are called to care.
  - As earth's caretakers,
    - living into our resurrection hope involves reckoning with our failures
      - and working for the freedom of *all* creation – human and nonhuman alike.

## Things to Consider

- Most of us have watched the news,
  - seen our neighborhoods change,
    - and have read about the detrimental human effects to God's creation.
  - The World Health Organization
    - has many statistics and stories
      - outlining the devastating effects of our brokenness in relation to the environment.
  - Creation's brokenness is not something that is far away.
    - It affects humans and all of creation.

- It affects our neighbors and our communities, some more than others.
- Whether or not we are aware of it,
  - we have all contributed to the brokenness,
    - *and* we can all contribute to solutions,
      - even if we can't imagine it yet.
- As Easter People, as people of the Resurrection,
  - we are called to the hope (and the hope-in-action) of new life.
    - One example of this hope-in-action is in our education systems.
      - One example is in our school systems,
        - where New Jersey and Pennsylvania have been at the forefront of positive/transformational change.
- New Jersey was the first state to mandate climate change education K-12 in schools.
  - The focus is not on doom and gloom, but rather on problem-solving.
    - Pennsylvania, the state I am about to head to, their schools have now added educational standards regarding the environment.

## What Scripture Says

- In verse 19, we are reminded that we are 'children of God' and that creation is longing for us to take life-giving action.
  - The term 'children of God' is used again in verse 21,
    - reminding us that our freedom is connected to creation being set free from destruction and decay.
- I want to invite you to consider what it means to you to live as 'children of God'

- and how that would change your interaction with creation as children of ‘The Creator’
  - within a sacred covenant with the Creator.
- If all creation’s hope is bound up with humanity’s freedom
  - and God has given human beings a special responsibility to care for the earth (as discussed in last week’s sermon),
    - what does it look like to take that responsibility, privilege, and freedom seriously?
- This scripture reminds us of our unity with God through creation.
  - The idea of one, full, and connected creation is underscored by our ‘groaning together’ and ‘suffering together’ in verse 22.
    - In the preface of the popular book *Braiding Sweetgrass* (by Robin Wall Kimmerer),
      - the author reflects on her Native American heritage and the process of braiding a sheath of sweetgrass, considered sacred by the Potawatoni people. She writes:
 

*“The braid is an intertwining of science, spirit, and story – old stories and new ones that can be medicine for our broken relationship with earth...healing stories that allow us to imagine a different relationship, in which people and land are good medicine for each other.”*
- From verse 23 to 25,
  - there is a shift from brokenness to new life and healed relationship (adoption) through the power of hope and God’s work of resurrection.
    - Much of what we hear on the news in relation to environmental concerns can seem hopeless...
      - And forget about the politics surrounding it.
  - Other experiences of holding onto hope (and acting as people of hope) might be easier for people to grasp.

- Consider talking about what it looks like to live and (actively!) wait with hope when things are difficult on a more personal level.
- The scripture mentions “first fruits” (v. 23) and “patience” (v.25).
  - We may not “see” hope but we have the “first fruits” –
    - experiences of blessing, goodness, and new life from God
      - that can sustain us as we work and wait patiently for redemption/better times ahead.
  - Connect these more personal experiences to what it looks like to live and actively wait with hope on a bigger scale when it comes to environmental matters.
- It can be hard to face creation’s brokenness and our own,
  - but the new life Jesus offers is one that flows from recognizing and naming the truth of our brokenness.
- In [John 14:1-13](#), Jesus teaches that he is the way, the truth, and the life.
  - Consider how naming the truth is what links “the way” with “the life.”
    - Perhaps we’re broken in how we treat our bodies...I’ve been guilty of that.
      - That is one way of NOT caring for God’s Creation.
    - Perhaps we’re broken in how we waste things...or in Over-consuming the Earth’s resources
      - Let me ask this: what keeps us from naming the truth about the state of creation
        - and the possibilities for change?
          - › **Pause**

## What This Means for You

- Today I am inviting you to consider your relationship with creation.

- You could complete a carbon footprint calculation (different ones are available online),
  - walk or ride a bike when driving isn't necessary, turn lights off when they aren't being used...
  - Keep our A/C on the ecological setting so it only runs when needed.
    - or in any number of other ways.
- Some areas have many resources for things like recycling and composting and have clean water and air.
  - Other communities have few resources,
    - and do not have clean air or water.
- In our community, we have an increasing number of people of color, Hispanics, Black, Latino, Asian...THANKFULLY!
  - And we could be getting to know them, building mutual relationships of service and fellowship.
    - We're currently doing that down at Treasures of Hope...
      - but how could we be even more intentional in promoting the kind of diversity in our community within our congregation?
- Let us also consider where is God calling us to take steps to heal the broken relationship between creation and humankind?
  - How might God be calling you, as a 'child of God' to be a bearer of truth and/or a bearer of hope-in-action?
- Often, younger generations are raised with more climate awareness,
  - and our eco-consciousness is being evaluated by people it is important too.
    - By doing our part we are not only doing good for Creation itself,
      - We are witnessing Christ's love to younger people who WILL LOVE TO JOIN side-by-side with us to work on eco-stewardship.

- Friends, the reason younger folks don't find purpose in our churches have to do, in part,
  - With our NOT speaking to and leading on the issues that matter to them.
- We are also to draw on their expertise
  - and learn from them about how we might care for our earth.

## What This Means for Us

- Friends, I am challenging you to wrestle with your responsibility to both name the places and sources of brokenness
  - and be an active part of the hope-in-action that can be new life or resurrection for creation.
- Friends, change will not happen overnight,
  - so what does it look like as lament and hope are present together?
- As I am transitioning out, I will not be the one to walk you through those changes.
  - We have a new pastoral appointment, with Pastors Dr. Vicki and Monica coming in July.
    - And they will then be your pastors to guide you to being even better stewards of God's creation than we currently are.
  - In the mean time, let us reflect honestly, facing our participation in Creation's Brokenness,
    - so that we can begin to make the small but significant changes in our lives so that the impossible once again becomes GOD'S REALITY!  
Amen? Amen.