

SEPTEMBER 27TH, 2020
SPRINGFIELD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
I'M NOT EVEN SURE ANYMORE WHAT SEASON WE ARE IN.
THE 201ST DAY OF MARCH

Adam, Eve, and Steve

I. Kick Off

Welcome to the first week of our first, in my tenure, Springfield Sermon Series. During this season, we will be start at the very beginning, because as they say, it's a very good place to start. We will walk through Genesis, which offers us helpful narratives and serves as some of the strong foundation of both the Old and New Testaments. I will not be able to preach on every nuance or interesting part of the narratives these upcoming weeks, but I will be pointing to some important transformative beginnings for deeper reflection. My prayer and hope is that you will be inspired in the following weeks to dig deeper into the text, to ask the hard questions, and to grow in faith.

This week, we start at the very beginning, the beginning of the universe, as we look at two creation stories. I only featured one in our reading today, but both are well known and often cited in our Christian life together. You could do a Bible study on each day of creation, or explore how we hold both science and the creation stories together, but for our purposes today, I want to look at three often used statements from these Scriptures that have informed culture, for better and for worse.

I. Adam, Eve, and Steve

It makes sense to begin with the sermon title. In our culture, depending on where you sit in the LGBTQ+ debate, you may have heard, “It’s Adam and Eve, NOT Adam and Steve” as a proclamation that God’s intention was for man and woman to be joined, without alternative. The literal reading of this Scripture has perpetuated divisiveness in culture, where LGBTQ+ people are not accepted into

Christian life. Yet, we know that it runs much deeper than that.

Here's a fun fact from Hebrew class....admittedly, I don't remember much from Hebrew class, but this one stands out: Adam, pronounced, ah-dam, is Hebrew for 'earthling' which is a neuter noun. It is hard to comprehend what this might mean, perhaps our closest modern day understanding would be an individual who is non-binary, meaning that they do not ascribe to either female or male gender identity. What we can declare, for sure, is that Adam is a neuter noun to begin with, so we cannot initially claim that man was first to dwell on the earth.

To then say, again, "It's Adam and Eve" not "Adam and Steve" really does not give any strong evidence when you take a look at the Hebrew and the initial setting. So what does this mean for us? Generally, it's just another good reminder to love your neighbour and to not use the Scripture as a means of discrimination. Also, now you have a theologically astute and complex comeback to anyone who uses the phrase.

III. Nudity Permitted

Onto our next topic: the one where Adam and Eve all the sudden realize that they are naked and were embarrassed. I always found it really weird, especially when you are taught as a kid about public speaking, to imagine people in their underwear. Who thought that was a comforting image?

But, is that coming out of my frozen chosen-ness? Am I easily embarrassed? Most likely. It's interesting that Adam and Eve have no problem being naked until they sin. Everything is going smoothly and then all the sudden they need to cover up. Now, please, know, I am not advocating that you walk around Sykesville naked...I do not want that pastoral reputation. Especially if our police pull up, please do not say, "Well, Pastor Becca at Springfield says there shouldn't be any shame."

But maybe, just maybe, our sin is what embarrasses us, it is what causes us to think our bodies aren't right, or beautifully crafted. We hear it later in the Scriptures – God created us for good, for beauty, and we were each fearfully

and wonderfully made. It is society and culture, particularly American culture, that has made us frown at our bodies. Yet, each part of us, our eyes, our ears, our nose, etc. – were all crafted and we all look beautifully different and our figure reflects our story, and the story of our parents and ancestors.

So, just like we see Adam and Eve here, pre-sin, not feeling embarrassed, what if every time we are forgiven of our sin, what if we are able to accept our bodies and thank God for their creation? What if we chose radical acceptance and affirmation for God's creation, particularly God's creation in us?

IV. Stewardship of the Earth

And the last comment I want to make is about the stewardship of the Earth. It is evident in the words of both creation accounts that humans have the wonderful and difficult task of caring for the earth. As we enter the season of the harvest, we give thanks for all of the hard work and the ways in which we have fresh fruit and vegetables on our

dinner tables. We are grateful for all who help make this a reality and we should be inspired to continue to care for the earth so that the generations that follow us are blessed by God's creation.

Yet, we know the problems here. We've seen the abuse of the earth, from all different angles – whether that's not paying folks a living wage for the harvest, pollution of sea and sky, or creating spaces where the habitat of wildlife is not a priority. The sin of poor stewardship is evident everywhere you go, and if we're all being honest, we've all been a part of that abuse, whether actively or passively.

And really, you don't need me to tell you the way forward, for prophet Micah does a far better job, when he says that we are called to, "love justice, do mercy, and humbly follow God." If what you are doing is incongruent with those words, then you might need to check in on who you are serving.

V. The Call

And we all know, that apart from these three topics, there are many many more ideas and topics to approach with tenderness, tenacity, and authenticity. My challenge for you is to open up Genesis 1 and 2 again this week and read each section three times over, seeing what is powerful for you, what challenges you, and what makes you want to stop and question further?

As you explore these creation stories this week, may you know the love of our Creator shining upon you and be inspired by the work of creation to go and serve God in new and tangible ways. Amen.