

**Sermon Series: Life Together**  
**Made for Each Other**  
**Genesis 1:26-27**

**David Hockett**  
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“Humankind is community...none of us is the full image of God alone. Only in community together do we reflect the image of God.”<sup>1</sup> From the very beginning, God intended for us to share life together. Genesis tells us that out of the chaos God created “them”. Not God created “one”, but God created “them”, you and me, us together. We were created for relationship and when they are beautiful and good we celebrate that we were made for relationship. And when they seem to choke the life out of us it we may want to avoid them altogether. But either way, we were not meant to live life alone - in isolation from God, from one another, from creation, or from our true and best self.

Relationship is at the heart of what it means to be human beings made in God’s likeness and image. God longs for us to draw near to God in relationship, and God blesses us with the opportunity to share life with others. We are made for God and for each other.

It’s interesting that our passage from Genesis reads, “Let *us* make humankind in *our* image, according to *our* likeness...”. If there is one God, one might wonder who this “us” is. It’s been interpreted in various ways. Some have suggested that it is the royal “we”, or the majestic plural where you employ the use of a plural pronoun to refer to a single person holding a high office, such as a monarch or a significant religious leader, others have argued that it might be a reference to the heavenly host, and Christian scholars have often suggested that it is a reference to the Trinity. And we do believe that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, three persons in one. “God is community, loving together so profusely that we are the overflow of their passion, so profusely that we are drawn into their relationship.”<sup>2</sup>

“In Trinitarian theology, the three persons: Father , Son and Holy Spirit...make room for each other. They are incomparably hospitable to each other.”<sup>3</sup> So a kind “...of space lies within the Triune God – a space potentially inclusive of the space of sinners and doubters – and yet this space is no desert but a spiritual garden of mutual love and glorification. In the incarnation, in God becoming like us in the flesh, the three, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, show that there is always within God a space large enough for the whole world, and even all its sin.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis*. p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> James Howell, *Introducing Christianity*. p. 89.

<sup>3</sup> William Placher, *The Triune God*. p. 155.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

From the beginning God has made space for us, in all our doubt and sin, in all our disobedience and brokenness, there is space into which have been invited to share in the divine life, to participate in God's very being, to be in relationship with God. From the beginning God intended for us to share in the communal relationship that exist between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This means that God intends for us to create space in which we share life with one another. And so God formed human beings, Adam and Eve to be companions in life. And God called Abraham and Sarah, not for the salvation of isolated individuals, but to parent God's new family, a new kind of relationship. And God formed Israel to be a holy people, not person, but a people, a community in relationship with one another and with God, a people in relationship who would then bless the nations. And Jesus, the very Son of God, called disciples to be a part of a community, to be joined together as the first fruits of a new humanity. Jesus didn't call Peter, James, John, Andrew and all the others and leave them to themselves, isolated from his self and from one another. He didn't say, "Well you can be a part of the life of God, on your own, in your fishing boat out on the lake." No, he said, "Lay down your nets, come and follow me, share life with me, abide in me, abide with one another, and I will abide with you, together you are my body." We know that if we remove a limb or an organ from the body that limb or organ will soon die. We need each other. Being in relationship is a part of what it means to be created in the image of God. Why then do we sometimes believe and live as if we can be vital, thriving, disciples, even vital, thriving human beings, if we remove ourselves from any sort of meaningful connection to one another?

Difficult as they may be at times, we were made for relationship – to be in communion with God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and to share life with one another. In part, the salvation that was won for us in Christ Jesus entails the renewal of all our relationships. Jesus is the model for what it means to be a human being in relationship with God, and with other human beings, with self, and with creation.

Think about it. Jesus is the most fully faithfully human one to ever live. His love for the Father was perfect and his faithfulness unwaveringly obedient. And that love spilled over into all his relationships with other human beings including those who were his closest friends and even his enemies whom he prayed for and forgave. He was whole within himself, loving others as he loved himself. And he embodied a perfect relationship with Creation. All those accounts of healings, of turning water into wine, of multiplying loaves and fish so that all had enough to eat, of walking on water, and the wind and waves obeying him, they all point to what it looks like when we relate to Creation well. They are all signs of how we are called to be co-creators with God in ordering the chaos.

Jesus is the beginning of and the means to the healing and the restoration of all our relationships. You may recall from our series on Ephesians how the writer points out to the Church that we are painfully divided from one another. There is a dividing wall of hostility that ruptures and

undermines the beloved community to which we have been called. Our original sin of believing that we have no need of God, not only separates us from God, it adversely affects all of our relationships so that we no longer relate to one another, even to those closest to us, or to creation, or to ourselves, in the way that God intended. Recently we've seen those divisions

Jesus broke down the dividing walls that hinder true relationships and calls us into a new community, which we know as the church, where we can learn to love one another again. Flawed and broken as it is, the Church is intended to be a foretaste of God's Kingdom, God's beloved community. And God's Kingdom is a place, a space, where there are no walls, no divisions, nothing that separates us from one another or from God.

And Ephesians offers this beautiful image of Jesus as the cornerstone of the whole thing. He is the foundation and the key to our life together as Church. He is the norm for all our relationships. And as the cornerstone for a renewed humanity Jesus makes it possible for us to be at peace; at peace within ourselves, at peace with creation, at peace with God, and at peace with one another.

It's one of the reasons this Table is so important. The sacrament of Holy Communion is not an individual act of private devotion. This Table, our Lord's Table, is not about "me and Jesus." The Christian faith cannot be reduced to "me and Jesus". It's about me learning to live well with all of Jesus' friends.

This Table, points to that space within the heart of God, where the Father, Son and Holy Spirit make room for us. This Table is a reminder and practice for the kind of life we are called to live. When we gather here God is renewing our relationship with Christ and the relationships we have with one another. When we break bread together and share a common cup, when we do something as intimate as eat together in the name of Jesus, God is at work reconciling us to God and overcoming any divisions that separate us from one another.

When we come to Christ's Table we remember how Jesus' body was broken on the cross for us, for our relationship with God and with one another, and in our remembering of Christ's sacrifice, we are re-membered. The Holy Spirit at work in and through us makes us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world.

And this is crucial because the way we share life together, our relationships, the way we forgive one another, and support one another, and walk alongside each other, the way we love lets the world know that we are Christ's followers. Our relationships as the body of Christ is one of the ways we proclaim that God loves the world. "They will know you are my disciples if you have love for one another." (John 13:35) Maybe you thought all you were doing was sharing a little piece of bread and a cup, when in reality you are bearing witness to the good news that in Christ healing, reconciliation, and real, holy relationships are possible – with God, with yourself, and

with one another. And more and more that is a word this weary world longs for and needs to hear.

The Church will gather once again this afternoon to celebrate and give thanks for Grant's life. It was a beautiful thing, his being able to come to the Table with many of you. I remind you that as Christians we confess our faith in the communion of the saints. This means that when we gather at the Table of our Lord in a few moments Grant and all the saints who have gone before us gather with us. Because, in Christ nothing, not even death can break the bond of love which we share. We were made for God and for each other. Because remember, "...Father, Son and Holy Spirit...make room for each other. So a kind...of space lies within the heart of God – a space big enough for sinners and doubters just like us. A space that is large enough for the whole world."