

Creation 1C ~ Ocean
Peace, Seattle
June 6, 2010 epk

OCEAN

ERIK ~ FRAME

These four weeks of the SEASON OF CREATION are an experiment of sorts for all of us.

- Yes, we're following a liturgical form we're mostly familiar with;
- Yes, we're gathering around the Word of God – though some of the texts we'll hear this month will be heard for the every first time.
- And yes, we're gathering around the Table of the Lord, with Christ as both host and food.
- **But we're doing all this with a bit of a twist:**
- **With each theme, each week this month we're paying attention to the fact that...**
- (1) Not only wheat and grapes but ***the Earth itself*** is sacramental presence of God.
- (2) That our human voices are only part of the full chorus of praise to the Creator, which comes from every quarter of creation.
- And (3) the redemption / healing / salvation which God is up to in this world in Christ is much more than a human story; God's vision includes the whole of creation—the entire universe.

ELDON ~ RESPONSE...

- Take this journey with us to somewhat unfamiliar places, a cruise of sorts, with a way of communicating that's different.
- This is experimental for us - we both have a sense that this Season of Creation calls us to a 'new day;' to think differently, speak differently, and respond to the Gospel in different ways than we have.

ERIK ~ GOSPEL STORY

In our Gospel story, when Jesus got into the boat with Peter and his companions, he told them to put their nets out in deeper water. They followed his command and the abundance of fish signaled their entry into sacred space; they were on holy ground—or better yet, holy waters.

Elizabeth Moltmann-Wendell says that in order to gain access to the power behind and beneath Biblical stories we have to be willing use our imaginations again—and that through this imagining the Holy Spirit brings new life to interpretations and approaches that have become fossilized.¹

Today with the OCEAN as our theme, we invite you to activate your imaginations and to voyage with us into deeper water.

ELDON ~ RESPONSE...

Here's the invitation:

- to enter the realm of symbol and metaphor... It's not a very contemporary way of thinking;
- it's more like the language of poets and hymn-writer.
- It's what Paul calls us to as he writes of a mystery of God that is set forth in Christ, something that embraces all time and all things in heaven and on earth.
- The goal of delving into the mystery of Christ isn't to explain it or to describe it - it's to stand in wonder in a place we haven't been before. We've all sensed this at times.
- Imagine, for a minute, what in creation brings you to a sense of wonder.

¹ Elizabeth Moltmann-Wendell, *The Women Around Jesus*.

Silence for reflection

ERIK ~ OCEAN

Our lives are, and always have been, linked with the life and health of the world's oceans.

“The ocean is the lifeblood of Earth, covering more than 70 percent of the planet's surface, driving weather, regulating temperature, and ultimately supporting all living organisms. Yet for all of our reliance on the ocean, 95% of this realm remains unexplored and unseen by human eyes.”²

Like the salmon in Northwest rivers whose life rhythms alternate between river and sea, we trace our lives to baptismal headwaters. Third century church father Tertullian put it this way:

“We, little fishes, after the example of our ΙΧΘΥΣ [Savior Jesus Christ], are born in water, nor have we safety in any other way than by permanently abiding in water.”

Not only do we abide in water, we human beings are water—at least the majority of the human body is (55-78%, depending on age, and other factors), & **the way we interact with water matters.**

ELDON ~ RESPONSE...

In the first creation account in Genesis, God's creating begins with raw material of the ocean. There was no "Ocean day." It would appear that all things (flora, fauna, the earth, the heavens, etc.) were created in the separation of the primal sea.

The deep history of life on earth is that all of creation traces its origins to the primal sea – and that means all creation, all life, is our sister and brother.

ERIK ~ OCEAN

In her book, The Sea Around Us, Rachel Carson wrote:

“Each of us carries in our veins a salty stream in which the elements sodium, potassium, and calcium are combined in almost the same proportions as sea water.”³

In the Scriptures, the sea represents the unknown, the waters of chaos, threat, death. Yet it is through these waters that God works to bring not only bring order and beauty and variety, but also deliverance. It is the arena through which God's judgment and God's saving power are made real.

ELDON ~ RESPONSE...

John Hart says: the sound of the sea is creation at prayer – hear those sounds...

The taste of the sea is the taste of tears; the mystery of the sea today is that the sea is in pain.

ERIK ~ OCEAN

- We know what it means when Jesus calls us to serve the blind, the lame, the leper, the homeless.
- The same crisis is upon us, to respond with a ministry to the ocean...
- This is harder than ministry to person...we know what it looks like.
- Harder to define what compassion and conscience would look like for ministry to the realm of sea.
- That realm is undefined...science will tell us ideas, oil companies, fisherman, but we need to operate in the territory of the Spirit.

² From the NOAA – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration website: <http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/exploration.html>

³ Kathleen Norris, *Amazing Grace: A Vocabulary of Faith*. Riverhead Books: New York, 1998, p. 288.

ELDON ~ RESPONSE...

- Just as we listen in miracle text to the cries of a man born blind and we listen to the grace and healing presence of Christ, so we are called to listen to the sea in its struggles and pain.
- To recognize in the sea the voice of cosmic Christ calling us to same miracle.
- **Going deeper – what does it mean?** Recasting ocean as part of cosmic redemptive work of Jesus to which we are invited to be involved.

SO... Today imagine how the dimension of Christ embraces the sea.
What does that call you to in your ministry?

ERIK ~ CONCLUSION

We end this time not with conclusions, but with questions:

- How do I hear the ocean's message and tend to its tears?
- How can I grow in a sense of ministry/awareness, in response to the One who called me to put down my nets in a strange and new place?

ELDON ~ RESPONSE...

- Go to deeper places, go to more dangerous places, go where we've not been before.
- Get outside yourself - become instruments of a new humanity...
- Even the sea has limits, boundaries, even doorways.
- Yet the sea obeys the voice of Christ, hears the cries of the earth, and the call of Christ is the same: FOLLOW ME!