

Youth Sunday/Trinity Sunday, 18 May 2008, by The Almost Adult Class

The story of Genesis is one that we can take lessons from in many aspects of our lives. There is the most obvious one is the human duty to care for God's creations, but less obvious lessons in the readings are our duties to care for others and our community and to care for ourselves.

God put us on this earth as shepherds; shepherds of the earth AND the others living in it. God gave us the power to do what we want with it, it is our choice... to destroy and take for ourselves... or to save and nurture to make plenty. The way we as a class interpret this is that it is our responsibility, our job to care. There are many ways that a person can contribute to others; a very simple way to doing this is to help your community and the people within it. If your community is not suffering then help the people who are around and guide them in the way of the Lord. Recently our youth group went to first visit a less privileged part of D.C., which is a sad scene to take in when you see all the decay and help needed in this area. Fortunately there was the Samaritan Ministry to try and help people get back on their feet. I suggest all of you try and contribute to this administration in anyway because it is very fulfilling. Our trip was even more rewarding than we expected. Helping these people gave us a chance to realize we should be doing a lot more to help others. You may not always have to help the less

privileged but the people around you may need help too. We don't always need to help others in ways that benefit them in a material sense. One must remember when caring for others they must also watch themselves otherwise they will be the ones needing help; you must always keep yourself in mind. Work, school and just life itself are all stressful and we don't do enough for ourselves in between all of it. Teenagers in today's world are pressured to do so much and we don't think about our own well-being. We should rest or just take the time at some point to think. Just think about the world and the people in it, just open your mind and close your eyes. There was a time where that was thought was respected: where Sabbath was respected. There were the Blue Laws. A blue law is one restricting activities or sales of goods on Sunday, to accommodate the Christian Sabbath. People just stayed home and relaxed and rested. That's one interpretation of Genesis, because after God created the earth and all of mankind in 7 days, God rested (Sabbath) and we should follow that example for our own health and sanity in this crazy world that we live in.

In Genesis God creates the earth, and after each day he found that it was good. On the 6th day God created man in his image and commanded that we have "dominion over... every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

With this charge, God gives us power over the earth. Though out the

centuries, people have interpreted this to mean we can do whatever we wish with this power, however we must reexamine Genesis, and look back throughout the original text and expand upon this interpretation. This power should be used to protect God's creations and not destroy them. God created the Earth, and it was good, and he created humankind to watch over the earth and protect it, not to destroy it, it truly is in our power to change and expand upon the common interpretation of Genesis not only to have dominion over the earth but to have a duty to protect it. It is our responsibility to right the past wrongs we have committed because of this narrow interpretation. As Christians, and very fortunate people, we have the means and responsibility to change our world. And there are so many ways in which we can do that, right here at Redeemer and in this community

To start, there are lots of little things that we can all do that won't break the bank. For instance, simply having a level of awareness about the amount of electricity, water, and fuel you are using on a daily basis can cut down on energy wastage. When leaving your house, or even just a room, remember to turn off your lights and any appliances you won't be needing. Speaking of appliances, if you aren't using something, like a computer or cell phone, and it is plugged in, unplug it. Experts estimate that if you unplug all appliances not being used, you can save up to 20% of your energy bill. If we all saved

20% of our energy bill every month, and we all pledge this money to church, just imagine how many more organs we can buy!! Surely this is doing God's work. We believe that a higher level of awareness of just much we waste is part of being a good Christian.

Additionally, one of the simplest things we can do is recycle. Just put a bag next to your trashcan and it takes only one extra step to get to the recycling bin, that extra step could save some of the 453 million trees used to make newsprint each year. If the idea of greenhouse gases doesn't scare you enough, think of the poor little animals whose homes are being destroyed when we use up so much paper.

The Earth is in serious trouble due to global warming and greenhouse gas emissions. Basically God is sending us a wake up call, and we need to answer. So we ask you to wake up and smell the bacon, I mean, the greenhouse gases. The time has come to fix our mistakes, the time has come to start recycling, the time has come to be aware of our energy usage, the time has come to take that extra step to the recycling bin. Remember that as Christians it is our duty to protect, not to destroy.

Genesis may be ages old, but it contains a plethora of lessons that we can interpret and use in our society today. And it's very important that we re-examine these readings because over time, we forget the original intentions

of the reading. That can be dangerous when people interpret it so loosely that it causes us to act against God's intentions. And when we take the time to think about this; think about what's really important: God's Earth and God's people, we better the lives of ourselves and everyone around us.