

## **Open Your Eyes**

Genesis 1:1-8, 1:26-2:3

Rev. Dexter Kearny

Longview Presbyterian Church

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In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.

Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness God called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

And God said, “Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

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Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.” So God created humankind in God’s image, in the image of God they were created; male and female God created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”

God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that

creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so.

God saw everything that God had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that God had done, and God rested on the seventh day from all the work that God had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that God had done in creation.

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

There was darkness over the face of the deep. The opening words of this mythological story are some that I have skipped over again and again because they are so familiar. But they are all the more relevant today as we struggle in times that are full of violence against black and brown bodies by the institutions that are meant to keep us safe.

This darkness is not something we can just skip over. First off, this word has been used against our siblings of color in order to justify our violence. But in the Bible, it is not a reference to skin tone. In fact skin color as a means of determining worth was created by pale skinned folks in the 16th and 17th century in order to further their colonialist and greedy tendencies at the expense of people of color. Rather the darkness that is hovering over the deep here in Genesis might better be

translated as night or a place where it is difficult to see. This difficulty to see covers our eyes and makes us blind (either by choice or by ignorance). We, the white majority in America, have lived in this willful blindness and ignorance for far too long.

But God says “Let there be light.” And there is nothing we can do to stop it. There is nothing that the powers of sin and death can do to stop it. Let our eyes be opened to life and justice. Jesus continues this tradition and says “All authority in heaven and on earth have been given to me.” Nothing can stop the eye-opening light of God’s love and justice. Nothing can stop the life and resurrection of Jesus from tearing away the scales at our eyes.

The violence that is being done to black and brown bodies in this country is not new. This violence has over 400 years of history. This violence has infected our sense of justice through corrupt laws promoting slavery and segregation while allowing and promoting violence. This violence has infected our neighborhoods by separating people by class and skin color in order to perpetuate the wealth of the privileged few at the expense of the rest. This violence has infected our theologies by turning even words like darkness into terms of division and racism against people of color. This violence has affected us in so many ways.

But our God is not a god of violence. Our God is the God of creation. Look at this Genesis passage. “Let there be light.” “Let there be a dome in the sky.” “Let the earth bring forth life.” Let the waters teem with life.” “Let the earth be filled with living creatures.” Our God is a God of creation. And God saw this creation and called it good.

And God was not done. God made humankind in God’s image. This creator God made humans to go and create in this world. God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it...” The word subdue here is not meant with the negative connotations as we use it today (think about how our violent tendencies have screwed that up), but rather it shows that this good creation was not perfect. God wanted humans to have a say in creation. To be able to create cities and families and systems filled with love and beauty. But instead we have turned to violence over and over again.

The protests happening all over the country are a light streaming into our eyes. No longer will we be blind to the violence done against our siblings in Christ. God has given us creative power to address these wrongs and evils. We start by rooting out the biases and blindspots in ourselves. By repenting and then working toward justice. Letting the light of justice open our eyes. And simultaneously we work on the organizations and systems who continue to perpetuate the false

narratives of racism and we either reform them or we get rid of them. We work on our neighbors and family members who continue to share racist remarks at the dinner table by standing up and offering them new ways of seeing.

We have been given a chance to start listening to our siblings of color instead of telling them what they need. We have been given creativity from our creator God. Will we create structures of violence or structures of life? Our history has been violence. What will our future be?

I want us to stop here and give a space of silence for the violence in our country and the stark awareness of how our silence and blindness lets this continue. Let us turn to our creator God in this silence and ask for forgiveness for our silence and then ask for God's creativity to fill us so that we would be transformed more and more into God's image of love and justice and creativity. Let us be silent.

God in your grace. You hear our prayers O God.