**SERMON 1-12-2020**

**GENESIS 1:1**

In the beginning, God.

The Bible begins with the announcement: "In the beginning God created."

Not: "God sat majestic in the heavens."

Not: "God was filled with beauty and love."

God did something.

God created.

In the beginning, God went to work.

Everything - literally everything – begins here.

Genesis is above all a book about God.

Genesis is an account of his deeds.

God is at Work.

Genesis, actually the entire Bible, is the story of God at work.

God took time to create.

Why did God take "6 days" to create the heavens and the earth?

Creation was not instantaneous.

It was a process.

When he placed the animals on the earth,

          there was already food and water for them.

When he put fish on the earth,

          there was water which allowed them to swim, and provided food for them.

When he created the birds and flying creatures,

          there was air to support their flight.

Creation was a process.

Step by step God created the universe and the earth for all living creatures,

including the animals on the land, the birds of the air,

          the fish in the sea, and finally the humans in his image.

God saw all that He had made, and it was good, it was very good.

However, God had barely finished creating the universe when human

rebellion marred it.

Adam and Eve's rebellion and disobedience because they wanted to be like God,

Cain's calculated murder of his brother,

          the worldwide wickedness leading to the great flood,

          and human arrogance at Babel.

People disobeyed and evil spread throughout the world.

Yet God kept on working.

Adam and Eve were put out of the beautiful garden,

          but God made garments of animal skins for warmth and protection.

Cain was sent out from his family and his land,

          but God placed a mark on Cain so no one would kill him.

Wickedness had spread so far, God decided to wipe the people out,

          but He provided for Noah and his family, and the animals.

When people decided to build a tower to reach God, He confused their language,

          so they could no longer communicate and cooperate with each other,

          and they would no longer waste their time, energy, and resources,

          in an impossible effort to reach up to God,

          because God was already with them and among them.

When evil and wickedness filled Sodom and Gomorrah,

          God destroyed these two cities,

          but because Abraham pleaded with God,

          He led Lot and his family to safety.

Step by step, God tried to teach the people how He wanted them to live,

          and what He wanted them to do.

God works through a process to teach humans He is with them,

          and caring for them.

God has always been active in this world to overcome the effects of sin,

          and to teach us how to live as his children.

God invites us to also be a part of this process,

          so we can experience His presence, and His peace and joy.

In the Beginning God went to work.

And He has never stopped.

Throughout the Bible we read of God loving, guiding, healing, and forgiving us.

So, what do we do in response to God's love and care?

What if we went to work like God?

In 1897 Dr. Grenfell was in Boston.

Dr. Grenfell had listened to Reverend Moody preach 14 years before,

          and the result was, he had been converted to Christianity.

Dr. Grenfell learned that Rev. Moody was holding meetings

          in Tremont Temple nearby.

He had never talked to Rev. Moody person-to-person, so he went to his hotel,

          hoping to have the opportunity to spend some time with him.

When they met, Dr. Grenfell told Rev. Moody he owed his conversion

          to Christianity to him many years earlier.

"What have you done since?" was Rev. Moody's immediate question.

We learn how much God loves us and forgives us,

          But what have we done since?

God went to work creating the world,

          and has never stopped working.

He teaches us to love him and love our neighbor.

How are we doing?

Are we still working for God?

God invites us to participate in his work.

Are we accepting his offer?

We are called to imitate God,

          He never stopped working,

          and we shouldn't either.

Considering the state of the world, God's work is needed very badly.

And there is a lot we can do also.

One morning, the eminent philosopher John Dewey found his son in the bathroom.

The floor was completely flooded.

The professor began thinking, trying to understand the situation.

After working a few minutes his son said:

“Dad, this is not the time to philosophize. It is time to mop.”

If we look around our own neighborhood,

          we realize it is not the time to simply consider the problems,

          it is not the time to hold discussions about the problems,

          it is the time to mop,

          it is time for each of us to do whatever we can to make things better.

That is what God is calling us to do.

How different the world could be if we do what God is calling us to do.

The smallest deed is better than the greatest intention.

Even a child can do it.

A man was packing a shipment of food contributed by a local school

          for the poor people of Appalachia.

He was separating beans from powdered milk,

          and canned vegetables from canned meats.

Reaching into a box filled with various cans,

          he pulled out a little brown paper sack.

Apparently one of the students had brought something different

          from the items on the suggested list.

Out of the paper bag fell a peanut butter sandwich, an apple, and a cookie.

Crayoned in large letters on the bag was a little girl's name, 'Christy -- Room 104'.

One little girl cared enough to do what she could do.

She gave up her lunch for one hungry child she did not know.

It might not have seemed like much, but as the story was shared among the staff,

          they felt each of them could do at least as much as this child.

The contributions increased rapidly.

From the "Thank-you" notes a few weeks later,

          it really made a difference to many hungry people.

When we listen to God, and follow his example,

          we never stop working making a difference in the world.

In the beginning God went to work.

We simply follow him.

AMEN