

Pastor Jordan Gades sermon 9.8.19, Gen 2:4-25

I'd like to start today with a question. We're gathered today, rallying together, getting pumped up and excited for this new year of programming but How are we connected? That's what we are going to dive into today. So to truly answer this we are going to do something super Lutheran. Can you please put your two hands in the air? I know what you're thinking, this is the opposite of being Lutheran is, try to stay with me. The one hand we are going to hold God because God is essential to how we are connected and in the other hand we are going to have us. Ok you can put your hands down.

Ok first hand, God. How are we connected to God, and how does God connect us? Today we start our year long journey through the bible, from front to back. We're going to be answering this question all year but today's story puts one of the biggest parts of connection in the forefront. God is our Creator. God went so far that in the beginning God created something that wasn't God so that God would have something else to have a connection with. God wasn't Lonely, God wanted more connections. So God created us. Not only that but we hear today that we are the prize of this creation. Of everything in this world, we are the shining jewel on the crown of creation. So that's the beginning of our relationship with God. We see God as creating, shaping, forming us, on purpose and with a purpose, never by accident, the breath of God filling us up with every breath we take in. That is something incredible to think about. Every time we breathe in it not just air but life from God filling us up, every breath connects us to our creator. I'm going to go on a little tangent but I can't stop myself. The connection between breathing, God and our faith, and our own health is crazy. With the right breathing techniques, you can lower your heart beat, it can help you control anxiety and other emotions like stress, temporarily lower your blood pressure, you concentrate better, you have more energy and more alert, and the list goes on. Also, did you know that we, as like humanity, don't breathe right? We should be breathing like 4 to 6 times a minute. It gives us the most benefits and is the most efficient at 4 to 6 times a minute. And instead we are usually like 2 times that. Instead we are basically taking these tiny little breaths that are barely keeping us alive. I love to think about this from a faith point of view. We have physically forgotten how to take in, how to breathe deep what our God is actively giving us. So slow down and breathe, feel that connection to our creator as it fills you.

God is our caretaker. God created Humans to take care of creation but it's God who takes care of us. It's beautiful in this scripture from Genesis how God tends to us. Lays out this perfect world filled up with everything we could ever need to survive and thrive, to be safe and be happy. Almost everything that we would ever need. God knew something about us that we often ignore. God created us to need each other and to need God. We are not complete without those. So God joins us in the garden and walks with us. God creates over and over new creatures to inhabit this world with us. But none of them can fill this unique while in ourselves which only another person can fill. And so after creation is complete God stays and dwells with us, it says God takes on some sort of form that walks through the garden, can you imagine that place? Where everything is perfect, God walks around and sparks up conversations, all our needs taken care of. This is what God is working towards for us every day.

So these are some of the ways that we are connected to God. But how are we connected to each other. Jumping over to that other hand here. We can think of a lot of things. We are connected by just being here. We are connected by living in this community, by supporting the same sports teams, by going to the same places to eat and spending time together. We have shared experiences and shared hobbies. We love our amazing Minnesota summers and falls and know how to get the best out of its winter, even if it does drag on. We work next to each other, bump shoulders at high school football games, and raise wings at wing night at the 40 club. If we see each other so often, if we do so many things together, if we seem to like to many of the same things why do we feel so disconnected?

As Christians we have an answer. There is a force of Evil in this world that is working, always working to separate us. Always trying to drive wedges of fear and anger and jealousy in-between us. Separate us from this community of support, this community that gives comfort and laughs and life and joy. Separated we lose. And this force of evil is trying hardest at trying to separate us from God. To make us think we are best off by ourselves. Best by ourselves because we can trust ourselves and no one else. What a horrendous evil we face day by day. But we are being lied to. We are not separated at all.

There is something that I believe humanity. I like how it's summed up in this this song called Most People - song is about this girls struggling with perceptions of most people but the chorus goes like this.

And she thinks "most people don't talk enough about how lucky they are
Most people don't know what it takes for me to get through the day
Most people don't talk enough about the love in their hearts"
But she doesn't know most people feel that same way

We all know how lucky and blessed we are, and we also know how hard our lives are, how much love is bottled up within us and yet; and yet we just need to let those things loose. They need to be shared. We all know it. There is so much power in that sharing. In that connection.

I know Pastor Bob is famous for saying Good People, it will all work out. And he has been right every time he has said it. We aren't perfect, the world isn't perfect, but we have each other and are fighting for each other. And we are not alone.

Put those hands in the air again. God. Us. Move that God hand over to your Us. God always comes to us. God always joins us in all those things we are doing. Always reminds us that we are connected to a loving God and surrounded by an amazing family of faith. Now, as people joined with our God and each other we go out connected hand in hand to change this world. Amen.