



One Page Sermon

By Pastor Robb McCoy

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People of God, grounded in Scripture. Genesis 1:1-2:4

Have you ever watched a child play in the dirt? I mean really play in the dirt—without fear of getting their clothes dirty or their hair messy. They investigate every grain of sand, every speck of dirt. They look at the discoloration of their own hands, and push their palms together to feel the mud squish. They pick up a rock hidden in the ground and bring it into the light for the first time. They look at the specks, feel the smoothness or the roughness, and marvel at how far they can throw it. An uncovered worm is a delight, and a pill-bug meanders up their leg.

When I picture such a scene I am torn between delight in watching such a beautiful moment and anxiety in thinking of the mess the child is making. The curiosity and sheer joy of playing in the dirt is counter-balanced by my adult fear of dirt, germs, and messes. I wish that I could return to that childlike state of curiosity. I wish I could let go of my fear of dirt. I'm not neat-freak but still, I wish I could enjoy a moment like that with purity of heart and not worry about messes.

At some point we decided that dirt is bad. Dirty is unclean, spoiled, and contaminated. Yet dirt is the stuff of life. It is the rich soil which bears fruit, which allows for roots to sink deep and gain nutrients and moisture.

On the third day God made the dry land. Dirt. Upon that land God created the plants and animals of every kind. Genesis 2 tells us that it was from the dirt (in Hebrew, *adama*) that God created a human (in Hebrew, *adam*). From the formless void of chaos, God's voice set all things in motion. God's voice created the light and the dark, the sky and the sea, and the land and the oceans. At the end of every day, God looked at what was created, and God calls it "good." Genesis 1 reminds us that humanity is the culmination of all of Creation, and when it was all over, God looked at everything and saw that "it was supremely good."

In the beginning, God created the cosmos and called it good. It is this original goodness that we too often forget. While we cannot deny the presence of sin in the world and in our lives, we also should not deny the goodness with which we were created. We are rooted in the goodness of all creation that was given to us at birth. This is the grace of God that

precedes everything we know. God's grace precedes our sin. God's grace precedes our failures. God's grace precedes our fear and anxiety.

I look at a child playing in the dirt and worry about the mess. I worry that the baby might choke on a stone, or put a bug in its mouth. I worry about germs and infection. I worry about the cleanup and the ruined clothes.

Just like the sin of the world, all of these things are real. They should be considered. But God's grace comes before all of these things. God's grace gives us a chance to look at the child and see the curiosity, wonder, and awe. God's grace gives us a chance to see the original goodness of the dirt—the source of life.

We are a people of God. For the next few weeks we will be thinking about what it means to be a people of God. What does it mean to be a family of faith? I believe it begins with the dirt. It begins being grounded in the stories of God as found in Scripture. It begins with being grounded in the stuff of life and the original goodness of Creation.

We are a people of God grounded in Scripture. We are grounded in the stories of our faith that remind us of who and whose we are. We are grounded in the dirt of creation. Not dirty and contaminated, but the primary source of life. The first Psalm reminds us that being grounded in Scripture is like being a tree planted by a flowing stream. Its roots are deep. Its branches bear fruit. To ignore the Scriptures, to ignore the stories of God's grace, and to ignore the original goodness of creation is to be like a tumbleweed blowing in the wind.

We are a people of God. We are a people grounded in Scripture.

