

When I shared what scripture reading I chose for us to focus on today, I received the most curious of questions from a mentor. He looked over this creation story in Genesis and seemed concerned. He asked, quite puzzled: "how are you going to tackle the gender issue? This passage says God created man and woman. A lot of people interpret that as being against gender variant folks. Where does that leave someone like yourself?"

Well, I want to invite you to do a little visualization with me today. I want to encourage you to close your eyes for a moment and listen to your breathing. Now, listen to my voice.

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Imagine you are at a park. It is a wondrous day: the clouds are white, the sky open, the sun bright and warm on your face. As you take a walk you notice a young child. They do not seem to be in any sort of distress, but you do not see any indication of a parent. In fact, now that you are looking at them a little more closely, you begin to notice something peculiar about this child: the whole time you walk by they have their neck craned back, their chin lifted to the sky. As you walk about the park you notice that the child does not move. You go about your walk and when you come back, the child is still there, still looking up above.

You approach them, curious. Even after your walk, you have noticed that no friend has come to join the child. No parent has called their name. In fact, it is almost as if no one but you is able to notice this young person simply standing there with their eyes to the sky. Something draws you to that figure and you find yourself standing before them as they keep their eyes heavenward. At first you don't believe the child notices you until they speak.

"Do you love the colour of the sky?" they ask.

It's an interesting question, and maybe your first reaction is to say yes. Or to look up. What you notice is that the sky above you changes suddenly and rapidly. At first it is blue, but the blue gives way to an orange then a red, a magenta as the sun dips below the horizon. A deep murky colour takes over the sky before darkness. Then a pale green that fades back into sunrise. The warm sunshine now illuminates the child's face who then asks you:

"Which one?"

Feel free to open your eyes now.

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If we were to try and write every creation that God has made, we would never be able to stop writing. So when God sent the Holy Spirit to bring the good news to humankind, the Saints who made the writings we call the Bible were tasked with bringing human words to something that was beyond our human nature. Not to mention, many of them were flawed humans in their own way. To try and take concepts as large as the universe and make them understandable to us was no easy task, but it also meant that in the process we lost a little bit of nuance.

Our story in Genesis tells us that God called the light day and the darkness night. Within the two, however, there is dawn, morning, noon, afternoon, dusk, evening and finally night. Were these things not also made by our Creator?

Genesis tells us God created land and sea. Yet we have beaches, rivers, marshes, swamps, oasis and so many more where the boundary between land and water is not so sharply defined.

If we were to try and put all of what God created in these spectrums on paper, the story of Genesis would become long and impossible to follow. That is why the writer chose these short forms, these binaries. God made more than just one or the other, but to avoid overwhelming us, day and night, land and sea become shorthand to help us better understand.

Time and time again, however, we see that God exists in the spaces in between. This becomes clear when God reveals Godself through Jesus who is fully human and fully divine. Jesus occupies this brave and strange space that is impossible to bound into our rigid categories, our black and white, good and bad thinking. This is the sort of place our human thoughts struggle in. Though, are we really surprised that we can struggle so much to know the mind of God?

The Prophet Isaiah wrote that God told us: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says God. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8-9)

When God created humankind, we are told God made female and male. Much like with day and night however, it does not say God "only" made female and male. Much like the land and sea, we are not told that the beach and the marsh do not count as creation, we learn to accept these in between spaces as what God made. Like the sunset, like the beach, God made those of us who exist in the spaces inbetween. In this way we are beautiful, challenging, and breathtaking and as our existence shows just how many facets exist in creation and exist in God.

To be part of the 2SLGBTQ+ community does not mean to turn away from God, but to turn towards. It is embracing part of ourselves that was fashioned in God's likeness. God made humankind in their own image, and by listing humankind as female and male, we are not being told all that humans are, but rather getting the tiniest of glimpses into God, a being who transcends these categories. It is not that we as people who would identify as Queer do not fit in the correct boxes, it is that these boxes, in God's eyes, had never existed in the first place.

For those who still hold hesitation and uncertainty of your 2SLGBTQ+ siblings and their place with God, I offer this: God is a being of inbetweens, not of extremes. Jesus as both human and God shows this. Jesus' command to us is clear. Jesus tells us to love.

Jesus doesn't say love only if they are your friends.

Jesus doesn't say love only if they repent and become like you.

Jesus says to love your neighbor like yourself, but to also love your enemy in the same way.

Jesus tells us we will be known as Children of God if we emulate God's love. God who shines the sun on the righteous and unrighteous, who gives the rain to the good and the bad. (Matthew 5:43-47)

Those of us who experience love in ways outside of the dichotomy of men loving women and women loving men are Children of God. We experience and give the love God has shown us. Even though it may challenge others, even though people may stand against us, we also love those who disapprove of our differences. After all, Paul reminds us that judgment belongs to God and God alone. (Romans 2:1).

Happy Pride to all of my siblings in the 2SLGBTQ+ community. May you be safe. May you be Proud. May you embrace yourself as a Child of God. May you always know that you are loved.

And God saw that it was good.

Thanks be to God,

Amen