

Let It Grow (Sermon Song with Trinity Children): VBS Sunday

Genesis 1: 26-31; Psalm 148

The Lorax speaks for the trees and for all of creation. He is a mystical character who protects the forests and all its animals. He warns us about the repercussions of abusing the earth without conscience. His is the voice that reminds us that all of creation is interconnected and what we do to it matters. Is it just me, or do we need a Lorax these days? Not only to speak for not only the trees, but also the seas, the rivers, the mountains, the air, and all of the created order?

Every creature in land or sea.
Every mountain, sky and tree.
Made to live in harmony.
So we say let it grow.

Let it grow
Let it grow
You can't reap what you don't sow
Plant a seed inside the earth
Just one way to know its worth
Let's celebrate the world's rebirth
We say let it grow!

How is it that we have lost our sacred connection with the rest of creation? When did we forget that we too are creatures who live within nature and are governed by its forces? How have we allowed systems of greed and wealth and power to give us amnesia about the genesis of who we are? There can only be one reason why the water protectors who spoke for the land at Standing Rock were ignored so a multimillion-dollar pipeline could burrow its way across the Missouri River. There is only one reason why people with legislative power loosen regulations on the coal industries, not even allowing words such as “climate change” on their reports. There is only one reason why our Secretary of State claims that the melting of the polar ice caps opens “new opportunities for trade.” It is the mindset of powerful people who have forgotten their creatureliness; and who then make decisions for the rest of us while making enormous amounts of money for themselves. In just the last three decades we’ve put more carbon emissions into the air than the rest of human history combined—in the last 30 years! By the next five years our summers will have climbed an average of five degree warmer. Our biospheres are dying, our weather is becoming more and more extreme. Fires, floods, famine, climate refugees, growing disease and yet we keep consuming and dumping and exploiting our earth. How has this happened? There can only be one explanation for it: We have lost our sacred connection with God’s creation.

The air we breathe, the allergies.
The garbage filling up the seas.
How it brings me to my knees,
So we say Let life Grow.

Let it grow
Let it grow
Like it did so long ago!
It is just one tiny seed
But it's all we really need
It's time to change the life we lead
Time to let it grow!

In the beginning, when God created all of us in God’s image, God created us first and foremost as environmentalists whose main purpose was to take care of creation. This is how we were made to fit in with God’s blueprint for creation. Yet, too many times we’ve interpreted God giving us dominion over

the planet as to mean that we can freely exploit the earth's resources for monetary gain. Except, the Hebrew word here essentially means to have authority over. In other words, we have an authoritative presence over the earth, just as God has an authoritative presence over us and all of creation. You see, having dominion is about using our authority to foster creative life, not to destroy it. It is about blessing creation, celebrating it, and relishing in our connection to it, just like God does with us.

It's why this psalm is so important for us today. It is a critique for those who believe God put us in charge to dominate and exploit creation. The psalmist says all of creation praises God—all animals, all landscapes, all people in power broker positions, even the weather patterns are to praise God—and the psalmist reminds us where our appropriate place in doing so is. Not over and against the rest of creation but praising God alongside it. The psalmist calls us to take our proper place as creatures with the rest of creation. As earthlings who also rely on the earth; and who work to care for its harmony and peace.

The things we do can add up high
We might ask, "Well who am I?"
But in the end we have to try,
So we say let it grow!

Let it grow
Let it grow
Let the love inside you show
Plant a seed inside the earth
Just one way to know its worth
Let's celebrate the world's rebirth
We say let it grow!

There is one word the Lorax leaves us with. The word is "unless." "Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better...it's not." Unless we can see ourselves as an integral part of creation's web; unless we can look up and see ourselves in the garden of the galaxies; unless we can recapture our purpose as creatures who speak for and care for our common home, we will simply continue to watch its destruction.

The truth is, we may never see the end results, but that is the difference between being the creature and being the Creator. We are co-creatures, not the Creator; we are ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own. We plant the seeds in our children that will one day grow. And we continue to water the seeds already planted. What we do today matters for our tomorrows.

Unless. Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better, it's not.

The birds who sing
To wake each day
The fish who swim
The squirrels who play
In God's image we are made
To help to let them grow!

Let it grow
Let it grow
You can't reap what you don't sow
It is just one tiny seed
But it's all we really need
It's time to banish all the greed
Imagine all the earth could feed!
Let this be our solemn creed!

We say let it grow
(In Winston)
We say let it grow
(It's a brand new dawn)
We say let it grow
(In Winston)
We say let it grow
(It's a brand new dawn)