

June 27, 2021 The Helper Genesis 2:19-25

Dearly Beloved;

It seems here, that a lot has happened since last weekend. For one thing, the Session has met. It was an in-person meeting, outside on lawn chairs, on the grass east of the Church building. After a lengthy discussion, it was decided that we would not go back to in-person worship, until the province entered the 3<sup>rd</sup> stage of its recovery programme. Several things contributed to this decision. The first was the duty shared by us all, to keep people safe. Secondly, being inside the Church is by its nature not truly safe. The principle of shared air. And inside in the summer we know the Church Hall is the better of the two spaces to use. The sanctuary simply over heats. The Hall's capacity is limited if we socially distance. Hence, avoiding inside spaces seems wise at this time. The 3<sup>rd</sup> reason for delaying is that with the Delta variant of Covid-19 becoming the dominant source of infection in Ontario, the desire to have all of us having received 2 doses provided yet another reason to lengthen our time of providing the sermon in manuscript form, and virtually, via, The Sermon From The Dining Room Table. As the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage of reopening will shortly be upon us, I suspect we will be looking at in-person worship before September. Please be patient with those of us who make decisions. All of us never thought the burdens of service would lead us into a time when we would be continually considering, "is it safe enough for us to meet."

Most of you know Barbara's knee replacement surgery was rescheduled. At this point I can share with you, she

had her surgery on Thursday morning. She came home from the hospital by noon on Friday. Since that time she has been walking with increasing confidence, we changed her dressing this morning, and she is doing well. The principal task at this point is pain management, and her surgeon has provided her with drugs that do the job, although the joint is painful to move. I have just served her lunch, and my assessment is that we are both doing fine, given the circumstances. So let us turn to the Word, giving thanks to God for HIS grace and favour.

The creation story in Genesis 2 reminds us several times that the creation of man, the animals and the birds of the air, was from the elements found in the earth and the dust. I cannot read Genesis 2 without thinking of my professor at Knox College, who was responsible for teaching "Systematic Theology." Fifty years ago, a lot of ministers and other church leaders were extremely concerned about the influence of Darwin's theories, which were causing more and more people to think of life coming to be in a Godless universe. It is important to remember that Darwin himself, did not suggest that. In fact he assumed his thinking was in line with what Scripture teaches. Dr. David Hay, pointed out to us on a number of occasions, that the creation story in Genesis begins with an insight that the chain of living beings on this earth Biblically is that there is a linkage between them. That linkage is the hand of God, and the elements of the dust from which they were created. Food for thought.

In one of the great ironies of life, we have lived to see a time that more and more thinks of “creation” in terms of some form of Big Bang Theory.” And a comedy program on television has virtually assured that several generations will not quickly lose sight of that theory. It of course also accords with Scripture, in that at a point in time life burst upon the scene in forms that included variety, in a relatively short time line. I am and have always been more comfortable than many with the insights and discoveries of science, as coming at the questions of creation from a very different perspective than the Bible. The so called secular perspective seeks to understand detail. The faith perspective of Genesis is one which begins with the presence of a loving and gracious God who breathed life into the nostrils of HIS most treasured creation...humankind. Those two perspectives need not be at odds with one another.

It is certainly interesting that Genesis gives us a portrait of the naming process in which God brings all the creatures to the man that he might name them. I find myself asking the question, would anyone really question that ? Is there a language known to mankind in which the words that name everything from the ant to the tyrannosaurus rex, are not the words of mankind? The use of Latin for the names of species makes me grin. The scientists who felt the Roman Empire’s language deserved the right to such an application says more about modern man than it does about the ancients. Anyway, the claim of these ancient Scriptures to which we adhere is that God gave to man the task of naming the livestock, the beasts and the birds. It is surely a Genesis link

that says we are made in the image of God. As the Lord created by speaking words, so HE committed to mankind the task of recognizing and naming every bit of the created order from stone, to the dandelion, to the elephant.

And in using words to organize his recognition of the created order around him God, not the man, but God notices there is something missing. For Adam (and his name literally means man) there was no helper to be found. Two thoughts immediately spring to mind. From God's point of view, it was obvious there was something missing. The man walks the earth and does his work, and he is alone. And it is God's perspective not the man's (you will notice the man makes no complaint about this solitary existence), it is God's perspective that the man should have company, a companion, a helper.

And that is the second thought. God can see the man needs help. There are several ways to read that last sentence. I welcome all of them. When I met Barbara as a teenager on the edge of manhood, I was amazed at how her wisdom, her faith, her abilities and talents helped me be me, with my own measure of wisdom, and faith and skills and talents. I am not the first man to say out loud, the woman in my life, makes me a better man. I needed help, back then as a teenager, and I need help now, as a man looking at the distant end line of the end game of life. I needed help. And she has helped me in every way that it is possible for a woman, a lady to help a man. Of course it helps if you are aware you need

help!! And there is another insight. I do not believe there is anyone, who does not need help. I know I need, and did need, and will need the help that only Barbara can give me. And there are certainly times when she has demonstrated an understanding of my need for help, before I did. The older I get the greater my fear is that there is a chance I could be asked to handle life and its challenges alone...please God, no thank you to that option. I love the help I receive from my better half.

Now there is an insight! I do not know the specific origin of the phrase, but it makes sense from what the Bible tells us about the creation of the woman. God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. And HE took one of the man's ribs (made from the basic elements of the earth and the dust) and God closed up the surgical wound, and God made the woman from the rib. She is literally his better half. It is really interesting that Adam gets to name her as he got to name the bear and the rabbit. Now, I am not talking about her name Eve, but her being named woman. There are two notes at the bottom of the pages containing the balance of Genesis 2 and Genesis 3 that are really interesting. The name Adam is pronounced Adamah in Hebrew. It means man. And the name woman sounds like Adamah in Hebrew, but it means woman. I think that is a warning to any man who thinks males are superior to females, but surely so is the Biblical insight that the man alone, needs help and he finds that help in the partner God makes for him.

Wise husbands will read or hear that last statement and simply say, "Right!"

Let us pray;

Lord there is always something new to see, and something new to learn when we read the Scriptures. They lead us to YOU. We give thanks for the truth that we have a place in the order of creation because that is the way you made us. We are wired, such that we fit where we are. And sometimes we treat the rest of the created order as we were meant to do...as a caretaker, as a gardener, as one who understands we have the ability to manage the system, only when we remember, every part of the created order matters, serves a purpose, not necessarily our own, and definitely, YOURS, O God our redeemer, sustainer and friend. Receive our praise, and hear our expression of gratitude. Amen