



## **Creation One**

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Amos 8: 7- 7; Luke 16: 1-13

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I saw in What's Happening that I'm preaching on Creation, interesting – which version of Creation do you think I should go with? Made in seven days, Darwinian, Big Bang, ahhh, choices, choices.

Actually I'm guessing the reason for the word Creation is to mark the Season of Creation. Typically we celebrate it through September, coincident with the beginning of spring in the Southern Hemisphere, but we've slid it a bit this year. Greenfaith, an international interfaith organisation, has invited religious communities across the globe to join in a season of action to raise awareness of our Climate Crisis from 2 October to 6 November. Just before the G20 summit and the U.N.'s COP 27 conference.

So for three Sunday's, excluding St Matthew's day next Sunday, we're turning our attention to Creation. Perhaps not surprisingly we're going to pay attention to the state of the creation we call home. Before you duck and cover at what you might perceive as a guilt inducing salvo I want to invite you on a bit of a journey, just bring yourself along.

Recently I participated in series of workshops in my role as the chair of the Friendship House Trust Board. The workshops are part of the process of Friendship House becoming a Tiriti-based organisation and were co-presented by Emma Rawson and Adrian Te Patu.

Adrian gave a quick overview of the history of Aotearoa/NZ history and te Tiriti o Waitangi. One slide had on it the image of a koru. In the centre of the koru was the letter 'G'. In speaking to this slide Adrian spoke of the

impact on Maori of the arrival of Europeans. He commented that there were some good things that came of this and some not so good, it wasn't all bad. But, he said, on balance it didn't end up so well for Maori. Now this is being recognised, he said, we're working to find solutions to the problems, to fix what is broken, to make it good.

To help unpack this, Adrian then used this analogy. Imagine, on my way home I'm involved in a car accident, the result of which I lose both legs from the knee down. There's an immediate rescue response involving police, fire service, rescue helicopter, medical teams, hospital, surgeons and so forth, all attending to my physical needs. Over time I might move to rehabilitation care to learn how to manage, to live with missing limbs.

Adrian paused, and then asked us what word we thought the 'G' stood for. It stands for grief. You're alive, you're grateful to be here and now. But life is not as it was. It can never be as it was and there's enormous grief at the loss. It's been like that for Maori, it is like that for Maori, he proposed. Now we're recognising the problems we're busy trying to fix them, make good as best we can. But the deep, abiding and ongoing impact of the grief wrought by such loss remains unexamined.

I found it a powerful insight.

A week or so later when in discussion with Alan Broom, Rod Oram and Simon Wilson about the Climate Action event we're planning, it popped into my head again. It struck me to have application for us in face of the Climate crisis.

If we consider the sweep of history that's led us here, it's not all bad. Think of the advances in science, in medicine, in innovation and technology that provides us greater connectivity and unprecedented access to information. Though I'm not entirely convinced this makes us any the wiser at times. We've medicines to heal, technology to help us understand all manner of human and planetary intricacy and the fine balance of this planet. But our single minded pursuit of these things has led to a plundered earth. It's not all bad but on balance it hasn't ended up so well for our natural world.

In response we want to jump to solutions, use our innovative brilliance and technological advances to fix things, with the best of intentions. Of course, turning our mind, energy, technological and innovative skills this way is noble. But what if our intention, however noble, remains unexamined? What if our noble intention is seeded from the same fruit that got us to this place?

Let's consider. We're raised on aspirational stories, they indwell us. Myths and legends of heroes, who set out courageously, push the boundaries of the known world, valiantly overcome any obstacle along the way, and conquer and tame. Our scriptures tell of a chosen people who righteously take possession of land, who displace, despatch and replace people not like them. The God on their side enables them to prevail. Perhaps especially for those of us who've privilege of being a certain colour, of education, income or, dare I say it, societal class we learned early on to expect to have what we wanted, with scant regard for its impact. If we tried hard enough, knew how to work the system, the sky and our ambition were the limit. Success ultimately measured by the control we have by our power over.

We don't want things to be as they are. We don't want to think of ourselves complicit in the climate crisis. If you're anything like me you experience a whole swirl of emotions. Grief for the lifestyle we'll lose, for we like the way our life's been, grief at recognising the way we've been living's led us here, grief for we never **meant** to get it so wrong, to not be good ancestors.

Maybe such grief, left unexamined, engenders in us resistance, petulance in face of the reality we **must** live differently. Maybe such grief is source of that dragging energy its hard to move through, that persuades us of impossibility, tempts us with the balm of inertia. I wonder if we can gift ourselves the chance to sit with our grief.

It's, of course, incumbent upon us to **do** the solution thing. But Mother Nature is now demanding of us the kind of radical shift that requires us to be changed. Our usual kite of tools and tricks is insufficient. To enact

differently isn't just about changing what we think, for under stress we invariably revert to type, to instinctual behaviour.

There will be loss for us in this. It may not be as physically and immediately confronting as the loss of limbs. But to decide to pay attention to our intention, to decide **not** to track the same path will potentially dismantle our sense of identity. To understand ourselves differently means some rewiring, for us to be willing to forfeit our certainty and invite vulnerability.

In faith contexts like this we talk about risking being open and of such transformative stuff. We dare to suggest this is actually a thing, an active choice. We propose that through this risky process of vulnerable uncertainty or transformation we're held, sustained and always beloved by God. And we say we with walk with each other along the way.

I invited you on a bit of a journey, these three Sundays of the Season of Creation. Between this Sunday and the next we meet, I invite you to reflect on this idea of grief in context of our creation - for what was, what is, what is now required of us. Maybe also to notice the stories that thread through, perhaps inform and motivate your choices to act, to behave in the way you do.

And remember, if we're recognising there are things that cause us grief, let's be gentle with ourselves – **this** isn't a conquering hero journey.