

## Introduction

Check-in & Introductions

## *The Mountains*

## Old Testament Lesson

Isaiah 65:17-25 (NRSV)

<sup>17</sup> For I am about to create new heavens  
and a new earth;  
the former things shall not be remembered  
or come to mind.  
<sup>18</sup> But be glad and rejoice forever  
in what I am creating;  
for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy,  
and its people as a delight.  
<sup>19</sup> I will rejoice in Jerusalem,  
and delight in my people;  
no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it,  
or the cry of distress.  
<sup>20</sup> No more shall there be in it  
an infant that lives but a few days,  
or an old person who does not live out a lifetime;  
for one who dies at a hundred years will be considered a youth,  
and one who falls short of a hundred will be considered accursed.  
<sup>21</sup> They shall build houses and inhabit them;  
they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.  
<sup>22</sup> They shall not build and another inhabit;  
they shall not plant and another eat;  
for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,  
and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.  
<sup>23</sup> They shall not labor in vain,  
or bear children for calamity;  
for they shall be offspring blessed by the LORD—  
and their descendants as well.  
<sup>24</sup> Before they call I will answer,  
while they are yet speaking I will hear.  
<sup>25</sup> The wolf and the lamb shall feed together,  
the lion shall eat straw like the ox;  
but the serpent—its food shall be dust!  
They shall not hurt or destroy  
on all my holy mountain,  
says the LORD.

## Psalm

Psalm 48:1-11 (NRSV)

<sup>1</sup> Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised  
in the city of our God.  
His holy mountain, <sup>2</sup> beautiful in elevation,

is the joy of all the earth,  
Mount Zion, in the far north,  
the city of the great King.  
<sup>3</sup> Within its citadels God  
has shown himself a sure defense.  
<sup>4</sup> Then the kings assembled,  
they came on together.  
<sup>5</sup> As soon as they saw it, they were astounded;  
they were in panic, they took to flight;  
<sup>6</sup> trembling took hold of them there,  
pains as of a woman in labor,  
<sup>7</sup> as when an east wind shatters  
the ships of Tarshish.  
<sup>8</sup> As we have heard, so have we seen  
in the city of the LORD of hosts,  
in the city of our God,  
which God establishes forever. *Selah*  
<sup>9</sup> We ponder your steadfast love, O God,  
in the midst of your temple.  
<sup>10</sup> Your name, O God, like your praise,  
reaches to the ends of the earth.  
Your right hand is filled with victory.  
<sup>11</sup> Let Mount Zion be glad,  
let the towns of Judah rejoice  
because of your judgments.  
<sup>12</sup> Walk about Zion, go all around it,  
count its towers,  
<sup>13</sup> consider well its ramparts;  
go through its citadels,  
that you may tell the next generation  
<sup>14</sup> that this is God,  
our God forever and ever.  
He will be our guide forever.

## Bible/Sermon Focus

Our Old Testament text for this week is an apocalyptic vision found in the book of Isaiah. The book of Isaiah is thought to have been written over a few different generations by different authors of the same community. Trito-Isaiah (or Third Isaiah) is from the post-exilic era, when the people of God who had been exiled to Babylon were allowed to return home and begin rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem. As the prophet reflects on his own people's restoration, his vision carries us to a future time when all of creation will be restored and redeemed. In this future there will be no crying, no infant mortality, no death by unnatural causes. The land will produce good fruit. People's work will be valued and workers never exploited.

It is a beautiful vision. And as Pastor Andy pointed out in his sermon, one that most young folk who are inheriting the earth, cannot see.

As we have been moving through the season of creation a theme of embodiment keeps surfacing. The treatment of human bodies and the treatment of the body of our planet seem to go hand in hand. In our story from Isaiah today, it was when the people, the actual bodies of people were free to return home from exile that they were able to begin to freely imagine a future creation. When their bodies were at peace, they could envision peace. I find myself deeply curious if there is a connection between the things we put into our bodies, the spaces our bodies occupy (and if they are safe or not), our health....and the health of the planet.

This is our last sermon in the season of creation, the youngest of the liturgical seasons. There is something about young people, some audacious spirit that empowers them to call it like they see it and ask the hard questions, and to demand of the rest of us some accountability (often to the extent that it seems a bit unfair). But there is also a beauty in this youthful spirit that we find in every single generation. I wonder how well the rest of us will listen? I wonder if we will take the voices of our children seriously?

## Discussion Questions

1. Do you like the Season of Creation? Why or why not?
2. How do the baptismal promises you've made (of our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service, and our witness) speak into how you care for creation?
3. When voices call for accountability around environmental concerns do you witness to them living into *their* baptismal vows?
4. What is the correlation in your life between how you feel and how you envision the future?

## Prayer

God of Creation, help us to lead the lives that embody your holy mountain. Help us to climb to the peak and see out over generations to come. Remind us that we are stewards for the next set of your children who will also be part of the great cloud of witnesses. Let our lives be lived in ways that will help those who are to come after us. Amen.

*"Jesus not only taught about this vision of 'the way it should be,' his life was the vision's inauguration. And the work of the Holy Spirit is the ongoing building of this 'new creation' that we refer to as Mount Zion, the holy mountain of the Lord."*