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Genesis 1:26-31

²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

²⁷ So God created humankind in God’s image, in the image of God, God created them; male and female God created them.

²⁸ God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” ²⁹ God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. ³⁰ And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. ³¹ God saw everything that God had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

There is a lot of talk about food right now. Not just about our recent bake sale, or our recent BBQ lunch and pie auction. But the subject of food is all around us. Pastor Travis shared with us a text out of John a couple weeks ago of what the disciples did after Jesus rose from the

grave. The same story is in Luke only Luke adds one interesting detail to the end. You remember the text. Jesus has risen. The disciples, being frightened, hid in an upstairs room behind locked doors. He told of how Jesus appeared in the room among them, how he showed them his wrists and the hole in his side. But then, in the very next verse, Luke writes, Christ asked them, “Have you anything here to eat?”

It’s not unusual for Jesus to eat with people, so we’ll continue. World Health Day was Tuesday, April 7th. World Health Day is a global health awareness day. A different theme is selected each year. This year’s theme was Food Safety Awareness. Our JYF, third through fifth graders, met that Tuesday afternoon on World Health Day and we briefly discussed over their snack time one simple way they could make the fruits and vegetables they eat safer. And that’s by washing their foods before they eat them.

The talk of food doesn’t stop there. This past Wednesday was Earth Day, a day we set aside to honor the earth and all the good that comes from it. The Sunday closest to Earth Day is reserved as Earth Sunday, which we are honoring today. Churches across denominational lines, Disciples being one of them, celebrate and honor one of the greatest gifts God has entrusted us with, the earth. And what is this year’s Earth Sunday theme? Sustainable food.

Everyone is talking about food right now. Jesus asked if the disciples had any food, The World Health Organization is focused on food

safety, Earth Sunday is honing in on sustainable food. Social media is booming with food related posts, from celebrities participating in the SNAP program to famous chefs only serving local in-season items on their menus. The Pope this week stated food is not only a moral issue, but a human rights issue. And from perusing through Netflix's, Amazon, and Hulu, the shift in the number of books, documentaries, TED talks and mom-blogs supporting a change from processed and refined foods to real whole foods is at an all time high.

I don't need to explain to most of you the value of our food. Or why it is such an important topic of conversation. And this may seem silly to a few of you, but foods like many of you are currently planting or planning to plant; tomatoes, carrots, cucumbers, peppers, leafy greens, peas, berries...they are making a come back throughout our country right now. It does seem silly, to say real foods, vegetables, fruits, grains, are making a come back. But with our fast paced lifestyles, more and more of us, especially my generation and younger, do not know where our food comes from. I watched a clip on Youtube of someone asking random strangers on the street where certain everyday food items come from. What plant does this come from? What kind of tree does this grow on? Some of the questions weren't even of items grown on trees to begin with. It is amazing how little we know about the foods we eat. How little contact we have with our food. How we often take for granted the process our food has taken prior to it being on our plate. We forget the journey is much longer.

Travis and I have decided that our children need to learn that journey our food takes, from seed to plate. From tilling the land, planting the seed, receiving water, sunlight, time, hopefully few bunnies, insects, or other animals, the waiting, and then to harvest, cook and eat! We have decided to try our hand at planting a small garden this summer so they can see what it takes for various things to grow. So they can experience that process firsthand and build that respect for food and our earth. I feel quite certain our experiences will be reported back to you. But when you have a hand in growing the plants, the foods are not only more exciting, they taste better.

Dan Barber is a world renown chef that lives and works in New York. He's good. He has received the James Beard Foundation Top Chef in America award. And his love for food has taken him all over the world to taste the best of whatever foods he hears about. The best fish, the best goose, the best (you fill in the blank). But he doesn't simply taste the foods. He visits where the food is coming from. He learns how the balance of the earth, the ecosystem is reflected in how the food looks, feels and tastes. How the food, given the right environment, is optimally delicious. His work in educating people about the foods they eat has even won him the title of one of the world's most influential people in Time Magazine's annual 100 list.

Given all these discussions on food, combined with the interviews of people not knowing what real food really looks like or how it's grown, I have to ask the question, do we care about our food? Are our lifestyles so busy that we throw real whole foods out the window? Do

we care so little about our food, that as long as boxed and prepared ‘food like substances’ are readily available, we don’t care where or how the food got there? Or do we care enough about our food to learn more about it?

I think we care. I think we enjoy eating a fresh heirloom tomato, a juicy watermelon, a farm fresh egg. Our fascination of everything food, each of the examples I’ve mentioned today, is proof that people really do care. We care about our food and about the earth. We respect nature and the balance of the earth. We understand how our food grows and the nourishment the earth gives to our food for our bodies to receive so we can thrive. We respect a safe and sustainable habitat, one with worms, bees, birds and butterflies; one with very hungry caterpillars and hopping bunnies. We respect the rain and the sunlight, the soil and the seed, the harvest and the tasting.

As [Worship Leader] read, one of the first things God gave us was entrustment over the earth and all living things, plants and animals. We were given this sacred gift to sustain life. We were entrusted with the earth; a home not only for us, but a home for our food, a home that nourishes the plants, the animals and all the people. The earth is alive. When we love our earth, we are loving ourselves and we are honoring God’s gift to humankind.

Amen? Amen.