**Proper 22B ♦ Mark 10:2-16**

*From the beginning of Creation God made them Male and Female...*

Jesus offers the reminder that God’s intentions toward humanity and creation are full of blessing and mercy from the very beginning. Humanity is made in the image of God, and given lasting companionship which is intended to mirror God’s own communal nature. Creation is provided with stewards who are to represent to each other and all creation compassion and love in “the image of God”.

We don’t choose to be stewards any more than we choose to be born; stewardship is part of our identity. Our only choice is what kind of stewards we will be. A faithful steward knows that what is entrusted belongs to another, and must be used for the good of all. Our faithful stewardship is rooted in the awe and gratitude of God’s stance toward us – a stance of blessing and abundance.

The life God has given us is overwhelmingly generous. We have the capacity to perceive beauty in the world; to relish colors, fragrances, sounds, the changing of seasons, the variety of life. It need not have been so, but it is. We have the ability to forge bonds of affection and love. It need not have been so – we could have been created to function on instinct, but we have been created for greater things – blessed things.

God also gives without strings. The charisms of leadership and invention, for example, have been used for great good or ruthless evil, and yet God has not removed these gifts from among us.

God gives sacrificially-- and let’s not limit our notion of God’s sacrifice to the death of Jesus on the cross. What did it cost God to create us with freedom? What has been the cost of enduring human indifference and rejection over the ages, or the rejection and execution of the Incarnate One?

That God is determined to bless us seems abundantly clear; the biblical record is filled with accounts of God’s pursuit, God’s longing for us to live in the blessings of love. The Resurrection, after all, is God’s response to humanity at its worst, and the message in the Resurrection is this, “There is nothing you can do – no cruel, evil thing - that will make me stop loving you.” Blessing indeed!

Such generosity always requires risk – but it is our call to take that risk, remembering that we are provided more than enough to accomplish our vocation of being blessings to each other in God’s image and name. When we open our hearts and arms and advocate for those who are powerless, we are sharing the Good News of God’s blessing for all. May it be so!

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**Reflection Questions**

- What does it mean to you to serve as a Steward in God’s image?
- How do you value your own blessedness and the blessedness of others?
- What risks are you willing to take to live into your call to be a blessing to others?