

We break boundaries too. Maybe because we think we know better - we reason that it will be in our best interest. Perhaps it's because we think the rule was unjust in the first place, arbitrary, or unnecessary. Maybe like young Cade we just can't help ourselves, or we're too focused on ourselves in the first place. Things get out of whack. The earthlings are no longer helpers, but want to dominate the animals and one another. We go to war. We destroy good land, and oppress those who are different than us to feel powerful or right, or to get what we want. We take what is good, and use it to divide and separate.

Walter Bruggeman writes that "the human condition before the Divine is characterized by vocation, permission and prohibition." Getting these three in balance - holding all three together is our lifelong struggle.² We all have a role or roles to fulfill. We have work to do in caring for our neighbors, living in accordance with the scriptures, to care for the world God made, to love God and one another, to share the good news, to work for justice and peace. We are reminded of these in our baptism, but not before hearing that we are forgiven and washed in God's grace, eternally redeemed, marked with the cross of Christ, and sealed by the Holy Spirit. We have already been welcomed into God's grace-filled arms, and are freed. What great permission we have to live as the body of Christ. And yes there are consequences when we disobey God's commands. When we cross boundaries and hurt the ones God loves, we feel the weight of our actions. We get hurt. We break relationships. We can lose ourselves all together. Then, like the first humans in the garden, fear and shame take a hold of us.

We've always been naked before God.

² Walter Bruggeman, *Interpretation Commentary: Genesis* (Atlanta: John Know, 1982), 46.