May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be acceptable to you O Lord, our creator, our sustainer and our redeemer. Amen.

This morning’s reading from Genesis has had me thinking a great deal over the past few days about the idea of a mirror. A mirror. Specifically, I’ve been considering the many mirrors we encounter in life, and the many ways in which each one of us ... you and I ... act as mirrors. I’d like to take a few minutes to share some thoughts I have about this.

**Thought number one.** In their book *The Vision of Islam*, an outstanding introduction to the history and tradition of one of the three significant Abrahamic faiths, the writers Sachiko Murata and William Chittick write, “Each thing in the universe, ourselves included, is like an image in a mirror. The object that throws the image is the divine Reality, the source of every positive quality, the one who displays the signs.”

In short, **all of creation** – extending to you and me and everyone who has ever lived – is a pale reflection of divine attributes ... and within each and every part of creation you will find a bit of the holy.

This was one of the most fascinating concepts that I picked up in a class on the Quran that I took while in seminary, and it goes to the heart of one answer to a question with which people occasionally wrestle: “Why did God create us?” This one response is simple, but powerful: **God created us out of love.** As parts of creation and as the images in the mirror described by Murata and Chittick we were brought into existence to **reflect that love.** Every living thing that has ever existed ... all that was brought into being in the six days of creation and all that has been in succeeding generations and millennia ... **was** and **is** here to reflect God’s love back to God, and to reflect back the bit of the holy found within each one of us.

**Thought number two.** Yesterday, I was honored to stand as a presenter for a long-time friend as she along with nine other men and women was ordained a transitional deacon by Bishop Susan. (You may recall that it was as a transitional deacon that I first came to this church almost three years ago.) As I thought about the journey my friend Colleen has been on ... indeed, as I thought about the journeys of all of those standing before the bishop ... I considered how each of them is a mirror reflecting all they have lived and everything they have experienced.

They reflect back to the world the love and support they have received from family, friends, colleagues and professors so that others may see it. They reflect back to the world all of the education and wisdom they have gained from this process so that others may see it. They reflect back to the world all of the deep emotions they have felt in their journeys through this world ... all of the apprehension and all of the joy ... so that others may see it.

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Thought number three. We come to the four brief verses from today’s Old Testament reading. Less than one fully chapter after being someone buried in a lengthy genealogical list, Abram has now been singled out by God to take his place in the center of an important event. “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you.” There is no preemptive conversation or lengthy dialogue with God. God simply and directly says, “Abram, pack up and go.”

Keep in mind this is no ordinary request. God isn’t asking Abram to simply stand up and stroll over to the next block, or even to walk down a few streets. God is telling Abram to give up everything. Your land, Abram … and your birthplace … and your father’s house. I want you to take everything you know and every place that is familiar … and leave it all behind. God isn’t any more specific other than to say Abram will go somewhere he will show him. There’s no roadmap and no certainty when or how the journey will end. Abram doesn’t even say a single word in response to this directive.

God says “go,” and Abram goes … no questions asked. Isn’t this what we might consider an ultimate example of faith in action, “Believing the promise without any visible evidence”?

But there’s something else important here that Abram is being asked to do. He is being asked to reflect the treatment he receives from others … but what Abram as mirror will be reflecting back is the action of God. “The Israeli biblical scholar Moshe Weinfeld has aptly noted that after the string of curses that begins with Adam and Eve, human history reaches a turning point with Abraham, as blessings instead of curses are emphatically promised.”

Allow me to adjust the wording just a bit: Those who bless you will have blessings reflected back on them, and the one who curses you will have a curse reflected back on them. Be careful when you gaze into the mirror of Abram.

I wonder too how our thinking might be different if we take one of the most famous lines in all of the New Testament … one heard in this morning’s reading from John … and consider it in light of these three points. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.”

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son as a reflection of that love, so that everyone who believes in him … everyone who looks in the mirror that is Christ and sees the goodness and love and forgiveness and redemption of God within themselves … may not perish but may have eternal life.

Jesus as Son. Jesus as sign. Jesus as mirror. Jesus as reflection.

I have a challenge for each of you as you go out from here this morning. First, I’d like you to ponder what you reflect to the world in all you do. In your work and in your rest … in your silence and in your prayer … in your conversations with one and in your interactions with many ... what do you reflect back, to the world and to God?

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2 Genesis 12:1 (NRSV).
5 John 3:16 (NRSV).
Second, what do you see reflected back to you from others? In your encounters with others ... in the way you approach them and the way you act towards them ... what do you find being reflected by them? And what does what you see in the mirror of others say about how you are showing God to the world?

Each thing in the universe is like an image in a mirror. Each one of us is a mirror. What are you seeing ... and what are you showing?

Amen.