

Rev. Todd R. Lattig / General

A NEW CREATION / Earth; World; Creation / Psalm 104:5–24

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Focus Statement

- As human beings, we tend to think the world revolves around us!
 - As scripture opens our eyes to the fullness of God's creation,
 - let us consider a shift in perspective.
 - We are but one part of God's magnificent creation.
 - What does creation tell us if we listen?

Things to Consider

- Friends, reflect on the ways you experience yourselves as part of the environment
 - or how you learn from plants and animals.
 - For instance, some of you may be naturalists in who think of themselves as gardeners and animal lovers.
 - Some of you may have hunted in the past...
 - Hunters are often allies in wanting to defend animal habitats
 - and have spent a lot of time in the natural world learning about the very animals they track.
 - Our church has had a blessing of the animals in the past,
 - acknowledging that God blesses all of creation and so should we!

- I, myself, members may have chosen to be vegan...when I am being good...and vegetarian otherwise...
 - partly because of my health...
 - but I'd be lying to say there isn't an ethical component...
 - as I do not like supporting the factory farm industry.
 - Even if you do eat meat, you can get your meat from local farms...
 - which are more ethical in their practices than the giant factory farms.
- [Psalm 104](#) and many passages in the book of Job
 - offer us a perspective of humanity as a part of God's creation,
 - not merely the rulers over the rest of creation.
- God as Creator and Sustainer is stressed throughout the psalm.
 - God created humankind, but as the psalm poetically declares,
 - God also created the earth,
 - the waters of the earth, the wild animals,
 - birds (including storks, wild asses or donkeys,
 - wild goats,
 - coney or rabbits,
 - young lions
 - and all the animals of the forest),
 - cattle, the trees of the field, the cedars of Lebanon and fir trees.
 - Not only is God the Creator,
 - God cares for and provides for the needs of all of God's creatures.
 - God provides drink for every wild animal,
 - trees in which the birds have their nests,

- grass for cattle and plants for people to cultivate,
 - the trees of the field are watered abundantly,
 - and even predators such as lions cry out to the Lord for sustenance.
- In God’s wisdom (*hokma*, in Hebrew),
 - God has created all.
- Today’s passage from Job also reminds us of our place in creation.
 - We need to learn to turn to the animals who will teach us,
 - the birds of the air will tell us,
 - the plants of the earth will teach us,
 - and the fish of the sea will remind us that
 - “the hand of the Lord” has created us all
 - and that the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being are in God’s hand.
- Although today’s passages do not include a Gospel reading,
 - reminders of God’s care for all created beings can be found in passages such as [Matthew 6:28-30](#) and [Matthew 10:29](#).
 - Jesus is present with us in all Creation.
 - Consider, too, the words of “In the Garden” (UMH #314):
 - and
 - “he walks with me and he talks with me and he tells me I am his own.”
- This beloved hymn expresses what so much of us experience when we are truly present in nature.

- We experience the resurrected Christ!
- In this season of resurrection,
 - there are signs of new life all around us:
 - trees beginning to flower and baby birds in new nests!
- J. Clinton McCann, Jr. makes several valuable observations in his reflections on [Psalm 104](#)
 - in the New Interpreter's Bible Volume IV, Abingdon Press: Nashville (1996).
 - He notes that “the origin and destiny of humankind is inextricably tied to the origin and destiny of the earth (p. 1099)” \
 - and reminds us of the etymology of the word *human* from the Latin *humus* or “soil.”
 - He notes that “everything we do has an effect on God’s world and thus on God (p. 1099).”
 - He also makes several valuable observations (p. 1100)
 - about the importance of “praising God” as the beginning of environmental consciousness.
 - [Psalm 104](#) is a psalm of praise.
 - The words, “Bless the Lord, O my soul” are found in verses 1 and 35 with the last words,
 - “Praise the Lord.”
 - Although these verses are not included in today’s reading,
 - they are an important part of this psalm.
 - McCann contrasts this praise-centered approach
 - with an environmental consciousness born of fear in which our primary concern is ourselves.
 - Although many humans in our time think that nature is there to serve us,

- we are meant to serve God’s creation.
 - We live in a time in which our human arrogance in thinking ourselves able to “save the world,”
 - independent of our Creator,
 - has resulted in devastating imbalances in the world
 - that are most deeply and tragically experienced by creatures with no advocates
 - and humans in our society who do not have the resources to deal with the effects of climate change,
 - limited and impure water sources,
 - food deserts,
 - and polluted air.
 - Many of these changes are the result of human greed
 - and a lack of understanding of the consequences of our actions.
- I want you to reflect on your reactions to the news we hear every day about the effects of climate change,
 - loss of habitat and species extinction,
 - and other frightening stories.
- Often, we feel overwhelmed and lose hope
 - and along with that the will to make changes in our lives
 - that might lessen the bad effects of humans on our environment.
- As a first step, what are some ways that you can find time to appreciate God’s creation?
 - This might include walks in natural settings,
 - time in a garden,
 - or time with a park naturalist.

- Birdfeeders and native plantings that attract native species of insects, moths and butterflies
 - make us more aware of the diversity of our local area.
- This is a great time to remind you, new and seasoned alike,
- that the life of faith is about more than going to church,
 - and that worship can happen anywhere, especially in natural settings.
 - Loving creation is a way of loving the author of creation
 - and appreciating the good gifts God has given.
 - Loving creation can also motivate us to make changes to better care for our environment.
- As a Christian community,
 - we have the opportunity to come together and praise God.
 - This praise is an important part of remembering that God asks us to be caretakers of this incredible world.
- Friends, our church has taken steps to be better stewards of our natural resources and of God's planets.
 - For instance, in the past we've installed Solar Panels which cut down the amount of fuel-based electricity we use.
 - This not only saves us money by generating energy from the sun...
 - But it also makes us partners in using renewable, clean energy.
- There are plenty of other ways in which we can praise God for God's creation...including us who are a part of it!
 - Let us, as we move forward together, begin to see all of God's creation as that which we serve! Amen? Amen!