

Trinity 13, 2015
Beauty Everlasting
Psalm 104 – The Glories of Creation
St. Andrew’s Church – Jacksonville, OR
By Rev. Mr. William Baker

Today’s psalm gives an incredible vision of our Lord and his compassionate care for all that is in the earth. The writer has captured a beatific vision that has its start in the very creation and ends with the comfort...that all things are under God’s divine power and control. But, here we are in the midst of our lives and we can see the continuing affects of the fall...the beauty of His creation has lost much of its luster through the ages. And yet we seem to have an innate understanding that all that has been distorted or damaged will be corrected and brought back to God’s original intentions. We have a hope, that along with our redemption so to will the beauty of our home be restored.

The Psalmist reminds us that nothing will be lost; that the original creation that God beheld as ‘good’ is still there under the dinginess of man’s sins. What we need are eyes to see...eyes that can capture the beatific vision not only of a real deliverance from sin, but of eternal lives endued with all the glories of Heaven and earth. And it is in today’s Psalm that we can find the kind of hope that will open our eyes to this reconciliation, that we will be able to see the restoration of God’s beauty in the world.

“Praise the LORD, O my soul: ...thou art become exceeding glorious; thou art clothed with majesty and honour. Thou deckest thyself with light as it were with a garment, and spreadest out the heavens like a curtain. Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters, and maketh the clouds his chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind. He maketh his angels winds, and his ministers a flaming fire” (Psalm 104:1-4)

What an incredible description of the Almighty at work! We see in the first four verses that God has not only clothed himself with the garments of nature, but has His dwelling in the forces of nature. In the beginning God said; *“let there be light and there was light.”* This light, that gives life to all creatures, becomes the very vestments of God. The waters, the clouds and the winds become his agents to carry out His will and fire and flame...the refiners of his judgments. And out of the chaos (vs. 6-10) he set the

foundation of the Earth and by the thunder of his voice commanded the waters to separate above and below.

What an incredible picture of the Creator himself! It is evident, that the creation is not separate from the Almighty and what he has created is perfect in function and in beauty. What the Lord has established...he controls...what he has set in motion, he has joined to himself. He has created a perfect harmony that cannot be disturbed...right? Of course he did, He's the Almighty! but...like all parents must one day do...after we have done our parts...responsibility is handed over to the next generation. And so, the Lord, after preparing a place for us, puts mankind in charge over everything pertaining to the earth. And all was well in the beginning. We see in Genesis 2 God putting Adam in the garden and giving him charge, "*to dress it and keep it.*" Here is man's chance to maintain the perfect nature God has handed him but, by chapter 3 deceptions enter into the heart of man and all of creation will suffer for it.

Now, in recent days a term has come to the forefront that concerns itself with the creation and is no stranger to contention. The term today is 'environmentalism'. While ecology is not so new to us today it has only been in common conversation since the 1960's when the use of DDT was called into question. Since then we have become much more aware of our 'human' footprint and how our movements into the future may affect future generations. This is a responsible reaction. And a proper and accurate assessment is necessary to a positive outcome. The Almighty has given us a great gift with such a luxurious home; and we need to ask ourselves; are we happy with our stewardship of His creation?

We have a personal relationship with the Godhead and simultaneously a deep connection to the earth...it is our God-given task to take responsibility to care for all the environments that we are able to affect...land, water and air...that which lies beneath the earth and even that which is out there...where man has engaged the stars. But it starts with each of us. Can I be concerned that Lizzy keeps her room picked up if I have no apparent concern as I leave my trash on the trail? Do I have a smug awareness that in spite of a low water supply I can afford to waste my share? Do we find ourselves turning away from the ethical environmental concerns of the day as high dollar investors continue to pollute our land? Is global warming human caused or is it a natural trend? Have we affected our rainfall totals or

is it all part of a weather cycle? And the various arguments will go on and on.

So, while some see catastrophe for the future and others exhibit a flippant response to our God-given responsibility, Psalm 104 reminds us that while the idealism of environmentalism and ecology are relatively new its ideas are not.

The author of this psalm saw in the order of things, a simplicity...everything in its proper place:

“Thou makest darkness that it may be night; wherein all the beasts of the forest do move. The lions roaring after their prey, do seek their meat from God. The sun ariseth, and they get them away together, and lay them down in their dens. Man goeth forth to his work, and to his labour, until the evening.”

It is through God’s design that the world cooperates together so fluidly. The beast lies down to sleep so that the man may labor while it is light. There is always a balance and where we may have influence, the creation will react; for nature’s desire is to maintain the original pattern instilled by God. Likewise it is our natural inclination to regain **our** proper place with the Father. If we, and the creation that surrounds us, have the same goal, shouldn’t we be willing to work in unison? God has given us the ability to choose our path. He has put us in charge. Will we choose the path of destruction or will endeavor with the earth to walk the path of righteousness.

Making the right choices to live in harmony with God’s creation is not so complicated if we put our pride and arrogance aside and listen to the voice of our Lord as he guides us. It is through faith that we will resist the fear of the future and embrace this moment as our time to choose the right course. Pure and clean lives are the desires of all of God’s creation and it is in lives aware of God’s leadings that we will choose the right path and walk in harmony with the natural world.

Now, it would be unfair not to recognize that the psalmist does not seem to fear man’s ability to destroy the stability of life. Quite conversely he recognizes God’s hand in keeping control; *“thou shalt renew the face of the earth”* the psalmist writes. And, if that isn’t strong enough, he goes on;

“The glorious majesty of the Lord shall endure for ever.” Everything, in the end, depends on God; all life, the wind, the rain, the light and the darkness.

And yet, before we get too comfortable, in the final verses the Psalmist acknowledges that there are those who are against God’s creation and he tells us their end, that *“they shall be consumed out of the earth.”* So, we have choices to make everyday on how we relate to the world around us. Many will endeavor to choose wisely and stay vigilant, while others will seek their own end.

But, we mustn’t consider that the damage sin has caused is irreversible? We have just seen the power of God in the creation! It would be inconceivable to think that our sins, which have caused such a destructive imprint, have overpowered God’s ability to deal with them. Environmentalism should not be centered around whether or not we are destroying our home but, more appropriately, are we living up to God’s trust in our ability to care for the very home that supports our lives.

My daughter Lizzy and I play a game sometimes when we are supposed to be taking naps. The game usually revolves around who gets to make the rules or who gets to change the rules as we make up other naptime games. We lay together on the bed and with our fingers write in the air, things like; “Daddy is the boss and gets to make all the rules.” In which Lizzy waves her hand through the air exclaiming “erase, erase, erase!” and writes her own rule, something to the effect; “Lizzy makes the rules because daddy is a broccoli head.” Then it is my turn to “erase, erase, erase.” And this continues for some time...most of the time we never take the intended nap.

All this is to say, that while we are so busy fighting amongst ourselves to create rules concerning our environment (God’s creation), let us be mindful of our responsibility to live in togetherness concerning our temporary home. May we put in the effort to care for this planet, that provides so much for us, knowing that in the end God, with one swipe of his all powerful hand, will say “erase, erase, erase” and will make all things new. It’s your home...clean your room...God will be pleased.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.