

Thursday, May 28, 2020

Turn off the outside “noise” for a couple of minutes and consider this message from God’s Word.
I am praying that it calms your spirit and encourages your heart.

PSALM 36 (NIV)

⁵ **Your love, Lord,** reaches to the heavens,
your faithfulness to the skies.

⁶ **Your righteousness** is like the highest mountains,
your justice like the great deep.

YOU, LORD, PRESERVE BOTH PEOPLE AND ANIMALS.

⁷ How priceless is your unfailing love, O God!
People take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

⁸ They feast on the abundance of your house;
you give them drink from your river of delights.

⁹ For with you is the fountain of life;
in your light we see light.

— PART 3 —

*I found that when a passage of Scripture has been very familiar to me for a long time — such as this passage! — if I will simply **slow down** . . . take my time . . . and read thoughtfully and reflectively, it can become alive to me in new and fresh ways.*

There is a single sentence that comes at the close of vv. 5-6, and I failed to comment on it yesterday. In my defense, it is easy to get distracted when focusing on the Lord’s **love, faithfulness, righteousness, and justice!** Not only that, but the Lord’s character qualities were also compared to the heights of the heavens, the majesty of the mountains and the depths of the sea! So I could also rationalize that the magnificence of God’s creation also riveted my attention!

Here’s that final sentence I omitted:

“You, Lord, preserve both people and animals” —

Old Testament scholar John Goldingay explains that “To say that Yhwh’s commitment, truthfulness, faithfulness, and authority **extend up to the heavens and down to the depths** is a merism affirming that **THEY ALSO COVER EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN, in the realm where human beings and animals actually live.**”

JOHN GOLDINGAY, *Psalms: Volume 1 - Psalms 1-41* (Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom & Psalms).

The Psalmist moves from the grandeur of creation which reflects the beauty of God’s character — but then zooms in to focus on the beauty of God’s personal care for his creatures, “both people and animals.” Derek Kidner points out that:

*“After the **immensities** of verses 5 and 6, **a wealth of detailed care** enriches the scene in 7-9, already anticipated in 6c, whose theme of man and beast is elaborated throughout Psalm 104 and taken further again in the Gospels (e.g. Mt. 6:25ff.).”*

DEREK KIDNER, *Psalms 1-72* (TOTC)

Let's take a moment and just peek at Psalm 104, as Prof. Kidner suggests. The Psalmist begins by reflecting on the majesty of God and his creation:

PSALM 104 (NIV)

¹ **Praise the Lord, my soul.**

**Lord my God, you are very great;
you are clothed with splendor and majesty.**

² The Lord wraps himself in light as with a garment;
he stretches out the heavens like a tent

³ and lays the beams of his upper chambers on their waters.

He makes the clouds his chariot
and rides on the wings of **the wind**.

⁴ He makes **winds** his messengers,
flames of fire his servants.

[Note that some phrases here will be show up on the Day of Pentecost! – Pastor Doug]

⁵ **He set the earth on its foundations;
it can never be moved.**

But then he demonstrates how the magnificent world God created for us to inhabit **also** serves as a vehicle for him to convey lavish provisions for his beloved creatures, “both people and animals,” in very specific ways!

¹⁰ He makes springs pour water into the ravines;
it flows between the mountains.

¹¹ They give water to all **the beasts of the field;**
the wild donkeys quench their thirst.

¹² **The birds of the sky** nest by the waters;
they sing among the branches.

¹³ He waters the mountains from his upper chambers;
the land is satisfied by the fruit of his work.

¹⁴ He makes grass grow for **the cattle**,
and plants for **people** to cultivate—
bringing forth food from the earth:

¹⁵ **wine that gladdens human hearts,**
oil to make their faces shine,
and bread that sustains their hearts.

¹⁶ The trees of the Lord are well watered,
the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.

¹⁷ There **the birds** make their nests;
the stork has its home in the junipers.

¹⁸ The high mountains belong to **the wild goats**;
the crags are a refuge for **the hyrax**.



Many storks return every year to nest on juniper trees in Yesildag, Turkey



Rock hyraxes are also called rock rabbits, or dassies, pimbi, stone badger, cape hyrax, coney, and klipdas.

Wild donkeys? Storks? Wild goats? The hyrax? (The *what?* Visit the San Diego Zoo and you might discover that the hyrax looks a bit like a large guinea pig or rabbit with very short ears...but is one of the closest living relatives of...the elephant!)

Look how the Lord cares and provides — *in precise and unambiguous ways!* — for his rare and remarkable, utterly unique, one-of-a-kind creatures! (*To be continued.*)

::

*Loving Father, we thank you and bless you today for the ways you provide so beautifully, bountifully and **specifically** for your creatures, “both people and animals”!*

Pastor Doug