

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)

<sup>5</sup> **Your love, Lord,** reaches to the heavens,  
**your faithfulness** to the skies.

<sup>6</sup> **Your righteousness** is like the highest mountains,  
**your justice** like the great deep.

**YOU, LORD, PRESERVE BOTH PEOPLE AND ANIMALS.**

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

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

<sup>9</sup> 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)

<sup>1</sup> **Praise the Lord, my soul.**

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

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

<sup>3</sup> 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**.

<sup>4</sup> 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]

<sup>5</sup> **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!

<sup>10</sup> He makes springs pour water into the ravines;  
it flows between the mountains.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>18</sup> 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