Blessings to you in the mighty name of Jesus

*Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap; they have no storeroom nor barn, and yet God feeds them; how much more valuable you are than the birds!*

Luke 12:24

In today’s sermon, we look at the fifth day of creation when God created the fish and the birds. At His command, great numbers of these creatures came into being; and they had life!

God not only made them but He cares for them. By His providence, they find food and shelter. The species are fruitful and they multiply, obeying God’s decree from creation. God sustains their lives; and He can call it back. As it says in the Psalms, “*You take away their spirit, they expire; And return to their dust*.”

But what He has created is for our benefit and we are the part of His creation that He holds most dear. How blessed we are to be so highly esteemed by our Creator. Not that we deserve it. He esteems us because He has chosen to love us.

We have all reason to thank our God and do our best to serve Him. He provides for us and holds our lives in His very hand. Our eternity is safe in Jesus Christ. Nothing can separate us from His love when we are in Christ.

In Christ’s love

John

12-12-21

Genesis 1:20-23

As we have looked at the days of creation, we realize that God is going step by step to make a world and universe that will sustain the life that He will create. He is going to make amazing forms of life and He has created amazing surroundings for them to live in. It is good to dwell on God’s word and it is good to dwell on His creation. The longer we consider all that God has made, the more we come to realize how majestic He is.

That is one of the things demonstrated in the creation account: God is worthy of praise; He is worthy of worship. Too often we allow ourselves to forget who we are dealing with and who is dealing with us. We tend to think of God as a very powerful human-being; but He is not. God is so far beyond what we can comprehend, that thinking about Him should bring us to the point of awe.

Think about the solar system. The planets travel about the sun in their orbits; day after day, year after year, century after century. They stay where they belong instead of flying off into space or even just wobbling haphazardly around the sun. Sure, we know about gravity; we know that’s what force holds the solar system together. But think about it: How can everything stay so perfectly balanced and maintain its place? They are hanging on nothing. And this is going on throughout the universe.

How about just the earth? What a tremendous system God has made with the water. He sets boundaries for it on the earth; yet it still travels to the firmament then falls to the earth to provide water for life. God thought this up and makes it work.

He made the earth bring forth the first plants by His word. Then He gave the plants the command to bring forth fruit and to bear seed; each after their own kind. The plants can both provide food for the life that God is about to create and continue to reproduce so that there is a constant supply. The plants need water so God provides the rain to give moisture to the soil. The plants need light and heat so God created the giant sun to provide both. He gave the plants the ability to draw the nutrients they need right out of the dirt. How amazing all this is. How worthy He is to receive praise and worship.

God put just the right type of life into the plants so that they would grow and reproduce; but He didn’t give them animate life. Certainly, plants don’t have a soul and their purpose is to provide food. But even then, God shows His great creativity. Look at all the different flavors we have in the different fruits and vegetables and spices. It would have been far simpler to create one type of plant with one fruit and we could have lived off that. But God wanted variety.

Speaking of variety, how about all the colors and shapes of the vegetation in the world. Some have no other purpose than to be beautiful and pleasing to look at. Remember, all these things praise God whether in their beauty or wonderous shape or great size. Our God is a creative God and He has done all these marvelous things even before He gets to creating animate life.

When we take the time to think on these things, and our mind starts being unable to comprehend what has been created, and we recognize that Almighty God is the One who has made all this, then we are praising Him. We are allowing ourselves to be overwhelmed by His grandeur and humbled by His splendor. We are proclaiming that He is God and we are simply His creation.

Here we are on day five and God creates what He has been preparing for all along: animate life. He creates beings who have life and are able to move around and, to different extents, think. The Hebrew words that we translate as “*living creatures*” literally mean “breath of life”. Fish and birds breathe, very differently, but they breathe. And we are all aware of how closely breath is associated with the Spirit. It is by the Holy Spirit that these creatures are animated and given life.

This is very different from plants. Although plants have a form of life, it is not animate: they can’t move around or think. They carry on a process of taking in Carbon Dioxide and releasing Oxygen, but this is very different from the breathing of the creatures God made. Here on the fifth day is something new and wonderful that God designed and called forth: not only fish and birds, but the whole concept of a living, breathing being.

God is now filling the different sections associated with the earth with life. The waters hold the fish and the sky holds the birds. We know that animals are coming soon on the land. I think it’s important to note that the part of the firmament we call space, or the second heaven, is without life. God specifically created objects for this area, but they are inanimate objects; they do not have the breath of life.

From this I gather that there is no other life in the physical universe. I really don’t think there are any aliens to be found from outer space. The Bible is pretty specific about where God created life; and it is specific that what He created for the outer reaches of the firmament are not alive.

I bring this up mainly because there seems to be an increase in the sightings of UFO’s. We, as Christians, need to be aware so that we don’t get caught up in popular thought about these things. The Bible lets us know that as time goes on, there will be signs in the sky. It also lets us know that many will be deceived.

Certainly, many of the signs in the sky will involve the sun and moon and stars. But we must also consider the possibility of demonic manifestation in the form of unexplained objects in the air. Remember that satan’s objective is to keep people away from salvation in Jesus Christ; to deceive people into believing that everything can be explained apart from God.

Even now, there are lots of theories regarding aliens putting mankind on the earth as some kind of experiment. Or that alien visitors gave ancient man the ability to build things like the pyramids or stone henge. Area 51 is fertile ground for all manner of conspiracy theories about visitors from other planets. As the Bible often warns us: Don’t be deceived. God is the Creator and He is the One who gave us the ability to build impressive things. Spending time thinking about beings from outer space is foolish speculation and leads us away from our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Here on day five, God calls forth all manner of living creatures that dwell in the water. This would include all the fish, but also all the other wonderous ocean animals, some of which are very strange and exotic: squids, sea corals, eels, and all the different mollusks. A tremendous variety from our Creator God.

And He didn’t just make a few; He called forth swarms. How else can we describe the millions of inhabitants of the sea and the lakes and streams? Yahweh is abundant. This is something for us to keep in mind and the Bible reminds us often: God is abundant, He has much and He desires to give much. But He is also wise and will give only so much. His concern is less about our comfort in this life than His glory and our eternal life with Him.

Listen to what Jesus told us in John 14:13, “*Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son*.” This is one of those verses that gets taken out of context and twisted into promises that aren’t there. But taken in its proper context of the surrounding verses and of the whole Bible, we have an abundant promise from an abundant God.

God owns everything and He is all-powerful. That means that it really is limitless as to what He can do and provide; and Jesus is offering whatever we ask. But note the main reason: *so that the Father may be glorified in the Son*. So, when we ask Him for something, is it for our own wants, or is it to glorify God? When we ask for opportunities to minister to others, it cannot be for building ourselves up, but for glorifying God. When we pray for God to bring others to salvation, it is not to gain a reward for ourselves but to build His Kingdom.

Additionally, there is nothing wrong with asking for things for ourselves in this life. He knows we need things while here and expects us to turn to Him for provision. When the Lord God answers our prayers in the way that we hope, it should bring Him glory. That is why it is so important to thank Him and give Him credit. If we are given healing, we can be grateful to doctors and for medicine, but we must thank God who is ultimately behind the doctor’s ability and the medical knowledge we have. Whatever we ask for, be it food or shelter or finances, we give God the glory for His provision and need to be satisfied with what He provides.

Jesus’ promise is not a blank check for anything we want; it is affirmation that God is God; that He will give abundantly and has the resources to do so; and that He is building His Kingdom and will answer the prayers of those willing to be used in building it. That is the wonderous thing about the sanctification we receive from the indwelling Holy Spirit: Our prayers line up with God’s will because our goal becomes seeing His Kingdom built. The motivation behind our prayers is to see God glorified. When that happens, we will receive whatever we ask for because we pray according to what God wants.

For us to pray in this way is a really tall order; and we will mess it up. Our motivation will not be pure and we will sometimes simply be self-centered. The good news here is that God understands all this and He is merciful and kind. As long as we are in Christ, He loves us and is pleased with our efforts. Just as we are pleased with the efforts of our children even though they might fail; we are God’s children and He is pleased with us.

The God who stands behind this promise of Jesus is the one who spoke and brought animate life into the world. He called for fishes and sea creatures and they appeared in great number; far beyond counting. This is the way God does things; and He is worthy of worship.

Verse 21 mentions that God made the great sea monsters. Some translations say “whales” and that is fine; it gets the main point across: that even a living thing that is so huge, like a whale, was created by God. But also, there are other giant creatures in the sea; and we can even think of the dinosaurs that dwelt in the world’s oceans. These are all made by God.

And, this actually goes a little deeper; and this would have been especially important to the Hebrew people who had come out of the influence of Egypt and who were heading into the influence of Canaan. Most of these cultures had myths regarding monsters of the sea who had to be defeated by whatever god they worshiped. These were unruly and evil creatures that put up a great fight against the deity who finally defeated them.

In the creation account, none of this kind of thing takes place. The God of the Bible is the One who actually created the great sea creatures and they do His bidding. There is no contest of wills; these whales and giant fish glorify God by their very existence. He is the creator God and these giant beings are His creation.

God filled the waters and then He filled the sky. Birds are so very different from fish and God has created them to be so. Again, the variety; colors and sizes and song. What other animal can make sounds that are so pleasant to hear? Birds, more than any other creature, seem to have few other purposes than to bring pleasure to the senses. They are pleasing to look at and to watch; they are pleasing to listen to. They make life more enjoyable just by their existence. Of course, these things reveal God’s glory.

Just as the fish and the birds are new as animate life, God does something else new with them: He blesses them. This is the first time in the creation account that He has blessed something. In verse 22 we read, “*God blessed them, saying, ‘Be fruitful and multiply*.’” Blessing from God often has to do with bringing forth young. That is what God wants them to do here. They are to fill the waters and the sky.

Being fruitful is a command God brings up several times in the creation account. We often think of it in terms of having children and, indeed, that’s what it means. But, again, there is more; especially for we who are Christians. Jesus talked about being fruitful and that His followers are to bring forth fruit. But this fruitfulness is related to building God’s Kingdom.

A couple minutes ago we discussed Jesus’ promise to grant what we ask for in His name. As Christians, the Holy Spirit builds the desire in our hearts to see God glorified and His Kingdom built. Fulfilling these things in our life is being fruitful for us. The fish and the birds are following God’s command to be fruitful. The important question for us is, “Are we?”

Prayer

When we look at all the fish and the birds and consider how vast are their numbers; just like the stars of Your heavens; what response can we have but to be in awe of You? Thank You for the majesty of Your creation; for it gives us the desire to praise You. You are worthy God, who has made all these things by the breath of Your mouth.

Thank You for the varieties You have made. This earth is not a drab place, but a place of wonder and beauty, even though it is tainted by sin. This makes us look forward even more to the new heavens and earth that You will create, where nothing will be tarnished by evil and rebellion against You, sovereign God.

We ask now for Your Holy Spirit to work in our lives such that we deeply and truly desire that Your will be accomplished. We ask that our prayers be according to Your will. We ask that our work would be guided by the Holy Spirit so that we may be fruitful for our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. May His Kingdom come soon to this earth.

In His most precious name, we pray

Amen