May the Lord God shelter you today and always.

*I cry aloud with my voice to the Lord;
I make supplication with my voice to the Lord.
I pour out my complaint before Him;
I declare my trouble before Him.*

 Psalm 142:1-2

Sometimes we hold back in prayer. We feel like we shouldn’t tell the Lord about our feelings; how things are really bothering us. Well, He knows anyway, you might as well tell Him.

Often, we may pray silently and there is nothing wrong with this. But sometimes, it is good for us to pray aloud. It gives us the sense that we are really talking to someone; that they are really listening. God is listening, and He cares about what is troubling you.

We have trouble with the idea of “complaining” to God. The Israelites complained and got in trouble. But see the difference. The Israelites complained about God; they felt they knew better than He as to what they should do and where they should be.

If we are pouring out our complaint to God, we are telling Him what is troubling us; we are expressing our honest feelings. Sometimes we have real problems in our lives; tell God about them.

He cares and He is the one who is able to do something about whatever difficulty you have. Yes, He already knows; but prayer is the way He has ordained for us to talk with Him, to fellowship with Him. We can complain and express ourselves without blaming God, and that is acceptable to Him.

He loves to hear from us, even if it’s about problems.

In Christ’s love

John

 8-1-21

Psalm 104 (3)

This is a magnificent Psalm, glorifying God and worshiping Him for who He is and for His creativity. It worships Him for His wisdom. As we go through the Psalm, we can see how each day of creation prepared for what was to come as God formed everything out of nothing. Mighty God spoke, and what He desired came into being.

Not only did God create the physical world, but He made a vast spiritual world. And these two worlds do not exist in isolation from each other. People down through the ages have had some indwelling understanding that a spiritual world exists. We can see this in all the gods that have been created by man and all the ways man has tried to manipulate these gods. The problem is, that without the Bible, it is impossible to have any true understanding of the spiritual world and how to deal with it.

We ignore the spiritual world to our peril. We are constantly under the attack of spirits that have turned in rebellion against their creator God. It is only by His restraining hand that all people are not destroyed by evil. It is only by unity with Jesus Christ that we have any authority over evil. And this comes from God having all authority over evil. This is demonstrated in God’s complete authority over water.

So far, our Psalm has considered the first two days of creation. God created the earth, covered in water, and in complete darkness. God spoke and light came into existence; then He separated the light from the darkness. There is nothing inherently evil about darkness; it is a gift to us, a time when we can’t normally go about our work so we have time to sleep and rest. But spiritually light and dark become a metaphor for good and evil, truth and deception, God and satan.

On the second day, God created a firmament to separate the waters on the earth from those above it. We learn of the spiritual nature and power of God in that He is able to set the foundation of heaven upon the water that is suspended above the world. Now verse 6 of our Psalm points out that the earth was still clothed with water as a garment; that it still covered the mountains of the earth.

Verses 7 through 18 look at the third day of creation and peek ahead to the reason for what is made on the third day. In Genesis, on the third day, God made the waters gather together so that dry land could appear. This is amazing dry land, because it is not mud, but has enough moisture in it to sustain plant life. So, the next thing God did on the third day was to have the land bring forth plants. Each plant bore seed after its own kind and fruit trees grew that had seed in their fruit. All to sustain what was to come later in creation.

Back to our Psalm. Verse 7 refers to the waters of verse 6. *At Your rebuke they fled, At the sound of Your thunder they hurried away*. Verse 9 says, “*You set a boundary that they may not pass over,
So that they will not return to cover the earth*.” Here we see the absolute control that God has over the water. We also see that the water’s natural tendency is to go back to covering the earth. Consider: it is only by the power of God that we are not underwater at any point in time. He is the one holding the seas back from reclaiming the land.

The seas have always been associated with chaos; with uncontrollable power. There are all kinds of pagan myths concerning some deity of the ocean; usually a monster such as a dragon. Think about today’s world. We build levees and sea walls to try to keep the water away from where we don’t want it. These work most of the time, but when the conditions are right, the water overcomes them.

God not only sent the waters away so that dry land would appear, He set a boundary for the water that it could not pass. This is shown in the book of Job when the Lord God is speaking to Job out of the storm. In Job 38:8-11 God says:

*“Or who enclosed the sea with doors
When, bursting forth, it went out from the womb;
When I made a cloud its garment
And thick darkness its swaddling band,
And I placed boundaries on it
And set a bolt and doors,
And I said, ‘Thus far you shall come, but no farther;
And here shall your proud waves stop’?”*

We must be humble in the presence of God, who is able, with His voice, to contain the ocean. We see the power of the Word of God again when Jesus rebuked the wind and waves of the sea of Galilee and they obeyed Him. Since God’s initial rebuke, there has only been one time when the waters came back to reclaim the earth in the days of Noah; but that was only because God allowed them. God used the power of the water for His own purposes in judgement. Still, He saved His creation, men and animals, in an ark of gopher wood.

We know from the account of Noah that the earth will never again be destroyed by water; it will never again be given permission to transgress its boundaries. What about the flooding we experience today? In our arrogance, we think we know where the boundaries are set. The beach should be the end of the ocean’s reach; rivers should not come out of their established banks. While these may be the normal confines of the water, these are not the boundaries set by God. We don’t know where they are exactly. The waters are still used by God for His purposes; even in judgement.

If God can set boundaries for the strong, chaotic waters, He is able to set boundaries for everything else; and He does. Nothing God has created steps out of those restraints except those He has given free will: angels and people. For the angels, once they have transgressed God’s commands, their fate is sealed. They have been given no means of redemption and they will eventually spend eternity in the lake of burning sulfur.

Mankind has also transgressed God’s good restraint and has the same destination. Only by God’s grace, we have one more chance. We do have a means of redemption available to us in Jesus Christ and in Him alone. Again, how much we should worship Him in saving us from an eternity of misery.

There is another spiritual aspect of these things mentioned in the book of Revelation. A prominent player during the seven-year tribulation is the beast. He appears in Revelation 13:1. “*And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names*.” Look at where the beast comes from: the sea. Now this is probably not a literal account; the beast doesn’t crawl up out of the Mediterranean Sea. But he does come out of the chaos of humanity; he will have a great amount of unruly power.

Still, he will be under God’s control. He will not be able to do anything God doesn’t allow him to do. He will have great power and authority, but it will not be beyond the boundaries that God sets for him. He will serve the purposes of God, and then he will be cast into the lake of burning sulfur.

Verses 8 is another of those verses that can be translated a couple different ways. My translation says, “*The mountains rose; the valleys sank down to the place which You established for them*.” This would show the Lord God designing the surface of the earth to contain the waters where He wants them and form systems to distribute the water to provide for the life that He was about to create.

Another translation says, “*They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them*.” Here, we get a description of what the obedient waters do once God has commanded that dry land appear. Water defies gravity by floating up past the highest mountains in mist and vapor; rising to clouds through evaporation. Then streams and brooks flow down off the mountains into the valleys and eventually into the sea.

Verses 10 through 18 jumps ahead to show God’s wisdom in His distribution of the waters and in bringing forth vegetation. The life that God later creates needs both water and food wherever they exist on the earth. There are mountain streams, rivers in the valleys, and ponds in the fields so that every type of animal may drink. Whether they are wild or domestic, or even for mankind, the Lord provides water for them.

God provides field dwellers with grass to eat. There are plenty of leafy bushes and trees in the woods for the forest dwellers to feed on. These are kept alive for the hunters that eat meat so they are also sustained. The earth also provides fruit and vegetables for people, but because of the curse, we have to work for it by tilling the ground and harvesting. But by common grace, the earth still produces for us.

Not only has God provided food and water, He has provided shelter. The trees are places where birds can build their nests. He has even provided large strong trees for huge birds the size of storks to build their giant nests. Some of the mountains contain cliffs where the wild goats can stay safe. They are able to climb where no predator can reach them. The shephanim go by several names: hyrax, rock badger, or conie. These are small furry creatures that have no natural defenses. When danger is near, they must hide. God has provided rocks and crags for them to reach safety.

All these things God has provided for His creation; it is there for them. But because of the curse, man must work for his food and shelter by the sweat of his brow. Still, the Lord is kind to us; His special creation made in His image. The earth produces thorns and thistles, but it also produces good plants for food. Wine can be made just to bring some cheer to life. Although we don’t use oil on our skin very much, it is very common in dry, hot climates to keep cool and give a refreshing feeling. These are good things God has provided for us; we must just be careful to resist the temptation to overdo them.

In all these things we can see the work of God in Jesus Christ. He is the source of living water. Once Christ resides in us, there flows from us streams of living water. We are to provide that Gospel of living water to a thirsty world. The miracle is that the more we give away, the more we have and the more there is. And it is not bounded; it is available to all men who will accept it.

The Lord even provides for the stupid, stubborn, wild donkeys. How often do we fit that description? Yet His love for us is so strong that He gave His only begotten Son that we would have that water to drink. The birds are a lesson to us. While other animals can only bray or grunt, the birds can sing and make worshipful music to the Lord. How much more should we, who have some understanding of what God has done for us, worship Him in song and prayer and life.

We like to think of ourselves as strong; that is our natural, fallen human tendency. In reality we are like conies. We are weak and defenseless against the spiritual attacks of our enemy, satan. We must always stay close to and hide behind our solid rock: Jesus Christ.

In addition to living water, we see in the wine the saving blood of Jesus. When we are cleansed in His blood, our hearts become joyful and we can come into the presence of God. Additionally, the anointing oil represents the Holy Spirit. He makes our faces shine as we are sealed with Him and He then lives within us. Our constant guide and companion, He leads us beside still waters, He causes us to lie down in the green grass, and in Him we no longer fear that shadow of death.

Prayer

We worship You, Lord God, creator of all things. Your wisdom shows through Your creation; how You made things in their proper order; every step planned out in eternity past. Nothing escaped Your notice and no piece was out of place. By Your foreknowledge, all was made to complete Your ultimate plan.

We ask that the Holy Spirit help us to see You in all nature; that we would be reminded that there is the creator God who made all these things yet is separate from them; and far above His creation. Remind us that we are part of that creation and that we were made to glorify Him and serve Him.

Blessed are You, Lord God. We add our voices to those of the angels who continually praise You in heaven. We are amazed by Your creation. And we look forward to Your new creation of heaven and earth; we pray for Your Kingdom to come. We await Your return, Lord Jesus, in glory.

In Your precious name we pray

Amen