

God's Care for His Creation

We talked briefly with the kids about learning things from animals – I want to continue briefly on that subject with you, by looking at a few additional verses, some from Psalm 104, and a couple of others from Matthew's gospel. If you have a Bible or Bible app, turn with me to Psalm 104:24-25, 27-31. **Read Psalm 104:24-25, 27-31.** Maybe bookmark that and turn with me to Matthew 6:25-26. **Read Matt. 6:25-26.**

These passages speak to God's care for His creation, focusing primarily on the animals that share our world with us. Psalm 104 is a hymn of praise to our Creator, celebrating the vastness and complexity of His works. Bible scholars suggest from ancient times that David wrote it. Verses 24-25 say, "How many are Your works, Lord! In wisdom You made them all; the earth is full of Your creatures. There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures beyond number – living things both large and small."

The Psalmist invites us to marvel at the diversity of life on our planet. From the tiniest microscopic creatures to the largest whales, God's wisdom is evident in the intricate design and interdependence of every living thing. Every creature, regardless of size or apparent significance to us, is a testament to the creative power and genius of Almighty God. Going on, we hear:

All creatures look to You to give them their food at the proper time. When You give it to them, they gather it up; when You open Your hand, they are satisfied with good things. When You hide Your face, they are terrified; when You take away their breath, they die and return to the dust. When You send Your Spirit, they are created, and You renew the face of the ground, (Psalm 104:27-31).

God is Active

All creatures, whether they realize it or not, look to God for their on-going life. He provides the food they eat, the water they drink. He gives and takes away their life. All life depends upon God for provision. Unlike people, animals do not sow or reap, yet they are sustained by the generosity of God. Christ points this out in the Scripture from Matthew.

God is not some distant observer, rather, He is an active participant in the harmonious balance and flourishing in the natural world around us. Jesus, in Matthew's Gospel, teaches us to trust in God's care through the example of birds.

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet Your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? (Matt. 6:25-26).

Jesus calls us to observe the birds and learn from their simple trust in God's care. Despite their lack of planning and storing, they are provided for. We are so much more valuable to Him than birds, friends. Valuable enough to send Jesus to the cross! We live in anxious times. Times when we try very much to be self-reliant. Instead, we need to be more open to trusting God, and relying on His faithfulness – we will talk more on that next week.

God Calls Us to Good Stewardship

Both these Scriptures highlight the value of animals in God's creation. They aren't just background characters in the story of human salvation – they're cherished parts of God's world. Those of you with pets know this. They very much become a part of our family. Animals reflect the creativity and glory of their Maker, and their existence helps us think about a greater understanding of God's nature – like those dogs – who unconditionally love us, even though we swatted their behind five minutes ago.

We also have a responsibility towards animals – not just pets – but the entire creation. We are called to be good stewards. That covers everything – economic, political, social, environmental – God has given us free rein over the world and calls us to be wise and responsible inhabitants of it. He expects us to care for all living things. Sometimes that means advocating for the well-being of animals, protecting their habitats, and ensuring that our actions don't harm the ecosystem He's entrusted to us.

Johannes Eckhart, a German theologian of the Church who lived from the mid 1200's to the early 1300's, once wrote, "Look for God in all things, for God is in all things. Every single creature is full of God, and is a book about God. Every creature is a word of God. If I spent enough time with the tiniest creature – even a caterpillar – I would never have to prepare a sermon so full of God is every creature." In seeing God's care for all His creatures, we're called to reflect His care and concern in our lives. There are some practical actions we can take. We can support conservation efforts, do more recycling, and think about how our consumption affects other species. It also involves cultivating an attitude of gratitude and awe for the creation He's blessed us with and seeing it as a reflection of His goodness and creativity.

God has blessed us. He blesses us each day, and if you have a pet in your family, you know what a blessing that is. As followers of Jesus Christ – the Word made flesh – who spoke all these amazing creatures into existence at the very beginning, we are called to be responsible stewards of the creation. He expects us to care for creatures, and trust in His unending, unfailing love and provision. And He will continue to take good care of us, because He loves us, and proved it once for all time at the cross.

Prayer: Father God, You've created a beautiful world filled with wonder and surprise. You've gifted us with animals and an abundant life. You've given us pets, to bring us joy and show us a glimpse of Your unconditional love. For all that You've given to us, and all You continue to give to us, Father, we give You thanks and praise. In Jesus' name. Amen.