

Psalm 104 • O Lord My God, Creator and Ruler Over All

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Psalm 104 is, I would call it, A Simple Psalm of Praise to the God who Created and Sustains All Things. The theme of this Psalm is creation. And not just creation. Because you can look at, or you can just say, yeah, God created everything.

I always like to say, that I think Christians would do pretty well if we were just taking a test. And there was a question on the test, did God create all things? Well, we would all say, yes, sure.

Here's the deal. Have you really looked though lately? Have you really looked at creation? Have you really thought about how things work? And have you ever really looked into some of the natural wonders of creation? It's just, it's incredible. Everything!

When I would think that the more a person investigates nature and how things work, the more impressed you should be with just the order that God factored into creation. I could mention several things, but I think you know what I'm talking about. And that's what this Psalm is really doing now.

I don't know if you remember the last psalm that we studied, which was Psalm 103, which was a couple of weeks ago, I know. But in that Psalm, the Psalmist really was exalting or magnifying God as, the Redeemer King. And in this particular psalm, he's magnifying God as, the Creator King. And he just begins to, on this theme, speak to the Lord.

And before we get into these verses, can I just say that I think this is a great idea. What I mean by that is, taking a theme and using it to praise the Lord. If you got together in a small group of people, let's say two, three, four people, something like that, and you all just said, we're going to pray for a little while. And let's just begin our prayer time by offering up thanks to God. Let's just praise the Lord. Just praise Him for whatever comes into your heart. How would you do in terms of thinking of things to say?

I've noticed sometimes in prayer times, there's often these long pregnant pauses, during our praise time. And it's like, come on guys, let's praise the Lord. Well, I think sometimes we're just scrambling to like, okay, what am I going to... How... What am I thankful for? Or, just, I got to think of something here.

Well, I like the idea of a theme. Because the psalmist here takes the theme and he basically says, creation. And not just creation, but, the order of creation, the beauty of creation, the wonder of creation. And he begins to allow that theme to issue forth in thanksgiving, as he's pondering: what God has made, how He has made it, the beauty with which He has made it. Right?

But notice that... I think that when, as we read through this psalm, you're going to notice that, what the psalmist was doing was - he wasn't just coming up with a random idea - he actually thought about it. He thought about it. And often you see that in the Psalms, or in other areas of Scripture. Lord, when I think about..., or, Lord, when I ponder...

And it's when we take time to get off our cell phone, or off our computer, or turn off whatever else is distracting us, and to ponder what God has done. Or, the Word of God, specifically, that we begin to allow that to just permeate our heart in such a way, that praise begins to usher forth.

Notice how it happens in this psalm. Verse 1.

He starts off by saying,

"1 Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, you are very great! You are clothed with splendor and majesty,

2 covering yourself with light as with a garment, stretching out the heavens like a tent." (ESV)

And then he begins to speak about creation in very poetic language.

"3 He lays the beams of his chambers on the waters; he makes the clouds his chariot; he rides on the wings of the wind;

4 he makes his messengers winds, his ministers a flaming fire.

5 He set the earth on its foundations, so that it should never be moved.

6 You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains.

7 At your rebuke they fled; at the sound of your thunder they took to flight.

8 The mountains rose, the valleys sank down to the place that you appointed for them.

9 You set a boundary that they may not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth."

Again, talking about... making reference to the once global flood, which is now being kept back by the Word of the Lord.

Verse 10,

"You make springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills;

11 they give drink to every beast of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst.

12 Beside them the birds of the heavens dwell; they sing among the branches.

13 From your lofty abode you water the mountains; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work."

Notice what he's doing as you are hearing about this hydrological cycle that he's praising the Lord for, these *"springs (that) gush forth in the valleys; (and) flow between the hills."* And he says, and those waters, not only do they green up the valley, but they water the animals. And the trees that grow up along the banks of the stream grow up tall. And they provide a home for the birds and the other animals that dwell in the trees, and so forth. And they sing among the branches, he said.

He's pondering these things: the beauty of it, the order of it. He's not just taking life for granted. It's that stop and smell the roses sort of an attitude where, I'm going to look at things and I'm going to see that God, everything you've made is good! And he's just... He's so connected right now to that goodness, that it just bubbles forth in praise. That's what I want my praise to be.

Verse 14. He says,

"You cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth

15 and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine and bread to strengthen man's heart."

So now he's just praising God.

You and I, we run over to Albertson's to get a loaf of bread or a gallon of milk or whatever the thing. It's like, what are you going to praise God?... It sounds weird. He's so connected to the process of the earth bringing forth food, that he's praising God for it.

Look at how it works: the water that comes down from the heavens and onto the hills; and it flows down; and then into these streams; and that, waters the animals in the...; and then it causes the trees to grow; and then, it also waters the earth; and from the earth grows up the food that we... He's connecting the dots in such a way as to just say, God, You're really amazing! You worked all this out! There's great wisdom.

And we forget that sometimes. We think about the tasks that we have to do, like: running a home, or running a business, or just even our own lives. Just dealing with the daily administrative issues of living life. I got to stop go to the store today; and I got to get the car in to get the oil changed; and then I got to get out and clean up some leaves; and, oh wait! Did I winterize that? And we've got all these things we've got to think of. Imagine if you're running the world and how things work. They just work and He made a way. He made a way!

Every summer, I watch this interesting thing, where during the late part of the summer, we often start seeing a lot of grass fires around the region, which can really quickly cloud up our sky with smoke. And then you get to that point where you smell it and... And I always look at that and I'm like, yeah, that's really a drag.

But I know that God has a way of dealing with it. And all that smoke, and all those particulates, which aren't frankly, all that great for you and I to breathe in, they go up into the atmosphere. And then the wind currents carry them along. And it's not like we're just passing our problem off to somebody else. It goes down the line a ways until it runs into some a storm system where they meet up with some rain clouds. And then, they get into those rain clouds. And then guess

what happens? It rains those particulates down upon the earth and it's fertilizer! And it causes things to grow! Isn't that crazy?

You guys have seen what happens even after a forest fire. You drive up through Yellowstone, or Glacier, or something like that where there's been this horrible fires. And you know at the time when it happens, we're all like oh, that's terrible! But then you see all this new growth. Because all these trees that were burned and all this fire and stuff, creates all this fertilizer for the ground. And it becomes rich in its ability to harbor life and raise up new trees in its place.

And you look at that, you just go, God, you figured all that out! In other words, what you're saying is, it is with wisdom that God has put things into order. So that even when bad things happen like fires, which we consider bad, God brings good out of it. And there's just this order that is just so incredible.

Verse 16 says,

"The trees of the LORD are watered abundantly, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.

17 In them the birds build their nests; the stork has her home in the fir trees.

18 The high mountains are for the wild goats; the rocks are a refuge for the rock badgers."

And he says, this is really cool! You look at all these different animals and God created a home for them. And it's just perfect. It's just perfect. He did it, and He couldn't... It's just perfect.

It says, then He goes on to some of the other, the seasons and stuff.

Verse 19,

"He made the moon to mark the seasons; (That's interesting, isn't it?) the sun knows its time for setting. (Yes, it does. You could set your watch by it, too!)

"20 You make darkness, and it is night, when all the beasts of the forest creep about." (at least those that are nocturnal.)

And it says,

"²¹ The young lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God.

²² When the sun rises, they steal away and lie down in their dens.

²³ Man goes out to his work and to his labor until the evening."

He says, you made it so that these predators come out at night. And they go out to hunt and do their thing. And then... And man is safely in his home sleeping. And then, when man gets up to start his day, the big predators are hustling off to their den where they're going to sleep for the day and so forth. And You've created this symmetry and a symbiotic situation in creation."

Verse 24,

"O LORD, how manifold (In other words, how great) are your works? (How many) In wisdom have you made them all; (And that's the key, really, verse right there, "In wisdom have you made them all;") the earth is full of your creatures."

All right. So there's the... If you're going to underline a verse and mark it and say: this is the theme, this is the key verse of the chapter, that is it right there.

Verse 25.

"Here is the sea, (Now he goes to the waters.) great and wide, which teems with creatures innumerable, living things both small and great.

²⁶ There go the ships, and Leviathan, which you formed to play in it.

²⁷ These all look to you, to give them their food in due season.

²⁸ When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.

²⁹ When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.

³⁰ When you send forth your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground.

31 May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in his works,

32 who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke!

33 I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have (my) being. (There's a song going through your head, I bet.)

34 May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the LORD.

35 Let sinners be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked be no more! (That's another way of saying, let the will of the Lord be done.) Bless the LORD, O my soul! Praise the LORD!"

What a beautiful Psalm. Just a Psalm... If you're one of those people that loves to go out and just enjoy nature, take this Psalm with you. And just use it to praise the Lord, as you look at the beauty and the wisdom with which God has brought forth all things.

And as we praise God for His majesty and the splendor of His incredible creation. It's absolutely beautiful!