

Psalm 104:5-9

- ⁵ He set the earth on its foundations;
it can never be moved.
- ⁶ You covered it with the watery depths as with a garment;
the waters stood above the mountains.
- ⁷ But at your rebuke the waters fled,
at the sound of your thunder they took to flight;
- ⁸ they flowed over the mountains,
they went down into the valleys,
to the place you assigned for them.
- ⁹ You set a boundary they cannot cross;
never again will they cover the earth.
- ²⁴ How many are your works, LORD!
In wisdom you made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.
- ²⁵ There is the sea, vast and spacious,
teeming with creatures beyond number—
living things both large and small.
- ²⁶ There the ships go to and fro,
and Leviathan, which you formed to frolic there.
- ²⁷ All creatures look to you
to give them their food at the proper time.
- ²⁸ When you give it to them,
they gather it up;
when you open your hand,
they are satisfied with good things.
- ²⁹ When you hide your face,
they are terrified;
when you take away their breath,
they die and return to the dust.
- ³⁰ When you send your Spirit,
they are created,
and you renew the face of the ground.¹

¹ NIV 2011

² <http://www.metrolyrics.com/printlyric/shout-to-the-lord-lyrics-zschech-darlene.html>
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Good Morning My Sisters and Brothers in Christ. I greet you this morning in the name of the God who Creates. Our Holy Scriptures begins:

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. (KJV)

and that first chapter of Genesis ends with these words:

And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Someone ought to be excited this morning just thinking about the fact that we are neither an accident, nor the result of cosmic event in which there was no control or plan. Someone ought to be excited when they think about the plans of a loving God who made the heavens and the earth and declared His creation to be good. Someone ought to want to shout for joy when they think of the works of God's hand.

This morning we begin a new unit of study as ordered by the International Sunday School Lesson series, which we follow in the Adult Sunday School class. The focus of this unit is on the Creation and the early history of Israel, God's chosen people, as we believe and understand it to be. We will be in the book of Genesis beginning next Sunday until the end of October. If you have not read the 50 chapters of Genesis in a while I would encourage you to make that a priority. One way to do this would be to read a chapter Monday – Saturday, think about what you have read on Sunday and continue the next week until you are done.

Our lesson for this morning is not taken from Genesis but from Psalms as you have just read. For those who are new to Bible study or may have forgotten what they have been taught, allow me to explain how the Psalms, the hymn book of The Children of Israel informs our understanding of human emotions regarding events that took place over thousands of years and how it informs us now.

The Hebrew name for the book of Psalms means "praises". The book is composed of 150 praise songs written to be sung with musical

instruments. Seventy-three of the Psalms were written by David and Moses, Solomon, Asaph, Ethan and Herman who were Ezrahites and the Sons of Korah compose others. Some of them are simply listed as author unknown. The 104th Psalm is one that the author and occasion for the writing remains unclear. There are two theories and each have something to teach us. The first theory of purpose is that the 104th was written while the Children of Israel were in captivity. Perhaps even the captivity that we just completed studying. We can relate to that, it is often when things are at their worst that we turn to God. Our Negro Spirituals are examples of songs written when black people were slaves in America. Another theory is that David was in a place of personal turmoil and instead of focusing on the negative he chose to focus on the positive. We can understand that too as we sing

"Great Is Thy Faithfulness,
Morning by Morning new mercies we see".

In the 104th Psalm David focused on the God who creates, sustains, provides and preserves. Another way of saying this is David, teaches us that in the midst of **whatever** we should focus on that which is permanent and can never be taken away by human hands. Psalm 104 is one of many psalms that focus on creation; some others are 47, 93, 96, 97, 98 and 99. With that as background would you pray with me and for me as we consider as our theme the words of a modern day psalmist?

I SING FOR JOY AT THE WORKS OF YOUR HAND

SHALL WE PRAY! My Jesus, my Saviour, Lord there is none like you!
We come to you on this Lord's day, on the day your Father set aside for rest and on the day we set aside to remember the new covenant you created for us with the shedding of your blood. We come because each day and especially on Sunday we want to remember you, glorify you, praise and worship you. We come in need of a word, a phrase, a thought, a melody that will keep us moving toward you when we are discouraged, when we are sad, when we have done all we can imagine to do and things

are not still not as we would have them to be. We come and we humbly ask that you send a blessing from heaven that will help us to make it until you come again. Jesus, please allow the words of my mouth, the research of my head and the desire of my heart to please you, be enough for the people of God this morning. In your name we pray, AMEN and AMEN.

I SING FOR JOY AT THE WORKS OF YOUR HAND

In order for the people of God to be in right **relationship with God** they have to know who God is. Allow me to explain it this way. You can meet somebody and fall in love and bring them home for inspection and possibly even marry them, but until you have been with them through the good and the bad. Until you have seen them under stress, depressed and generally a mess you really do not know them. Well, knowing God is kind of like that. God does not get stressed, depressed or generally a mess but we do! And when we step back and look at God we see that God does not change because of our stuff. God is still God.

If the God who set the world on its foundations, told the waters to flee, gave job assignments to the mountains and the valleys is our God then it seems to me we need to get to know this God so we can have a relationship with the One who is in charge.

²⁴ How many are your works, LORD!
In wisdom you made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.

I SING FOR JOY AT THE WORKS OF YOUR HAND for you are Creator.

In our present day **economy** it is easy to move into despair. Businesses are folding, banks are foreclosing on our home, jobs are hard to find and life in general may not be what we would have thought it would be like. If we are not careful we can easily get caught up in all the misery of financial hardships that are happening to us personally and

those around us. But the 104th Psalm reminds us that there are some things that should give us reason to still have joy.

²⁷ All creatures look to you
to give them their food at the proper time.

The God that created us has a plan for us, a plan on which we can depend. God knows exactly what we need because He created us and He will provide for our needs in the proper time.

His Eye is in the Sparrow and I know He watches over me

**I SING FOR JOY AT THE WORKS OF YOUR HAND
for you are protector and sustainer**

Not only will God provide for God's creation we also need to remember all that is here has a purpose.

the earth has a purpose

⁵ He set the earth on its foundations;
it can never be moved.

the mountains and the valleys have a purpose

⁸ they flowed over the mountains,
they went down into the valleys,
to the place you assigned for them.

**I SING FOR JOY AT THE WORKS OF YOUR HAND
for you know the plans/the purpose you have for me.**

Last week this country celebrated the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington and the I HAVE A DREAM speech. For some folks it was just another political rally and they chose not to attend. For an entire generation of children it was a history lesson and history is boring, so it did not get much of their attention. But for some of us that speech was a reminder that regardless of the racial turmoil, the economic conditions, the failure to take care of the young, the sick, the elderly, the men and women who have served this country in wars not of their own choosing, the locked up and the locked out there is still a God who has ordered the universe and it will be as He will have it to be.

So this morning and for the rest of this week I challenge you to think on these words of David:

²⁸ When you give it to them, they gather it up;
 when you open your hand,
 they are satisfied with good things.
²⁹ When you hide your face,
 they are terrified;
 when you take away their breath,
 they die and return to the dust.
³⁰ When you send your Spirit,
 they are created,
 and you renew the face of the ground.

If that does not speak to your heart perhaps there are other words that will:

SHOUT TO THE LORD

My Jesus, my Savior
 Lord, there is none like You
 All of my days, I want to praise
 The wonders of Your mighty love

My comfort, my shelter
 Tower of refuge and strength
 Let every breath, all that I am
 Never cease to worship You

Shout to the Lord, all the earth, let us sing
 Power and majesty, praise to the King
 Mountains bow down and the seas will roar
 At the sound of Your name

I sing for joy at the work of Your hands
 Forever I'll love You, forever I'll stand
 Nothing compares to the promise I have in You

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