

Communion

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[0:00] Praise the Lord, praise the Lord from all the heavens, praise him in the heights above, praise him all ye angels, praise him all ye heavenly hosts, praise him sun and moon, praise him all ye shining stars, oh Lord, we come in praise this evening, Lord, as humans, knowing our own weakness and our dependency on you, knowing your strength, Lord, that horn, the strength, the salvation has come to Israel, come to Israel, come to Israel, the Gentiles, and we are blessed by knowing the Lord Jesus Christ, and we thank you so much that we can praise you for the wonderful things that you've given us in creation, Lord, from the smallest ant to the mighty rhino, and from the vistas of the South Downs to the valleys in Wales and the beauty in our own nation, Lord, we give you thanks and give you praise for blessing us so much.

Bless the Lord, oh my soul. And we come in thanksgiving and praise because we are found tonight to be at your mercy seats, and we thank you that we can remember your death and resurrection once again to draw near to you, Lord.

Thank you that you draw near to your people. Thank you that this is the best place to be here on a Sunday evening, Lord. We could be in numerous other places, but to be in your headquarters as you touch earth, as it were, as you speak to us, as we were reminded this morning, Lord, that your words and being in your presence is sweeter than honey, sweeter than honeycomb.

It's more precious than honeycomb.

Sufficient one should choose us, Lord. What is man that you are mindful of him? The son of man that you care for him, Lord. And yet you do, Lord. You richly bless us beyond comprehension, and we give you our praise.

[2:27] And we come in repentance, Lord. We confess our sins that we've committed, Lord, against you. And I pray that you'd forgive us of our many sins.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, I thought I'd do a book plug tonight. So, thinking about creation this morning, Psalm 19.

We saw a bit of creation, didn't we, last week as well with Steve's Psalm 8, I think, touching a bit on creation. Yeah, it does. About the finger work, isn't it?

Well, it's a finger work, I think. The Language of Rivers and Stars, written by Seth Lewis, is by the Good Book Company, How Nature Speaks of the Glories of God. And I've just finished this. It's a page turner, okay?

I'm not, as you know, I'm not a very good reader. But I've read two books this summer. Yay. And so, be encouraged. You can do it. So, it's only five, six, seven pounds from the Good Book Company.

[3:28] Rachel's got this. Sorry, I can't give this to you. Rachel wants to read it. I actually bought it for Rachel, but I ended up reading it myself. And it's great because it goes through creation, Genesis 1, the different days.

And Seth, who lives in Ireland, talks about the nature around Ireland in his back garden. Also alludes to his childhood in America and in Georgia, I think.

And he goes through the different days of creation and weaves in stories, statistics, and amazes you at the beauty of the world that God's given us.

So, I really do recommend it. I'll read the first paragraph to whet your appetite, okay? The Language of Creation. It was the middle of the night, in the middle of nowhere.

There must have been clouds above us because, beyond our headlights, the darkness was complete. The only sound was the crunch of gravel under our tires.

[4:33] As we pulled into a wide spot beside a lake we could not yet see. I cut the engine off and all was calm. There we go.

So, recommend it. It's really good. It will help you appreciate creation as you walk around. Good. Well, let's read Psalm 104. Another creation psalm. I haven't actually asked anyone to read, but people are welcome to read tonight if they wish.

Do we have a roaming mic, Roger? Or I can share it with someone. Thank you. Would anybody like to read?

Yeah? Great. Oh, yes. That's true, Roger. That's fine. Anybody else like to read? Yeah. Okay. I'll let Ray read the whole lot.

[5:44] Is that okay? Or do you want me to share it with you? Oh, that's all right, I think. Share my little voice. Okay. So, Psalm 104. Oops. A bit shorter.

Praise the Lord, O my soul. O Lord, my God, you are very great. You are clothed with splendor and majesty. He wraps himself in light as with a garment.

He stretches out the heavens like a tent. Lays the beams of his upper chambers on their waters. He makes the clouds his chariot and rides on the wings of the wind.

He makes winds his messengers, flames of fire his servants. He set the earth on its foundations. It can never be moved. You covered it with as deep as with a garment.

The waters stood above the mountains. But at your rebuke, the waters fled. At the sound of your thunder, they took flight. They flowed over the mountains.

[6:44] They went down into the valleys to the place you assigned for them. You set a boundary that they cannot cross. Never again will they cover the earth. He makes springs pour water into ravines.

It flows between the mountains. They give water to all the beasts of the field. The wild donkeys quench their thirst. The birds of the air nest by the waters.

They sing among the branches. He waters the mountains from its upper chambers. The earth is satisfied by the fruit of his work. He makes grass grow for the cattle and plants for man to cultivate, bringing forth food from the earth.

Wine that gladdens the heart of man. Oil to make his face shine. And bread that sustains his heart. The trees of the Lord are well watered.

The cedars of Lebanon that he planted. There the birds make their nests. The stalk has its home in the pine trees. The high mountains belong to the wild goats.

[7:50] The crags are a refuge for the conies. The moon marks off the seasons. And the sun knows when to go down. You bring darkness.

It becomes night. And all the beasts of the forest prowl. The lions roar for their prey. And seek their food from God. The sun rises.

And they steal away. They return and lie down in their dens. Then man goes out to his work. To his labour until evening. How many are your works, O 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.

There the ships go to and fro, and the leviathan which you formed to frolic there. These all look to you to give them their food at the proper time.

[8:57] 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 earth.

May the glory of the Lord endure forever. May the Lord rejoice in his works. He who looks at the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke.

I will sing to the Lord all my life. I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. May my meditation be pleasing to him as I rejoice in the Lord.

But may sinners vanish from the earth and the wicked be no more. Praise the Lord, O my soul. Praise the Lord. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Thank you, Ray.

[10:09] Well read. Indeed. Praise the Lord is hallelujah. Any words you didn't know? Any animals you didn't know from there? Perhaps a few. The hyrax in verse 18, or conies, as Ray said it.

Is that a type of bunny? Leviathan? A whale? Yes, what they say is a whale. Any others? Hyrax. Yeah, I think we talked about that. 18, or the conies. I think it's a type of bunny. I'm not too sure, though. Like a rock badger. Something like that, perhaps. Yeah, rock badger is probably better. Yeah.

Anyway, what a lovely creation psalm. And it's bookended, isn't it? Praise the Lord, O my soul. Like typical Hebrew poetry. Was there a book in the Bible that you were thinking of when you were reading this?

Genesis chapter 1? Yeah? It mirrors that, doesn't it? I was reading it today, and I thought, wait a minute. This looks like the creation order. But apparently it's not exactly the same.

[11:18] But it's almost as though David is referring back to Genesis 1 and writing the creation story in his own way. And giving it more poetry.

It's a beautiful psalm. One of my favorites. And notice, David this morning was alluding to the fact that in Psalm 19, you had God, Elohim.

The God creator God. The transcendent God. And here, what do we see here? Yahweh. The covenant God. Even though we did see Yahweh as well in the psalm this morning.

Here, we don't really say, Lord, my God. Yahweh. Verse 1. Twice. Verse 2. The Lord wraps.

Yahweh. So, it's referring to the covenant, the personal gods of Israel.

It's the same God, brothers and sisters. The covenant gods, the personal God, the intimate God, is also Elohim. The creator God. The transcendent one who creates.

[12:20] He's the same God, isn't he? He's so powerful, big, unfathomable. But also, he's a personal God who knows us tenderly.

Isn't that lovely? And here, we see creation. The whole of creation. So, in verses 2 to 9, we kind of see the earth being made.

And the boundary sets. We need water and land. What day was that? Day 2, I think. And we see that lovely verse in verse 2.

The Lord wraps himself in light as in the garment. He stretches out the tents, heavens, like a tent. Perhaps you've been camping this summer. My wife has. Oh, we went, didn't we?

It's a dangerous camping, Jerome. And a tent is to dwell. Yeah, you dwell in a tent. And this is a lovely picture of the Lord making the world, making the... So, it's habitable that we can dwell in it and enjoy it.

[13:31] It's beautiful poetry. And, yeah, we talk about the foundations.

And then it goes on to verse 10, which... In 10 to 18, which I've entitled, The Provider of Life.

You notice that he says, He makes, He creates, He gives. It's all God, isn't it? And he provides water for the beasts in verse 11.

For the donkeys, we see the springs pouring forth water. The birds are catered for in verse 12. The cattle are catered for, verse 14.

And us as well. It talks about wine that gladdens human hearts. I enjoy a glass of Merlot. Oil to make faces shine.

[14:38] The bread that sustains their hearts. Isn't God a great God? Providing all these wonderful things for us. Not only for the animals, but for us, for humans.

Perhaps we've tasted them today. And the trees are there, well watered. And not only does he provide for the clean animals, he provides for the unclean animals.

Do you see that? In verse 17, the stork is an unclean animal in Jewish society. But the Lord blesses the stork.

Beautiful. Storks are wonderful. Sorry? Not an ostrich. Yeah. Well, he gives us ostriches as well, as we were looking at the other week. Yeah. I don't know if they're unclean or not, the ostrich.

Have they got hooves? Probably. I don't know. No problem. He is a great God. Yeah. And then it talks about the, is it day three?

[15:42] The moon? Verse 19. And the sun? Sorry? Day four, is it? Yeah. I'm not very good at knowing which day which. And here it talks about darkness.

Even the lions. He provides for their prey as they seek their food from God. Do the lions pray at night?

Yeah? It seems that way. Yeah. And the sun rises and they steal away. So the cycle of life which he's given us. The moon waxes, wanes.

The sun. What a blessing. How many are your works, 24? In wisdom you made them all. The earth is full of your creatures.

And it talks about the sea of all the vast creatures, both living and small. Even ships, commerce, to and fro.

[16:43] That's good. That's not sinful. Merchants go on the ship. And the whales there which he formed. So all creatures, 27, look to you and give them the food at the proper time.

God is a God who gives in abundance more than we ever need. And they go away.

They die in verse 29. May the glory of the Lord endure forever. Verse 31. May the Lord rejoice in his works. He who looks at the earth and it trembles.

Who touches the mountains and they smoke. Then David says, I will sing to the Lord all my life.

Sing praise to him. And rejoice.

But may sinners vanish from the earth. The wicked. And the wicked be no more. So brothers and sisters, we come tonight to this great creator of this psalm.

[17:48] And this psalm was supposed to be sung, wasn't it? Supposed to be given in praise to God as David writes it. I presume David does. It could be someone else. And we too can sing it as well tonight as we look at creation.

And we're thinking about communion tonight. We've got the symbols here. Interestingly, it talks about there's a bread that gladdens the face of man and wine which makes him happy.

And he has made us happy, hasn't he? Through his death and resurrection. Through the body that he gave for us. This is a beautiful picture of creation.

But yet how ugly this world is. And yet the creator stepped in to the created order for us. And gave his life, his own body and his own blood.

So that us, who created ones, can be in fellowship with the creator. So that's what we're celebrating tonight. As we come around the table.

[19:01] And we're giving glory to him for that. Let's sing one more song. And then we'll perhaps have a time of prayer. Open prayer about those things that we've been thinking of.