***THE MUSIC OF CREATION***

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Texts: Psalm 8 and Hebrews 1:1-3

Is there anything that elicits awe in you? Is there anything that takes your breath away or moves your heart or leaves you speechless (realizing that would be a new experience for some of you)? If so, what is it that so moves you – the view from a mountaintop, the birth of a child, a solar eclipse? What, if anything, inspires awe in your soul? In his book *Christianity as a Way of Life*, Kevin Hector suggests there should be more awe-filled moments in our lives day to day. He writes:

*The fact that a grain of seed grows into a tree or flower or blade of grass is astonishing, as is the growth of each leaf and each branch on the tree. Yet we are so used to seeing trees and flowers and grass and clouds and water and countless other wonders that we seldom even notice them, much less stand in awe of the one who created them*.[[1]](#endnote-1)

What he suggests is that we should find awe in the miracle of creation in the ordinary things around us day to day, but we should also be awed by the God who created it all. All creation sings God’s glory, as Yulee’s hymn reminds us, for our God is a Creative and Creating God!

At this time of year that creative genius is readily apparent as trees begin to shout God’s glory with brilliant colors, and birds and butterflies begin their long sojourn south. Yet, when is the last time you took note of the wonder of the world as it is before the colors burst out and the birds begin their pilgrimage? When is the last time you paused long enough to see the miracle that is ALL of creation all year round – in trees that shed their leaves and then burst into bud in the spring, squirrels that somehow know to store up nuts for the winter, starry nights that sparkle with choruses of God’s glory billions of light years away, ladybugs and stinkbugs too that suddenly appear out of nowhere? When is the last time that you looked at your fingers and were amazed, not by the arthritis that has set in, but by the fact that no one else on this planet has the same pattern of prints? We are fearfully and wonderfully made, as is all of this universe in which we live, yet day to day we take so much of it for granted and fail to note, not only the wonder of it all, but the God who brought it all into being.

The psalmist gives voice to his awe of creation, taking note of the wonder of the moon, stars, and creatures that are the work of God’s fingers. He sees God’s handiwork in all that he sees. Yet in the midst of that star-spangled universe and world of towering mountains and verdant plains and waters teeming with life, what really amazes him is that out of it all, God thinks of humankind and cares for humans – not just en masse, but individually. “*What are frail mortals that you are mindful of them, children of mortals that you care for them*,” he wonders aloud. Who are we that God takes note of us one and all? We are children of God, that is who we are – those made a little less than gods and crowned with glory and honor according to the psalmist! As rabbi Jonathan Sacks so well describes it:

*What is religiously significant is not the how of creation but the why – and it was here that Judaism uttered its revolutionary proposition. God did not create the world as a scientist in a laboratory. God brought it into being as parents give birth to a child: not out of curiosity, but in love. We are not the accidental outcome of a blind evolutionary process. We are the children of the living God*.[[2]](#endnote-2)

We are all God’s children, not just some of us, all of us! On this World Communion Sunday, we celebrate the Lord’s Supper with all those children of God who gather at the Lord’s Table in all the corners of the world. The bread is broken with the words, “*Take, eat, this is my body*” spoken in hundreds of languages. The hands that hold the cup are as varied in color and texture as are the sands of the seashore. At the Lord’s Table there are no nationalities or ethnicities or races or genders or orientations or denominations to divide us; there is only our place here as children of God invited by Christ to share this holy meal in remembrance of him in all our glorious diversity. The music of creation is sung here with variations among us as essential to the song of God’s glory as are the varied voices of sopranos, altos, tenors, and basses in any choir! Our diversity does not detract from the music of creation, it enhances it in tribute to the wisdom of the divine composer who wrote it in the beginning and continues to write it anew with our lives today! The children’s song declares: “A*ll God’s critters got a place in the choir*,” and so all of us critters – you and I – have a place there too!

Those voices cannot just sing any notes that they want any time that they want or the music becomes discordant noise. There is an ordering to it all in the wisdom of God. And part of that ordering, part of that responsibility that comes with being children of God, is to care for the rest of creation. As the psalmist phrases it, we have been given dominion over all that God has made. We are created to enjoy the blessings of this wonderful universe in which we live, but also to be stewards of God’s good creation to exercise dominion and care, over the land, seas, and skies God has given us. There are those, however, who have interpreted dominion and care to mean domination and exploitation. As my seminary professor Jim Mays notes:

*Dominion has become domination; rule has become ruin; subordination in the divine purpose has become subjection to human sinfulness. The creatures suffer*.[[3]](#endnote-3)

Across the years, our misuse of God’s good gifts has resulted in pollution and damage to the earth entrusted to our care with all its attendant problems so evident in our world lately – rising seas, powerful storms like Helene, destructive floods in one area and damaging drought in another, record-setting heat across our nation and world, and forced migration of people as the land becomes unproductive and uninhabitable. As Samuel Wells notes:

*Global warming is a problem that arises as an almost inevitable result of seeking a world without God. The ecological crisis, in Augustine’s terms, is simply expressed: we have used what should be enjoyed*.[[4]](#endnote-4)

God has created this world with all its wonder and fruitful blessings for us to enjoy and appreciate, a world with abundant resources to be shared and to be cared for in order to provide a good life for ourselves, for our neighbors near and far, and for future generations who are also children of God. Our response to the blessing of all these good gifts is twofold: awe, thanks and praise sung by faithful lives, and responsible caretaking of all that God has made! Gathered at this Table we offer to God our thanks and praise; and here too we share a holy meal to strengthen us for that good work to which we are called as children of God and disciples of the risen Christ.

The music of creation that began long ago with the God who said, “*Let there be light*,” continues today in and through our lives. It is a glorious melody with spectacular harmonies in which we all have a part. With joyful, loving, faithful lives, sing your part! Be awed (A-W-E-D, not O-D-D) by all that God has made, and sing on, my brothers and sisters! Every day, sing on! Amen

1. Kevin W. Hector, *Christianity as a Way of Life*, Yale University Press: 2023, p.171 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Jonathan Sacks, *Celebrating Life*, Fount Press: London, 2000, p.103 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. James L. Mays, *Interpretation: Psalms*, John Knox Press:1994, p.70 [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Samuel Wells, *Incarnational Ministry*, Eerdmans Publishing:2017, p.74 [↑](#endnote-ref-4)