

Creating, Sustaining, Caring

by Bev Regier

Passage: Psalm 104

May the glory of the LORD endure for ever; may the LORD rejoice in his works-- who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke.

**I will sing to the LORD as long as I live;
I will sing praise to my God while I have being.**

—*Psalm 104:31-33 NRSV*

The word “creation” brings up many images for me. The smell of my newborn grandchild, the warmth of spring sunshine on my face, the grandeur of a summer sunset, the song of the cardinal outside my window, and the flavor of a warm tomato freshly picked--these are a few of the things I think of. Others think of mountains, the ocean, or the night sky.

Psalm 104 is a song of praise for God’s creation. The writer is overwhelmed with the greatness of all God has made. The psalm begins and ends with a commitment to praising God. It magnifies the splendor of God and moves through several themes: the formation of the earth, God’s provision for all creation, the regularity of natural cycles, the dependence of creation on God’s care, and finally a return to a jubilant commitment to praise God.

O LORD, how manifold are your works!

Within the psalm, people are mentioned only twice. In verses 10-18 the psalmist lists the ways God provides for creation and includes land forms, plants and animals as well as people. Then in verses 19-23 the theme is how God has placed regularity in creation. Included are seasonal and daily cycles, as well as the contrast between the animal pattern of nocturnal hunting and sleep during the day, and the human rhythms of work and rest.

Understood and seen through the things he has made

Romans 1:20 says that God’s eternal power and divine nature can be seen and understood from what God has made. From Psalm 104, we see God’s great power and glory. It

tells of God's wisdom and love in providing for all the lands, plants, animals, and people. God cares for all creation--every beast and bird and plant and person.

How can we also value all of creation as God does?

I find inspiration in the lives of those who try. Andrea and her husband share a car with a friend and use it only when it is impossible to bike to their destination. Linda arranges carpooling as often as possible. Elena raises much of her food and tries to buy the rest locally. Laura and her husband share their human-powered lawn mower with nearby friends. Many friends recycle and use efficient light bulbs. Some share their stories of friends in other countries who manage on much less than we think we need.

These ordinary everyday actions nurture our selves as they nurture creation. Riding my bike instead of driving feeds my spirit in ways I do not understand. Weeding my vegetables gives me a sense of sisterhood with all women growing food and a sense of collaborating with God. Both seem like meditating with my whole body. "May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the Lord." v. 34.

PONDER

- 1. As you read through Psalm 104, notice which images of creation resound with you. If you were the writer, which parts of creation would you include in a psalm of praise? What do they teach you about the nature of God?*
- 2. People often speak of how God meets them through their experiences of creation. I have a friend who chooses to eat her lunch in a park near her job almost every day, because she recognizes her need to be connected with creation. Are there ways you can increase your daily contact with creation?*
- 3. Whose example inspires you to care for creation? What is your next step in sustaining a healthy creation?*

Prayer: Creator God, you have revealed yourself to us through the things you have made. May we live our lives in ways that respect and honor your creation. Amen. 📖