

Hello everyone! And welcome to our Wednesday Word devotion for today, September 16, 2020. Thank you so much for tuning in and for taking this time out of your day to focus on God and focus on your faith.

Today I want to talk about creation, both in joy and in lament. Around this time of year, I am filled with joy at the changing seasons. What a gift to be able to witness the cooler weather, the turning colors, and the gift of the harvest across our country. God has so richly blessed His created world and I cannot help but give thanks for the way the planet provides all our food, our water, and the joys of nature.

But I also think about the devastation facing many parts of our country - between the wildfires on the West Coast to the storms and hurricanes hitting the southern coast and moving inland, it is a scary time for millions of people as the created world around them suffers. Lord we pray for all these people, that they may be safe and sheltered, with plenty of food, water, loving relationships, healthcare, and all the resources they need.

So for today's devotion, I'm going to switch up the order of things a little bit. I will start with a prayer, for both the joys and sorrows that we face in our created world, and then move into a reading from Psalm 104, assuring us of God's goodness in creation. I hope these words provide comfort and a moment of reflection for you as we meditate on God's creation.

Let us pray.

Lord God, out of nothing, at the beginning of time, you created the heavens and the earth, the whole cosmos that support and sustain our lives. You deemed this creation good, and for your whole creation, we give you unending thanks. Your creative power is seen by us in the miracle of growth we have the joy of witnessing every season, every year, every lifetime, through the life and nourishment of your created beings. For this joy, for the way you sustain us with food and water, sunlight and shelter, fresh air and freedom to roam, we praise you and lift our grateful hearts to you, O Lord, our creator and sustainer.

We give you thanks for all people who work to tend the land, farmers who grow our food, who process our food and water, for all the people who transport our daily bread on a daily basis. Keep them safe, O Lord, as they grow and nourish your whole earth. Help them to find joy and sustain them when the work gets tough. Thank you God for this year that has yielded good crops. Bless the harvest coming forth from the earth. Thank you for replenishing the supply lines of food so that we may all eat and be nourished amidst this global pandemic. We lift to you all the people across your created world who don't have enough to eat, or fresh water to drink. May we be good stewards of the earth to support the needs of all our fellow people worldwide. May all your children be nourished with good food, clean water, stable and safe shelter, and clean air to fill our lungs with your Holy Spirit breath of life who moves and breathes within and around us and all of creation.

God, we pray for all people who don't have clean air to breathe, especially those who suffer from the wildfires burning the West Coast of our country. We pray for a swift end to these fires,

for all people to be safe and sheltered, and that we may be better caretakers of your creation now and into the future, to prevent these massive fires. For all people who suffer devastation due to natural disasters, including our brothers, sisters, and siblings facing hurricanes in the southern part of our country, we pray O Lord. We pray for a quick recovery, for a lack of damage to people and property, and for new life to come forth out of this devastation. For all people aiding in relief efforts, we give you thanks for their courage and servant hearts. For all who are despairing, may the power of your Son Jesus' resurrection give them hope unending. For all your created world, empower us to

All these prayers and the prayers on our minds and hearts today, we lift to you O Lord. We pray to see your goodness, your steadfastness, your love throughout your created world. In Jesus' name, united with the Holy Spirit, we pray. Amen.

And now a reading from Psalm 104 (verses 1,10-24, 27-30), to remind us of God's assured presence throughout creation.

Bless the Lord, O my soul.

O Lord my God, you are very great.

You make springs gush forth in the valleys;

they flow between the hills,

11 giving drink to every wild animal;

the wild asses quench their thirst.

12 By the streams the birds of the air have their habitation;

they sing among the branches.

13 From your lofty abode you water the mountains;

the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work.

14 You cause the grass to grow for the cattle,

and plants for people to use,

to bring forth food from the earth,

15 and wine to gladden the human heart,

oil to make the face shine,

and bread to strengthen the human heart.

16 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 its home in the fir trees.

18 The high mountains are for the wild goats;

the rocks are a refuge for the coneys.

19 You have made the moon to mark the seasons;

the sun knows its time for setting.

20 You make darkness, and it is night,

when all the animals of the forest come creeping out.

21 The young lions roar for their prey,

seeking their food from God.

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

23 People go out to their work
and to their labor until the evening.

24 O Lord, how manifold are your works!
In wisdom you have made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.

These all look to you
to give them their food in due season;
28 when you give 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.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Go in peace dear friends, have a beautiful day.