

Psalms 104:16–26
Imagining God by Worship and Work

Tuesday, October 24, 2023 • Read Psalm 104:16–26

Questions from the Scripture text: What else does God give water for (v16a)? What are those trees full of? To which trees, specifically, does v16b refer? What other creatures does this benefit (v17a)? And which nest where (v17b)? What other home has God created for which creatures (v18a)? And what home for which others (v18b)? What else has God appointed for what purposes (v19–20a, cf. Gen 1:14–19)? What does even the darkness provide (v20b)? Especially for what (v21a) From whom do even lions seek their food (v21b)? What else does God provide for them, in what way (v22)? What other creature makes what use of day and night (v23)? What else does man do, besides work—how does he respond to God's works for his own works (v24a)? What should man see in God's works (v24b)? To Whom do they confess the earth and its fullness belong (v24c)? What else is full of God's possessions (v25a)? What sort of creatures (v25b–c)? Including what works of man (v26a)? And what great creature (v26b)? That can do what in the sea (v26c)?

Which of God's creatures depend upon Him? Psalm 104:16–26 looks forward to the opening portion of morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these eleven verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **all of God's creatures from the smallest to the greatest depend upon Him, including and especially man.**

Homes. As we come into v16 of the Psalm, it shifts from God's provision of food and drink to provision of homes. For the birds (v17), the Lord first provides for the trees themselves (v16). He designs goats that have footing like no other creatures, together with high hills and crags that they are uniquely suited to get to (v18a). He designs small and squeezable creatures that can fit into almost any hole, and cliffs with holes that are uniquely suited for them.

Times. v19–23 take us especially into the fourth day of creation. The moon and sun are not independent agents, they are appointees of God (v19) for making dark and light (v20), morning (v22) and evening (v23). Lions know what to do with these. In darkness, they hunt (v20b–21a)—although it is God Who provides the food (v21b). To other animals, they may be the top of the food chain, but they are still God's needy dependents. In the day, they take a nap (v22).

Man's schedule is opposite—he works during the day (v23a), but evening is for more than lying down. It's for worship! The men from v23b are joining the psalmist now in v24. They are home from work, and it's time to worship: "O YHWH, how manifold are Your works!" Lions don't know from Whom they seek their food. Men do. If we don't worship Him in our homes, worship Him in the evening after work, worship Him with regularity and response to our food... if worshiping Him is not the great thing in our daily lives, then we are no better than the beasts.

Works. The whole creation are God's manifold works (v24a). Earth (v24c) and sea (v25) are full of creatures that are His possessions. Among them, not only the small but even the great, like the Leviathan that plays in the sea. But even the great sea creature Leviathan is not to be compared to man as a work of God. His sailing ships in v26a show him to be in the image of this glorious God.

How glorious is our God, and what a privilege it is to be a man! We not only receive from Him and depend upon Him, but we worship Him and image Him. And He gives us songs like this one to sing and to pray, driving it home to our hearts.

To Whom do you belong? To Whom do the other creatures you see belong? What makes creativity and work such a high privilege? What else sets us apart from the other creatures?

Sample prayer: O Lord, how manifold are Your works! You give to each of the creatures their home, but You Yourself have been our dwelling place through all generations. You appoint to each of the creatures, but our times are in Your hands. Morning and evening, You have created for us to worship You, and especially Your day. Thank You for giving to us to image You in creativity and labor. But, O Lord, give us to image You especially in enjoying You and adoring You in Your worship! So unto this end, grant the powerful and merciful work of Your Spirit, we ask through Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP104AB "Bless the LORD, My Soul" or TPH104B "My Soul, Bless the LORD"

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Psalm 104 verse 16 through 26. These are God's words. The trees of yahai are full of sap. The cedars of lebanon, which he planted. Where the birds make their nests, the stork has her home and the fur trees. The high hills are for the wild goats the cliffs are are refuge for the rock badgers.

He appointed the moon for seasons, the sun knows it's going down, you make darkness and it is night. In which all the beasts of the forest creep about. The young lions, roar after their prey, and seek their food. From god. When the sun rises they gather together and lied in and they're dense.

Man goes out to his work. And to his labor. Until evening. Oh y'all. Hey, how manifold are your works? In wisdom, you have made them all. The earth is full of your possessions. This great and wide sea in which our innumerable teeming things, living things, both small and great.

There, the ships sail about There's the leviathan, which you have made. To play there. Amanda sends us reading of gods, inspired and inherent word. Of course, picks up where we left off last week, and Psalm 104. And Continuing with the provision of god for his creatures. And uh, First portion last week we we heard Well, especially towards the end of it.

Of god's provision of food for his creatures. And how the particular foods that. That god has provided for man and the way that they affect us. Are a reminder that we are made in god's image. And that. Gladness and blessing and fellowship. And encouragement of the heart. Are things that are really unique to man.

As relational and moral moral and conscientious. Creatures in. In relation to God and in relation to one another So the the food even was one of the ways that man's distinctiveness in the creation has made in the image of god. Was shown. Well here in the portion that's before us.

Now we have god's provision of homes. We have god's provision of times and we even have god's provision of work and again in Um, In these things. The. Provision of home. Is not does not talk about man but we'll Uh, we'll make a point about that when we When we get to it, but the provision of times and the provision Of works times in 19 to 23 and works.

Overlapping with verse 23, but Uh, verse 23 through 26. Um, Ones in which we see god's great goodness to all of his creatures. But then we see the way in which his goodness in those areas differs to us. The way that man that god has. Honored man to make lesson his image and you kind of have that psalm 8 dynamic of considering the creation as a whole and then seeing how the sort of regard that god has given us As just this overflow of generosity.

In his making us in his image and we end up crying at things like, What is man that you are mindful of him? And if that's true, and we look at the creation, How much more than? Uh, when we look at redemption, So first in this passage, there is a provision of homes.

The Um, the trees of yahweh are full of sap, the cedars of lebanon, which he planted. The cedars of lebanon at the time. And still now to some extent, the Um, the trees on On the mountain science and in the woods and lebanon are Um, Are beautiful. Um, although i don't know if The forests are as great now as they were then,

Excuse me, but verse 16.

Uh describes it as a garden that god is planted the cedars of lebanon as his garden. Just like, we And might, you know, plant, what is it milkweed to? Attract them on butterflies or Or whatever. He Uh, god is going to get himself some pet birds as it were in verse.

Uh, 17. And so in lebanon. Where he's going to keep those birds. He plant cedar trees, and then Um, along. You know, some coasts, he plants fur trees where there's going to be storks that nest in those and Uh, there's this picture of power and generosity and wisdom. And not just the birds, making their nest in the store, having your home for 17, but then making unique and strange Animals that are perfectly suited to the homes, where they're going to live and he provides the homes that are suited to them.

And we talks about the high hills for the wild goats. I don't know if. Uh, you guys have ever seen, we actually saw in real life. Uh, you know, kind of sheer cliff men's sides in which there would be these tiny outcroppings and there'd be a goat. That looks like it's glued to the side of the mountain because they're able to jump release that little outcroppings like like the best freehand.

Rock climbers in the world and you just look at them and you're like, What a strange creature and how amazing that, that, that Cliff. Is so exactly suited to it. It is definitely safe from lions there because a lion can't get there at all. And, And then you have, Uh other uh similar creatures that what's called here.

The rock bot badger. And i think in modern taxonomy it's called the hierarchs, but it's As a similar similar rodent abilities to to mice. You remember the manson bethesda? There was Mice could get through a whole this big because they're skull head collapsible bones. And so there are these little, you know, burrowed holes in the sides of mountains and things where the Where the rock badger could get through his opening.

And nothing. He has no. Um, No strength or great defense, mechanism whatsoever, but Um, But the lord makes a hole that he can get into. There as well. So you have this, this wisdom and goodness of god. Providing homes for his creatures, verse 16, through 18, And, There's two things, i think my implication especially once we get through verse 19, through 26 and we see the distinctiveness of man, and, and there's other sections one.

Is that that point that? Moses makes. And the one psalm that he authored. Where he says y'all play, you have been our dwelling place. Through all generations. And this was Moses who, Grew up in a home. That wasn't his in egypt and then He was an outsider of sorts in a home that that wasn't his Um, In the wilderness of sinai.

And then he literally spent the next 40 years of his life wandering. In the wilderness with the with the people of israel and yet he wasn't without a dwelling place. That his confession was, you have been our dwelling place through all our generations. And then the other distinctiveness is.

That the lord has. Has given us to be. Uh, designers of homes in a way that Um, That other animals aren't other animals. Uh, make their nests or so. Uh, some of them but always by instinct never by Um, Never buy the The sort of. Creativity. And comforts. And Uh, thoughtfulness for a household.

You know, so the lord provides homes for his people, he provides times. Uh, verse 19, he appointed the moon for seasons, the sun knows it's going to down you. Are familiar. Of course, with Genesis 1 of the Um, Days and months and seasons and years. And god being a father of light.

He has The right time for everything and even darkness, then. Uh, verse 20 is. The right time for something for us. It's the right time to sleep for lions. Uh, it's a time to creep about. Go after their prey and seek their food now. Verse 21, they don't know, god, they don't know that they're seeking their food from god.

You know, the lion is top of the food chain. Have acts as if yeah. He's the he's the one who takes what he wants. Um, But it's god, who feeds even the lion. So from the greatest creature to the least creature, Um, God feeds. But, Uh, for Uh, for a man, he works in the daytime.

And the sun rises and the lions. Uh, lay down on their dens. But man, goes out to work. To his labor until evening. And so times are provided not just for the, the lower creatures, but for man in particular And for man times are especially punctuated by worship. So, when you lay down and when you rise up, Are worship types, Deuteronomy 6 evening and morning, then properly understood and genesis longer worship times the Um, With a Weak marked by the sabbath the lord's day.

Every week. And so god provides times, but For man, his times are different. Then the creatures times there's not a creature that has morning and evening worship. Although Uh, The, the lord does aid, man in his worship. By the way, the bird sing in the morning. Uh, praise god.

The The sunrise itself and the light. And The lord has even Um, So designed His creation. So that there are all these hints in nature. That the the reviving of things. And, and the new light of things is is as it were urging us to worship. God, who gregated this way.

And then the calming of things and the sunset And and the way that god slows everything down and is Uh, something else that he calls us to worship. So, He is a provider of homes for his creatures, but himself, especially as our home. Here's a provider of times for his creatures.

Uh, but himself, especially And the worship of himself is that which punctuates our times But in between those, we do have work. Some man goes out to his work during the day. And to his labor until evening. And so, you have this Uh, This play. On the works, and you have the The works of man verse 23 and And then into the work.

Orcs of god, verse 24. Oh, you all way, how manifold are your works and wisdom. You have made them all. The earth is full of the orc possessions And so, Per. Kind of like when. A man is evaluating whether he should give his. Um, daughter away to a young man for her husband.

You know, what kind of work do you do? Are you successful? Um, As the lord blessed it and are you wise are you frugal? And, This case we don't have a young man. Of course, we have the lord and we see the greatness and the power and the wisdom of all of his works, and how has it been blessed.

The earth is filled with his possessions. And so god is the great worker capital w and he has made us to be little workers in Uh, in his image. And then he puts Two of the things together. The great and wide sea in which are innumerable. Teaming things living things with small and great in case.

So the sea is is kind of the canvas or the background for the comparison and verse 26, where man's works are pretty impressive. The ships that sail about And you think of all of the engineering and understanding, and then labor and diligence in making it and diligence and labor and discipline and operating it, the ship sailing about is a pretty impressive work.

But then next to the the, you know, man's great, grounding achievement that sailing about is Uh, one of god's creatures that is Part of this small and great. That verse 25 was talking about the leviathan, which just plays. And we of course, Um, Don't know what a leviathan is, but Uh, we can.

We can gather some hints from scripture about the The greatness of these sea creatures that would indubitably be considered dinosaurs of Man was to see one

today and the great and terrifying. Uh, power. And, Um, god makes it to be kind of like a toy in the water. Oh, that just plays a plays about.

But still. The great. Privilege and honor that we have. Of being made in the image of god. Where we may have understanding and apply it in design and work and enjoy our work. As as those who are imaging in and working. Um, but Uh, not such that we would be impressed with ourselves and our works.

Uh, last, we forget that, he's the one who makes playing leviathans. But then, it would be his greatness that his glorified. And then our imaging him becomes for us. Not a sort of source of pride, but a source of Gratitude and humility wonder at him and worship. Of him.

And so that's what this middle portion. Then of psalm 104. Is especially calling us to Let's pray and ask him to apply it to us.

Our gracious. God and our heavenly father. How we thank you. For giving us this lesson, this course of instruction. And how rightly to observe. What you have made and what you do in this world. And we are. Amazed at you in your power. Your goodness. Your wisdom. We bless your name for all of it.

O lord. And we do ask that while your grace, you would enable us to use. Whatever, strength, and wisdom and goodness, you have worked in us. To honor you as we imitate you. Our work, give us to be. Generous and wise as well. And lord. When you ask that your spirit would, Uh, keep us mindful.

That we might be humble. And not exalted in ourselves by what we do. But amazed that you Would give us who are So much smaller than a leviathan or weaker than a lion. The place of. Almost infinite privilege above both. Um, Let's give make a humble lord and give us to live.

Lives desiring to image you and Rejoicing, when the times come, Where we can pause the work even. And just give ourselves to worshipping you. Only bless your name. Oh god. And jesus name. Amen.