

Stretching Toward Sunday

*Thoughts, readings and reflections
based on this week's readings*

September 30, 2018 ~ Fifth Sunday in Creation
Climate Sunday
The Season of Creation

The readings this week:

- Job 28:22-33 ◦ Psalm 104:1-13
- James 3:13-18 ◦ Matthew 16:1-4



God's Handiwork

Some of the most famous words attributed to Francis of Assisi are these: *"All praise be yours, my Lord, through all that you have made, and first my Lord Brother Sun, who brings the day; and light you give to us through him. How beautiful he is, how radiant in all his splendor! Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness. All praise be yours, my Lord through Sister Moon and stars; in the heavens you made them bright and precious and fair..."*

I suspect many would view St. Francis' words as whimsical or strange. Who goes around calling the sun her "brother" or the moon his "sister"? Not many, but I've come to appreciate the way Francis and others over the centuries have viewed various elements of God's Creation as family members. In fact, I wonder at times if some of our environmental woes may have been averted if we had not lost grasp of our familial connection to the rest of the earth. Everything that exists — the sun, moon, earth, plants, animals, humans — has the same source, God. We all come from God and we all belong to God. That makes us family, does it not?

Two key ingredients in any healthy family are love and respect. Where these virtues are absent trouble is inevitable. This is true not just for our immediate family but also for our extended family that includes all of Creation. Every person and everything that God has made deserves our love and respect. If we do not extend them this there will definitely be trouble.

The rest of Creation is due our love and respect, if for no other reason, because God made it and it manifests God's glory. Francis' words reveal his belief that praise comes to God "through all" that God made. Recognizing that all of God's Creation should be viewed as family helped Francis see the beauty inherent in God's handiwork. This beauty, in turn, led him to offer his worship and praise to the Maker of heaven and earth.

Each day and each night we have visual reminders in the sky of God's goodness and love. Let us give

thanks for "Brother Sun" and "Sister Moon" and the light they shine upon us. Let us pause and savor this garment of earth, the skies, the seas, the mountains, hills and valleys and the very air we breath.

Let us also join with them in offering our praise, *"Praise the Lord, my soul. Lord my God, you are very great; you are clothed with splendor and majesty..."* Psalm 104:1

It's a wonderful thing, after all, when families can do things together...



Adapted from *"Brother Sun, Sister Moon"* by Dr. Chuck Summers First Christian Church, Henderson, KY Creation Care

*God,
let gentleness be the air I breathe,
wisdom the well I drink from:
wisdom from you,
pure as a mountain spring,
wiling, not willful,
the wisdom that is mercy,
a strong river of grace
a tree with life-giving fruits.
May mercy be my muscles
and gentleness my bones,
and your wisdom the breath
within my breath.
Calm and resourceful,
I face the world
with courage and love
born of your grace,
gentleness born of wisdom.*

~ Rev. Steve Garnaas-Holmes, *Unfolding Light*

Reflecting on the Word



1st Reading: [Job 28:22-33](#)

Who does not know where to find wisdom? Who then does know how/where wisdom is found? What illustrations demonstrate His knowledge? What conclusions can man learn from God regarding wisdom? What lessons should we learn from Job's discussion of wisdom? What steps are you taking to pursue wisdom and understanding in your own life? [David E. Pratte, Women Living Well](#)

Psalm Reading: [Psalm 104:1-13](#)

What is the possible significance of the Psalmist beginning by recounting God's original act of creation? What attributes of God stand out to you from these first 13 verses? What are the implications of God's role as Creator? Is there any part of the earth that is not under God's sovereignty? According to the Psalm, is creation a onetime event for God or something God continues to participate in? What does it mean for us that God continues to be involved in creation? Does this Psalm suggest that God views any part of creation as unimportant or without value? Does this depiction of creation suggest there are boundaries to creation? Are these boundaries appropriate? Inappropriate? Beneficial? Harmful? [Good Steward Campaign](#)



This is a beautiful time of year for observing sunsets. Recently we have seen some of those beautiful pink and blue skies. Have you ever thought about them as being like a garment that God covers Himself with - a garment that shows the majesty and beauty of the One who made it?

My mother used to sew a lot of my clothing, and she was a wonderful seamstress. When I was covered with the clothing that she made, it was a compliment to her because people could look at it and say that it looked good. They saw something she made and knew that she had done a good job. All of creation is as a garment for the Lord Himself. It is His covering that shows how good and how great He is. Certainly it reflects His majesty and His honor. Look around you at the sky, at the beauty that is there. See it as a garment displaying God's majesty and His greatness.

~ an excerpt from [Thank Him for His Creation](#), Dr. Ann Schorb

3rd Reading: [James 3:13-18](#)

Who is the wisest person you know, or have known? Why do you say that? How did they show their wisdom? What do verses 13-15 tell us about what wisdom is and isn't? Verse 13 talks about a "good conduct"? How would you define that? What kind of "good conduct" does a wise person exhibit? Why is meekness part of true wisdom? In James 3:16-17 we see descriptions of the "fruits" of true wisdom and false wisdom. What's the difference? How can we tell them apart? What does it mean for wisdom to be "pure"? How can wisdom be "open to reason"? What do you think verse 18 means? Have you known people who thought they were wise but really weren't? Were they meek? Did they show humility? What can you do to promote peace that yields "a harvest of righteousness"? [New Hope Church](#)

4th Reading: [Matthew 16:1-4](#)

How do you find out what the weather is going to be-TV, radio, newspaper, or superstitions, such as "ring around the moon and it will rain soon?" How does knowing the weather ahead of time affect your day? Who approached Jesus? What were the people who approached Jesus really doing? What request did the people make of Jesus? Jesus answered the Pharisees and Sadducees by talking about what? What did a red sky at night mean in this context? What did a red sunrise indicate in this context? Why did Jesus chastise the Pharisees and Sadducees? What kind of generation did Jesus say looks for a sign? What single sign did Jesus offer? What did Jesus do after speaking with the Pharisees and Sadducees? Why do you suppose the Pharisees were hounding Jesus for more miracles to prove who He was after He had already done that? Do you look for other signs, or do you take His precepts as your sign and roadmap for life? [Discipleship Evangelism, Into Thy Word](#)

Praying Toward Sunday

We Hold the Earth

We hold brothers and sisters who suffer from storms and droughts intensified by climate change.

We hold all species that suffer.

We hold world leaders delegated to make decisions for life.

We pray that the web of life may be mended through courageous actions to limit carbon emissions.

We pray for right actions for adaptation and mitigation to help our already suffering earth community.

We pray that love and wisdom might inspire my actions and our actions as communities. . .

so that we may, with integrity, look into the eyes of brothers and sisters and all beings and truthfully say, we are doing our part to care for them and the future of the children.

May love transform us and our world with new steps toward life.

~ [Faith Climate Action Week](#)