

Your message burns in my heart and bones, and I cannot keep silent. (Jeremiah 20:9)

The testimony of JESUS is the spirit of the prophecy. (Revelation 19:10c)

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03.02.2020

Son Rising (Observation/Thought)

I start most of my days sitting quietly in the room in our house that faces the east where the sun rises each morning. I sit there for at least an hour before the dawn of the new day, so as I look out the window, it is all darkness. This morning was no different, except as I stared off into the dark sky, I began to ponder what it would be like if the sun did not rise this day and this darkness continued. What would it feel like not to see the sun? Would it bring fright to our souls?

As I pondered this not so pleasant thought, the birds outside the window began chirping—their song of the morning. I often wonder what they are communicating. Are they talking to one another in bird talk, or are they announcing something to most of the world (at least in our area) that is still asleep at this hour? It's probably both. But then, a few minutes later, something else occurred. As I looked off into the darkness (mostly to the wooded area adjacent to our house), I began to see a glimmer of light shining forth through the trees as the sun began its ascent—the dawning of a new day. Its rise began as a faint red hue on the horizon until it broke forth into its full orb of bright light that no eye can look upon without suffering blindness. With the dawn, the birds outside our window moved on into the woods and, with them, their song. This morning they had done their job; they had announced the new day had come. Don't fear; darkness has once again been dispelled. God's creation awakens to the new day as life springs into action.

Over the years, I have learned a lot from sitting in this room and observing what goes on in the wooded area near us with its stream coursing through it. One day I observed a quite large (they usually are) blue heron flying through the woods as it headed toward a nearby lake to do its daily fishing. It looked like a 747 making its landing approach as it makes sharp banks to avoid mountains or buildings; only in this case, it was avoiding trees and its protruding limbs. (It reminded me of the experience we had many years ago of flying into Hong Kong's airport.) It was amazing to watch as it gracefully tilted and dipped its large wings as it headed toward its landing strip on the edge of the lake. Then, on another day, I observed a lone deer walking through the same woods when it just stopped in its tracks and turned its head looking back at the stream and then up the hill toward the same lake the blue heron often frequents. It seemed to me that the deer was pondering whether to follow the stream or head up to the lake. Either way led to water; it made me think of Psalm 42:1: *As the deer longs for the water brook, so my soul longs for You, O God.*

I learn a lot from God's "very good" creation as I see His handiwork that is truly amazing. One of the amazing truths found in His creation is that He has created everything to be well-suited to its particular realm or, if you will, niche in His glorious creation. The blue heron is well-suited to course its way through the woods to its feeding ground. Have you ever observed a heron with its long skinny legs that look like twigs of a tree standing so still in the shallow water of a lake, waiting patiently for a fish to pass by so that it can grab it with its long beak? I saw one of these stately birds sitting on the roof top of one of our neighbor's home; it looked like the Statue of Liberty. In a sense, it truly was free; free (at liberty) to be what it was designed to be and, by the way, without any care of what was going on in the world. Next, consider the deer. Have you ever watched a deer run really fast through a wooded area? How in the world do they avoid all those trees? Well, they do it because they are equipped to do it with their long legs, a

keen sense of balance, and a gait to match. Finally, back to the birds. How do they know the sun is about to rise? Do they have an internal sensor? Perhaps they see the light before we do or they have a "heavenly chip" within that says now is the time. Of course, in the case of this morning's encounter with our winged friends, I also knew it was coming because the time on the clock indicated sunrise was soon.

Looking across the broad spectrum of God's living creatures, they are equipped or, should we say, well-suited for the environ in which they live. Internally equipped, whether through their senses or through the very mechanics of their structure or something within their nature that God has placed within them, they serve their purpose (often quite amazingly) in that environ. God even uses them as signs for us to discern, whether it is the rising of the sun, the changing of seasons, or imminent danger. (When Indonesia experienced the great tsunami and quake of 2004, elephants ran for the hills before the huge wave hit land.) Earth's creatures are one of the clear indications that there is a creator God behind it all.

Now, what about us humans? We are well-suited for our environs, as well, which essentially includes the entire earth. Did you know that one of the factors that makes planet earth habitable is its relatively tight temperature range? According to one source, the temperature range for earth goes from 115° F to -100° F, with an average temperature of 61 degrees. (I'm always fascinated when I see the number 61, as if God has planted it in His creation as a sign of the history of the heavens and the earth and His rest on the seventh day [6+1=7]). The hottest temperature ever recorded was 134° F in Death Valley. Some might think this range is quite large, even extreme, but it is not compared to other planets out there that are so extreme it would be difficult, if not impossible, for humans to engineer long-term sustainability on them.

The big difference between us and all the rest of God's creatures is two-fold. First, we were formed to be in the image of Elohim—that is, we were created to be imagers of the Creator. Second, our brains, along with our hands and feet, are equipped to make things (great and amazing things) that allow us to exist and function in practically all types of environs. (Reminds me of sci-fi movies that portray these grotesque-looking aliens that supposedly are far-more intelligent than humans, and yet they have no hands, perhaps claws that look like an insect appendage, that would not allow them to build anything, and yet they course through the universe in phenomenal space craft. How'd they build them? Well, I guess this is why this genre of movies is called *fiction*.)

This all leads to the main point: we who belong to the Lord Jesus are different, even from the rest of our human race. This is not said to make us proud of ourselves or to look down upon any of our fellow humans. Rather, it is to humble us. We are who we are today by the grace of God. Our testimony is: **But God!** When the Lord broke into our lives to give us His faith to believe, we were given something that no other creature possesses—the spirit of the Lord, also called *the holy spirit*. In other words, we are given the spirit of the very same one who gives us faith, and it is by this spirit that we are to live and thrive (i.e., walk) by faith. Like the heron, we are free indeed (at liberty) to be who we are meant to be in Christ, and to thrive in our environs, which include both heaven and earth. We who believe have been given the most tremendous inner sensor of all of God's creation. It is called *the spirit of God*. We can communicate with our Creator. We can be in union with the very one who formed us, saved us, and is coming to rescue us.

Dear beloved, if I have one message for you in this day, it is this: As the bird's sing each morning of a new day dawning, as the Sun arises, the spirit of God is singing today in us that the day of our beloved Christ is dawning, the Son is arising. He has arisen in our hearts and soon He will arise as He presences Himself to us in glory. Is the spirit singing in your heart?