

Jan. 15, 2017

Lesson 7: Psalm 65; 67:6-7

Praise God the Provider

Context:

The Psalm we read today focuses on several things including humans and creation. The first several verses focus on the relationship between the psalmist and God. There is discussion of how they relate to God and God responds to the psalmist in their as they can feel and know that God is with them. In the second part of the Psalm, the psalmist moves to describing how God has created everything that is on the earth: water, grain, hills, meadows, and valleys. All of those things the earth gives life to other people. And both the earth and humanity give praise to God who created all things.

Like the other psalms that we have explored in this lesson series, there is praise and adoration for the God who is the creator of all life from humans to all the things that make up the earth.

Application:

Worry and anxiety are things that plague us. Even though we read in the Bible time and time again to “not be afraid,” we still sometimes struggle especially when things happen that are beyond our control. We hear of fighting in other countries, we see violence in our communities, and we must weather different storms that come our way. I’ve come to discover that if you have not experienced fear or anxiety at any point in your life, prepare yourself because it will come at some point. See, I just gave you anxiety by talking about future anxiety.

One of the ways that we lift up our anxiety though is through prayer. As we experience difficult times we go to God in prayer and lift up our concerns. But I have found that sometimes it does not come in that moment of silent reflection in corporate worship or even in the morning when I lift up morning prayers sitting in my armchair. Sometimes my prayers are said outside as I walk in nature or run along that steady path working on increasing the amount of miles I can run. The sun shines, the trees sway with the wind, a deer runs across the road, and I can feel myself breathing and sweat forms on my forehead. There I look around and see that God never leaves us and always gives us the courage to go on.

One of my favorite writers and theologians writes of how even taking moments of silence in nature can reinvigorate and renew our spirits. It is there in God’s creation that we see that life goes on and that the grace and peace of God is always with us. Wendell Berrey’s “The Peace of Wild Things,” gives us assurance that we are never truly alone:

“When despair for the world grows in me and I wake in the night at the least sound in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be, I go and lie down where the wood drake rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds. I come into the peace of wild things who do not tax their lives with forethought of grief. I come into the presence of still water. And I feel above me the day-blind stars waiting with their light. For a time I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.”

Whenever I read this poem, I am always revitalized. As I step into creation I realize that as I lift my prayers to God, I am reminded that all around me life continues to go on and that God is never that far away.

Psalm 65 especially lifts up these concerns. We are called to have moments of silence and prayer and see that the earth provides us with proof that God is at work. God's handiwork reminds us that God is present in all places. And we are reminded that God hears us whether our prayer is lifted as we drift to sleep, those random thoughts that swim during the quiet moment in the pastoral prayer, or ponder them as our feet hit the ground and continue to move past all of God's creation.

Our God is at work in our lives and our God reminds us that we are called to continue to come back to our creator with praise, petition, and gratitude.