

# **Sermon for Sunday 13 September 2020**

## **by Rev. Bill Church (via Zoom)**

### **CREATIONTIDE – Week Two**

*Readings: Psalm 104; Matthew 6. 25-30*

Nowadays you hear environmentalists saying of woods or peat bogs or ancient grassland that they store carbon and improve water management and deliver so many millions of pounds worth of public benefit.

All that is true. But it would be a pity if it overshadowed the sheer joy of experiencing them.

And scripture tells us not only that God made the world, but also that he rejoices in what he has made.

At the end of the first Genesis creation story, it recounts that God saw what he had made, and behold it was very good.

The wonderful last chapters of the Book of Job have God telling Job how awesome is his creation.

Psalm 104 wants to tell us how enjoyable it is; what an array of creatures live in it, each finding a place.

And then there is the sea, which, on the whole, the Hebrews were not very fond of. There go the ships busily carrying people and goods; and there goes the whale just playing around, as God made him to do, and maybe God had fun making him.

The creation is useful – giving wine and oil and bread – but it is also there to be enjoyed.

Jesus is making much the same point. Look at the birds and the wild flowers. They have no economic function but God provides for them and the flowers have a brightness and a beauty which the most expensive fashion designers cannot match.

We all look at landscapes in different ways. Subsistence farmers will assess how it can sustain them; builders will look for nice flat well-drained sites; I think about what crops my allotment will yield, and I cast an eye over woods for their firewood potential.

There should be more to it than that, and not just in the obvious National Trust standard landscapes. Wordsworth's memory danced with the wild daffodils in the Lake District, but we can wonder also at the small, the everyday, the local.

A project in Bristol has been drawing attention to wild plants and flowers in urban parks and road verges, uncultivated, uninvited, overlooked, but with their own beauty and colour.

Harvest Festival will give us a chance to give thanks for all the useful and showy things we grow and eat and put in vases.

We should also both raise our eyes, and cast them down to ground level, to see remarkable, non-functional bits of creation, all there for our enjoyment.

O Lord, how manifold are your works, in wisdom you have made them all!