

Kippax Uniting Church
Seasons of Creation Study Series – week 2
Fauna

by Jessica Morthorpe & Steve Coster

***"How long will the land lie parched and the grass in every field be withered?
Because those who live in it are wicked, the animals and birds have perished."
Jeremiah 12:4***

This study consists of five readings with discussion questions and a responsive prayer, thus 10 minutes can be allocated to each section.

READING ONE

“God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.” Genesis 1:25 NIV

Discuss: What meaning is behind God naming the animals ‘good’? Is it significant that this was said and true before the creation of humanity in verse 26?



READING TWO - Genesis 2:15-20

Discuss: Last time you brought a pet home, how did your feelings and relationship with it change when you gave it a name? What does God asking Adam to name the animals suggest about how God wants us to feel about them and the kind of relationship God wants there to be between humanity and animals?



READING THREE - Genesis 6:11 – 9:17 NIV (emphasise the verses that speak of animals)

Discuss: After reading this passage what do you note about the way God cares for the animals? Who does the legwork for God to make sure all the creatures are saved?

READING FOUR - *Read Luke 12.22.-31*

This sermon of Jesus seems ludicrous to many people today. We are told not to worry about food or clothing! God takes care of the creatures in the wild, so God will take care of us! Ridiculous! Concern for food and clothing are basic to our nature as human beings! We have to take care of our basic bodily needs!

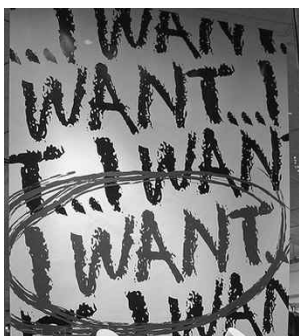
Consider the ravens! Sure! They do not sow, reap or gather into barns! Yet God feeds them. Are we to live like ravens?

But consider the ant and be wise, the wise tell us (Prov. 6.6). They actually do gather into ant barns for the winter. We should emulate them and be wise! Right, God?

Consider the lilies! They don't toil or spin like humans! But the glory of their attire outshines even Solomon in all his splendour. True, but are we to live like lilies whose glory lasts but a short season?

Is Jesus' point that we should not 'worry' about such things as food and clothing, becoming obsessed with getting enough to eat or to wear?? Does Jesus want us to focus our attention on our human drive to possess? Or is there something deeper in his challenge?

Jesus finally gets to his point that we should strive for the kingdom of God! What is this kingdom? A super spiritual realm that has invaded this world with the coming of Jesus or something else?



Jesus makes it clear that this kingdom, this way of living, is in contrast to political or economic kingdoms of nations. Such kingdoms are all about power and productivity, exploiting resources to increase possessions.

The kingdom of God, Jesus seems to be saying, is like the kingdom of the wild where creatures live in harmony with nature and with God their provider. We ought to live our lives in like manner, learning to fit into the ecosystems of creation rather than exploiting them. The kingdom of God and the kingdom of the wild complement each other.

Discuss: The sermon of Jesus might be summarised in wisdom terms as follows: Consider the ways of the kingdom of the wild and be wise! What lessons from the domain of the wild might be learned to gain a closer relationship with our Creator and with Christ in his kingdom?¹

READING FIVE

“What is the price of five sparrows--two copper coins? Yet God does not forget a single one of them. And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows.” Luke 12:6-7 (NLT)

“Jesus presumably points at a bird flying by, and says, "Aren't these birds worth virtually nothing to you? Do you even care about them? Is anyone sad or grieved when one of them dies? The Father cares for every single sparrow! That little bird in the tree is the Father's beloved companion. He was watching when she first pushed her way out of the egg, and listening as she sang her first song. He has held her in his arms, soothed, and cared for her every day since she was born. The Father laughs with her when she plays a game, and comforts her when she is frightened and hungry. One day this little sparrow, the one that no man has ever noticed, will be taking a drink from a puddle when she is suddenly and viciously injured. As she lays there dying, terrified and quivering, the Father will pick her up and stroke her neck with a strong and loving hand, whispering words of hope and rest into her ear as she breathes her last breath. He is moved with compassion at the death of his tiny, beloved friend. He weeps for the curse of sin on the earth, and the resulting death of his companion. And yet, his sorrow wanes as he remembers that they will soon be together again, without the pain and suffering of this world, enjoying each other forever in eternity.”²



Discuss: If God does not forget a single sparrow, how do you think God feels when a species goes extinct?

PRAYER RESPONSE

Open a prayer to God the Creator, then pray for the world's endangered species through a group brainstorm of as many of these species as you can think of. End with a request for a blessing on all the threatened species you don't know about, or which are undiscovered but already threatened. Thank God for providing so many incredible animals and plants, and for humanity's privilege in knowing and learning from them. Let each individual tell God what they would like to do to help threatened species (donate money, volunteer to help local endangered species, educate others, be more careful about their product choices, influence their workplace to behave ethically), or ask for guidance as to how God would like them to act.

¹ Season of Creation Bible Study, Fauna Sunday

² [What are some Bible verses that show God's love for animals? | Answerbag](http://www.answerbag.com/q_view/1152859#ixzz0y95t0Evw)
http://www.answerbag.com/q_view/1152859#ixzz0y95t0Evw