

Psalm 104^(part2)

You set limits!

Reading the Scriptures in the 21st century can raise questions; questions we do not always have an answer to, for example:

You set the earth on foundations
so firm it will never be shaken.

And you set clear limits to safeguard the earth from flooding.

The psalmist was not attempting to explain the science behind creation, he was writing a song of praise to the God, the Creator, he was attempting to capture the grandeur of the earth with its pleasures. The rhythm and flow of the words of the psalm are directing us toward the meaning of creation not a scientific explanation.

We know we cannot escape the realities that the earth does move - the movement of the tectonic plates is witness to that and earthquakes still happen. Also, that the climate is changing and the safeguards are breaking down and flooding is happening.

There is a legal term 'duty of care', a legal responsibility to keep others around us safe. We have a duty of care towards God's Grandeur. The Jesuit priest, Gerard Manley Hopkins, wrote in 1877 of the world being 'charged with the grandeur of God'. The opening words are of celebration and creation, but he also despairs at humanity's abuse of creation.

Why do men then now not reckon his rod? (*heed His divine authority*)

Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;

And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;



St Beuno's Jesuit Spirituality Centre in Tremeirchion, Denbighshire, Wales

As a community of faith, we should be moved by the words of the psalmist acknowledging that the grandeur of God's creation is being diminished by reckless human behaviour. The destruction of habitat, the threat of some species is of concern to the God we praise.

We seldom hear all the words of Psalm 104 read in full, why not take this opportunity to read the whole of the psalm?

Prayer

O Lord my God, let me know your glory, you that wrap yourself in the light as in a garment and ride on the wings of the wind.

Let me see your care for wild creatures in the brooks that run among the hills, in the trees and the rocky heights.

Let me see your wisdom in the setting of the sun and the rising, in the great width of the sea and the leaping of her creatures.

Let us honour your creation and not abuse it. So we may live in your kingdom of blessing and love. (adapted from John Eaton 'Psalms of Life'.)

We conclude this second reflection on Psalm 104 with part of Sergei Rachmaninoff's All-Night Vigi/Vespers. It is a sombre and appropriate as we approach the following words from Psalm 104 sung in the Orthodox style of liturgical choral singing.

Bless my soul (Psalm 104) It is as a cappella choral piece recorded in Cathedral of St. Mary Magdalene in Warsaw.

 **YouTube** <https://youtu.be/XfDreatXYeU?si=D2FdFSzV8oiWAqkY>

The Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), an international and ecumenical lectionary and Psalm 104 appears various shortened forms. Psalm 104 is one of the longer psalms. Sometimes brevity is required in worship!

Acknowledgements

Iona Community Worship Book

The Psalms selected are taken from the Psalms used by the Iona Community and are taken from the Iona Abbey Worship Book, Wild Goose Publications 2017. The material can be used for non-commercial use without written permission.

Photographs

St Beuno's Jesuit Spirituality Centre in Tremeirchion, Denbighshire, Wales. It was built in 1847 by the Jesuits, as a theology college. During the 1870s the Victorian poet Gerard Manley Hopkins studied there. Since 1980, it has been a spirituality and retreat centre. Llywelyn2000 - Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0

Prayers

John Eaton 'Psalms of Life'.

Music

We conclude this second reflection on Psalm 104 with part of Sergei Rachmaninoff's All-Night Vigil/Vespers. It was composed in January/February 1915 and premiered in March 1915. It is recognised as the end of liturgical music following the Russian Revolution in 1917.

 **YouTube** <https://youtu.be/XfDreatXYeU?si=D2FdFSzV8oiWAqkY>

Bless The Lord, O My Soul (S. Rachmaninoff "All-Night Vigil" / Vespers, op. 37) Singers (from the left): Adrian Nikiel, Katarzyna Bieniaszewska, Michał Raczkowski, Joanna Dacko, Irina Bogdanovich (solo), Adrianna Jarzębowska, Jakub Kozioł, Teresa Gręziak, Rafał Brzeziński.

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(Derek is an Honorary Associate Priest (All Saints & St James and St Stephen's, Elton) Prior to his ordination he was accredited as a Methodist Preacher in 1968 and served within the Methodist Church until returning to the Anglican Church in the mid 1980's)

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The dual Parishes of Kirklees Valley, Bury, (All Saints, Elton & St James, Woolfold) and St Stephens, Elton are in the Diocese of Manchester.

Vicar of the two parishes - Fr. Samuel Eccleston O.P. (Anglican Order of Preachers-Dominicans)