

## still waters

home church studies

### Psalm 104.24-34, 35b [Worship]

24 O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. 25 Yonder is the sea, great and wide, creeping things innumerable are there, living things both small and great. 26 There go the ships, and Leviathan that you formed to sport in it. 27 These all look to you to give them their food in due season; 28 when you give to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things. 29 When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. 30 When you send forth your spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the ground. 31 May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in his works—32 who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke. 33 I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being. 34 May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the LORD. 35b Let sinners be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless the LORD, O my soul. Praise the LORD!

#### Consider:

For the Middle Eastern farm worker, Pentecost marks the first harvest of the year. For urban people who live reliantly upon—but often unaware of—agricultural labor, the precariousness of harvest is unknown. For those who till, sow, and reap, first indications of good harvests are a sign of hope. Psalm 104 is a celebration of the fruitfulness of God's creation, a poem of praise to a creating God whose continuing creativity in the harvest and much else reminds us of God's commitment to renew the face of the Earth.

#### [Words]

Ecological disaster has always threatened humanity, and in our own age human actions have put at risk the fragile ecosystems upon which we all depend for life. Jesus recognized the destructive power of evil in systems that kill and destroy (John 16:1-4). His own life constantly demonstrated the judgment of God. He promised that as his witness on Earth ended, he would "send...from the Father the Spirit of truth" (John 15:26) who "will show the world how wrong it was" (John 16:8).

The gift of the Spirit is set alongside a dramatic, poetic prophecy that speaks of "portents in the sky above, and signs on the Earth below," of the sun turning to darkness and "the moon into blood" (Acts 2:18-20): pictures of the cosmos under threat. But the same prophecy speaks of God pouring the Holy Spirit "on all humanity; your young people shall see visions, your old people dream dreams," and on the slaves and oppressed, too, the liberating Spirit will fall. Our folly is not the last word. Those of us "who have the first fruits of the Spirit" are to act with persevering confidence (Romans 8:25).



#### Reflection and Action

Share with others a moment in your life when you have wondered at creation. What steps are you taking to become more cooperative with God's creation? How do you celebrate God's goodness in continuing to provide for your community's needs?

#### [Scripture]

### Romans 8.22-27

22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; 23 and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. 26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. 27 And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.