

THE MUSIC OF CREATION

Dear Friends,

Can you hear the music of creation? It is heard in the harmony of all that God has created. The music of creation is a taste of heaven.

John describes in Revelation 4 and 5 what he saw and heard when he responded to the invitation to visit heaven. In Rev. 4:11 he records that when the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders worship God on the throne they sang, "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

If we are serious about worshipping God perhaps we should start listening a little closer to the music of His creation. A music heard in the chirping of the birds, the insects, the wind blowing through the trees and so much more. As God takes John to heaven to show him what will take place before the return of Jesus Christ He immerses him in the music of creation (see Rev. 4 & 5). Heaven is a place of perfect harmony, untouched by human sin. In the center of this worship music of creation John is introduced to the four living creatures. "The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had the face of a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle" (Rev. 4:7).

These four living creatures represent the balance needed in each of us as we join the rest of creation in worshipping God in word and deed, and in spirit and in truth. Two out of four of these creatures come from the animal kingdom and one is a bird which combines with man to provide the perfect music of creation.

The lion represents the boldness that is needed in the lives of each of us. The ox represents the perseverance and steadfastness that is necessary in our Christian walk. The man symbolizes the need for compassion and caring in our lives with the eagle representing our need to be prayer warriors.

The four living creatures represent the harmony needed in our personal lives and with the rest of creation when it comes to worship. "Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come'" (Rev. 4:8).

On earth the music of creation is also heard. The problem is the harmony of creations music has been destroyed by sin. The antidote for this poison of sin is provided through the death and resurrection of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. All of creation knows this as John further reveals what he saw when he visited heaven. "Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea and all that is in them singing: 'To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, forever and ever'" (Rev. 5:13).

This revelation that John shares with us makes it clear that Christ's redemptive work goes far beyond just humanity but includes all of creation. That is why John heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea and all that is in them singing.

The music of creation is all around us. From the whale deep within the ocean to the ram on the highest mountaintop and the bird in the limb of the tree, Psalm 150:6 says, "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord."

Many miss out on experiencing the music of creation or the fact that the redemptive work of Jesus Christ extends to all of creation because their world is primarily made up of asphalt, computers and fluorescent lighting. Elizabeth Achtemeier in her book entitled Nature, God and Pulpit says, "There are thousands of people in our cities who have never seen a cow, and who could not say if the stars were out because city lights and smog block their vision. A youth leader in New York City took his teenage group into the country and found to his amazement, that they were terrified when they saw a deer. The natural world has become strange to us, divorced from our thoughts and vocabulary, so that few sermons anymore use natural images – a development that has impoverished our language almost beyond imagination. As George Buttick remarked at the beginning of the space age, 'we admire Sputnik and ignore the stars.' It is now our own creation that captures our attention instead. Our animals are anthropomorphized into Mickey Mouse and Snoopy. Tiny transistors are more amazing to us than seeds. Concentrating only on our manufactured things, we have lost the natural world."

Step out of the asphalt jungle into the Cathedral of Creation and hear the music all around you. "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world" (Ps. 19:1-4).

John Michael Talbot who has been referred to as Catholic music's number-one recording artist says that, "everything God has created reveals the divine imprint. The nature of creation manifests the unique signature of the Creator God, just as Picasso's signature in the corner of a painting reveals the work's origin. The harmony evident in our universe is evidence of the divine impetus behind all that exists. The music of creation reveals the interconnectedness of everything that God has made. But beyond that, this cosmic harmony also reveals the unity and melody that exist within the divine nature."

Talbot goes on and points out that, "the music human musicians compose is created for the ears, the emotions, the mind, and the soul. But the music of creation must sink into the deepest realms of our spirit, where it is better understood by intuition than by emotion or thought. Here, working deep within us, this music of creation will bring us into harmony with all of creation, with our human brothers and sister, and with the creator God."

All of creation is praising the Lamb of God in Revelation 5 because this lamb Jesus Christ shed His blood in order that sin, which destroys the music and harmony of creation, will be ultimately destroyed. That is why we read in Romans 8:19, "the creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed."

Humanity was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27). This means human beings are also triune creatures consisting of a body, soul (made up of the mind, the emotions, and the will power) and a spirit. Sin

causes all three of these to be in disharmony resulting in an emotional, mental and spiritual turmoil that is reflected in the struggle of creation as a whole.

“For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God” (Romans 8:21,22).

Jesus, the Lamb of God, is the way, the truth, and the life who reconciles all of creation with God. “God is love” (1 John 4:16) and as His love flows into us through the cleansing power of Jesus Christ it brings harmony and peace into our lives. As this happens it transforms the way we treat the rest of creation to the extent we let the love of God flow through us to change creation’s groaning into creation’s music of praise.

“We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of child birth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have we wait for it patiently” (Romans 8:22-25).

Hearing the music of creation often involves silence, solitude and stillness. It means leaving the noise of the city behind and going into the solitude of the forest or the park or even the closet. Then letting the peace of God create the music of His creation within. Henri Nouwen in his book, The Way of the Heart, says that “solitude molds self-righteous people into gentle, caring, forgiving persons who are so deeply convinced of their own great sinfulness and so fully aware of God’s even greater mercy that their life itself becomes ministry. In such a ministry there is hardly any difference left between doing and being. When we are filled with God’s merciful presence, we can do nothing other than minister because our whole being witnesses to the light that has come into the darkness.” As that happens God’s music of creation begins to flow forth through the resurrection power of Jesus Christ producing spiritual fruit not religious nuts.

Hearing the music of creation and letting it flow involves first asking God through prayer (Luke 11:9-13) to give us His Spirit that was present at creation (Gen. 1:2). Second, we surrender ourselves to God through Jesus Christ and join the rest of creation in praising God (see Psalms 100, 104). Third, by faith expect the creative power of the Spirit to work in your life until miraculous signs and wonders follow (Mark 11:22-25). Fourth, engage in a life style of letting go of self and surrendering to God. Then let the music of God’s creation flow through you until you are free of worry like the birds, flowers and the rest of creation (Matt. 6:25-34).

Paul in Phil. 2:6-11 describes how by surrendering to will of God Jesus let the music of creation flow through Him. “Though He was in the form of God, He did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather He emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross. Because of this, God greatly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus’ Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.” Remember, John’s description of this music of creation in Rev. 5:13, where Christ is now glorified by “every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea and all that is in it.”

Jesus is the reason for the music of creation. “He is the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation. For in Him were created all things in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, all thing were created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together” (Col.1:15-17).

How we need to join in the music of creation and praise God from whom all blessings flow. The problem is that this music is often not heard in our lives because of the struggles of daily living. As we move further into the fulfillment of the events spoken of in the book of Revelations it is critical that we make every effort to not only listen for the music of creation but also participate in it.

Before God showed John the events that were to transpire before the return of Jesus Christ, He took John to heaven to hear the music of creation. Then as the judgment unfolded John continues to report, “After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting: ‘Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for true and just are His judgments (Rev. 19:1,2).

There is a shaking going on in the world at this time. Governments are falling. Climate change is unfolding. Crime is rampant. Even as I write this I get the report someone stole a NLEC van parked in front of one of the women’s shelters. How I must strive to not let anything keep me from hearing the music of creation. This means I must not only continue to hear all of creation praising God but I must join in that praise and worship. As I do this I am reminded in the depths of my being that “God is love” and that He has everything under control. “Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for true and just are His judgments” (Rev. 19:1,2).

I am told over and over in the wonders of creation and in the Scripture that God has everything under control. As I hear and participate in the music of creation this knowledge begins to move from my mind into my emotions and will power. As this happens I am free to join Paul as he declares. “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Phil. 4:13).

The time for action is now. May we indeed strive to join the music of creation and let the love of God flow through us in word and deed.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Larry Rice". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Larry Rice