

Sunday 5 September 2021: God the Creator (Psalm 65)

The first of September is Spring Day and all over there are signs that nature is waking up after winter, even though the weather is still not always very 'Spring-like'. Perhaps some of you have been out to see the spring flowers on the West Coast.

I wonder what signs of Spring David noticed as he looked after his sheep. Probably he became aware that there were more hours of light and that therefore the nights weren't so cold. He probably also noticed that there was fresh grass for his sheep. Perhaps he too saw some blossoms or veld-flowers.

His immediate reaction was to praise God and to thank him for the signs of his care. I love the way he puts it in Psalm 65. It is a poem so he is using word pictures all the time. He explains that it seems as though 'the gateways of the morning and the evening' are shouting for joy.' (verse 8). The dawn and the sunset are celebrating the season in which God will provide the crops that we need. And David realizes that this isn't just a once-a-year act on God's part – it is the result of God's preparation during which he 'softens [the earth] with showers' and so blesses its growth.

I like his next image for he describes God's 'wagon tracks' overflowing with richness. I can just picture the grass covering the muddy winter trails! David is so thrilled by the beauty and the abundance that he imagines that the hills have dressed themselves in joy while the meadows are clothed with flocks and the valleys with grain. All dressed up in their most beautiful clothes, 'they shout and sing together for joy'.

When I was a child we used to celebrate God's provision with a 'harvest festival' at church. On the Saturday we all brought fresh produce (flowers, grapes, carrots, sheaves of wheat, etc) to decorate the church. Some clever people even baked giant loaves of bread! This was all beautifully arranged at the front of the sanctuary so that when we went to Sunday school and church the next day, we could see an amazing display of what God had given us. Then everything was packed up and given away to poor people. I loved those services when we sang for joy that God was looking after us. Sadly, as more people moved into towns and didn't have big gardens, these services couldn't be held any longer.

Some people get so upset by the problems in the world, that they forget the wonderful things God has provided. They blame God for things which go wrong, but don't thank him for all that is going right. Let's wake up and sit up and notice! Spring is a good time to celebrate God's goodness to us – just as David did here and in many of his other poems and songs too.