

HARVEST 2019
PSALM 104
COLOSSIANS 1:15-20

God's world – our world

Look at the wonderful display of food; all of it starts of life growing on our planet; wheat that grows to make flour to make bread or pasta; apples that grow on trees; beans that grow and then are tinned in tomato sauce; jam that starts off life as fruit and sugar that comes from sugar cane. There is just a wonderful variety of things that we have and that we enjoy and what we have on the table is just a small sample.

Were you listening to Psalm 104 as Christine read part of it for us? Psalm 104 is all about our world that is also God's world; it celebrates the world as God's world, a world that He made and it celebrates the ways in which God works in the world. Were you listening?

Tell me some animals that you heard mentioned? *Donkeys, birds, cattle, stork, goats, conies*

Tell me some plants? *Grass, plants, trees, cedar*

Tell me some things that God gives to us for our use? *Food, wine, oil, bread, water.*

These are all ways of seeing what God has done and what God has given us, ways of saying "thank you" to God for His wonderful world that He has made and the wonderful world that we live in!

What does our food do? "Feeds us" is obvious answer, but here's something to amaze you. I have a clock here, but it is not working; what does it need? It doesn't take a battery and I can't wind it up! But I do have a lemon and 2 wires; if I plug these 2 wires into the lemon watch what happens to the clock; it starts up, powered by the lemon! The clock's power comes from a fruit that God has made. The first time I came across something like this was someone who had a clock powered by a potato.

This makes me even more amazed at the world we live in; it is such an amazing place and the more amazing that I see the place is, the more I want to say "thank you" to God for making this world for us to enjoy. But we are not only to enjoy it, we have to look after the world as well and we have not been very good at doing that; that is our job, to look after God's world and we still have to look after the world for God. It is our job to care for the planet and those who live on it; we want it to stay a wonderful place for everyone to enjoy!

There are all kinds of ways in which we can look after the planet; we have heard all about reduce, reuse, recycle; Tearfund has a campaign to persuade four multi-national corporations, Pepsi, Coca-cola, Unilever and Nestle, to reduce the number of new plastic bottles they produce and so reduce the amount of rubbish on the planet; there are all kinds of ways and our job is to look after the planet because it is God's wonderful world and our wonderful world too.

What's in the bag?

We had 5 bags with some food in them, in varying amounts; each bag was given to someone in the congregation at the start of the service and now they had to bring the bags to the front.

Bag number 1: a big sandwich with jam; a spare jar of jam, a chocolate bar and an apple.

Bag number 2: a smaller sandwich (no jam); a satsuma, a large bag of rice

Bag number 3: a tiny sandwich (no jam); a quarter of an apple; a little rice

Bag number 4: two small squares of bread (no butter or jam), 2 cream crackers, a quarter of an apple, a very little rice.

Bag number 5: a cream cracker and a little rice

If this were your lunch, how would you feel? *Hungry! Jealous of the person with the first bag because she has more! I don't know how to cook rice!*

Is it fair? *No! Of course not!*

How do we make it fair? *We share it our better; those with more, share with those who have little.*

It is not the fault of the person who has more that they have more! We should not feel guilty that we have more food and a greater variety of food, but we should find ways of sharing!

We have lots of food, the display at the front here shows that! We say "thank you" to God for the food we have, the things we enjoy. It is great! But we live in world where other people don't have as much as we have or the foods we have, or other good things. There are people in our city who struggle to have enough food to eat and depend at times on foodbanks; there are people who have to choose in winter either to pay for heating or pay for food, but they can't afford both! It should not be like that in our rich country, but it is. There are families who need to visit food banks because they don't have enough food to see them to end of week; I read the story of the dad who feeds his children sugar and water to give them energy.

There are people in other parts of the world who find it hard to farm, it is hot and getting hotter; they depend on the rains, but the rains have not come and the ground is dry, and the crops don't grow. There are countries, like Sierra Leone, where the rich people take most of the wealth and keep it for themselves while most of the people in their country are poor and have very little to eat. Last week, we saw Ruth's story: the year before last she grew five bags of corn; last year she grew 13 bags because the church in her village helped her to farm better, and through the self-help group to which she contributes, she now has a pig and some chickens to help her earn money to feed her family more and with other foods.

So we give. We give the food in this display to the food bank at Gorgie to add to the food box that people give to each week. We give at times to Tearfund (watch out for the Quiz in November) and Christian Aid because these groups work across the world to help people who are poor, helping them with better farming, or other crops, or with a campaign against corruption! Pray for our world to be fairer place.

Jesus is Lord of everything. *"Everything was made by Him and for Him."* (Colossians 1:16) These words remind us how great is the Lord Jesus and that the world is His. We need to look after the world and the people in it, in a way that pleases Jesus!