

VIEW FROM THE HEIGHTS August 2021

And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals?" (Jonah 4: 11 NRSV)

Greetings,

God is deeply concerned with animal welfare. That heartens all of us who are equally (ALMOST equally!) passionate about our 4-legged, winged and finned relatives.

The assurance of God's love for animalkind is especially comforting when our companion animals get into difficulties.

This summer, my cat was attacked by a barred owl and incurred severe leg injuries. Thankfully, after 6 weeks in plaster, she is now well on the road to recovery. Buddy, a dog in our wider church community, has been struggling with past abandonment issues and is now in "rehab." to help him recover. (Good luck, Buddy! Our prayers are with you.)

Sadly, in July, our very own church dog, Jake, succumbed to the heart issues that had gradually weakened his body but never dampened his spirit.

Jake was an exemplary church member. Quiet during worship (OK, he may have slept during sermons but so do lots of humans!), Jake was in his element during greeting time. He was always the first one out of the pew. Kind and friendly, quiet and contemplative – he was the perfect congregant! Jakie will be dearly missed.

We love our pets. Rightly so! Their wellbeing is part of our duty of care to God's good Earth. We have been invited to name animals: not "dog", but "Jake" & "Buddy". We are commanded to look after them.

C.S. Lewis wrote that,

*"Everything a [human] does to an animal is either lawful exercise, or a sacrilegious abuse, of an authority by divine right."*ⁱ

"Everything" runs the gamut from battery eggs to preventing habitat loss.

Pet care, farm animal welfare, and the protection of wildlife are all part of our God-given duty to tend Creation. Human interfaces with animals are either "lawful exercise" or "sacrilegious abuse" of that Divine mandate.

This is a not a duty that is supposed to be onerous. God intended it as a source of blessing, and the blessings are manifold. Furry companions, feathered friends who fill our gardens with colour and song, the opportunity to help God every time we buy a dozen eggs! God knows how to hand out THE BEST jobs!

*I will make human beings,
men and women, girls and boys.
They will be help me care for the fish, the animals, the birds,
all the creatures that swim in the depths,
or run upon the land,
or ride upon the tall air.*

*How beautiful everything was!
How very good!
All was good!
ALL was good! .ⁱⁱ*

Deepest Blessings,
Brenda

ⁱ C.S. Lewis, "The Problem of Pain," Collier Books, 1962, p.129-143

ⁱⁱ Genesis 1: 28, 31, Trevor Dennis, "The Book of Books," A Lion Book, 2003