

# A Loud Voice

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Category: Creation Care

Dappled sunlight, filtered through sycamores, willows and oak trees, glints on the small brook. As I sit there watching, several species of warblers and a flycatcher flit by. Moments later a grosbeak appears in the tree in front of me. All around are sounds of life: dragonflies, birds, lizards, squirrels. Things I had almost forgotten about in my overly busy life. But as Luke 12:6 tells us, God has not forgotten them.

As news of the oil spill fills the headlines in the US news and the sad story of the destruction of countless creatures filters in, it is easy to think of the environment only in terms of problems. Similarly, in my work with Plant With Purpose, focusing on environmental degradation and poverty around the world, one becomes all too aware of both devastation, and its impact on people. But the destruction of creation is only a part of the story.

God created the heavens and the earth and pronounced it good. Despite the impact of the Fall, and all we have done since, it is still good. In historical Christianity, creation was widely regarded as God's general revelation. There is still much to be thankful for, much to delight in, and much that points people to God.

St. Augustine said, "Some people, in order to discover God, read books. But there is a great book; the very appearance of created things. Look about you! Look below you! Note it. Read it. God, whom you want to discover, never wrote that book with ink. Instead He set before your eyes the things He had made. Can you ask for a louder voice than that?"

George Washington Carver, an American botanist (and former slave) of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was so confident that science revealed the truth about God, that he encouraged people to study creation precisely so they could discover God. He said, "To me, Nature . . . is the little windows through which God permits me to commune with Him, and to see much of His glory, by simply lifting the curtain and looking in. I love to think of Nature as wireless telegraph stations through which God speaks to us every day, every hour, and every moment of our lives."

God himself, when called into account by Job, turns to creation to explain himself or rather remind Job that he is beyond human understanding. Some of the most moving descriptions of God's relationship with nature come in Job 38-41. In these passages we see both God's delight in all that he has made as well as our own need for humility as we approach it.

Occasionally critics express a concern that emphasis on environmental stewardship will cause people to worship nature. Yet I have never felt this temptation, nor have I met anyone who has. It certainly didn't seem to be a worry of Augustine or George Washington Carver as they encouraged people to look more closely at all that God has made.

Rather it inspires a much deeper reverence for the Creator, as well as some unique insights into his character. In Augustine's words, can we ask for a louder voice? If we wish to discover more of whom God is, we can remind ourselves of what he has not forgotten. And as we seek to share Christ with the world, we will find his creation is a powerful ally.