

All Hail the Power of Jesus Name!

See print copy for song.

Old Orchard Church

February 1, 2009—10:15 to 11:45 a.m.



**O Lord my God,
you are very great...
At your rebuke
the waters fled,
at the sound of your thunder
they took to flight....**

Psalm 104:1, 7

Celebrating Jesus, Incarnate Son of God: Lord of Nature

Who can take in the wonders and richness
of this vast, complex, beauty-ridden world?
From the splendor of a snowflake
to the awesome tumult of a storm,
all nature shouts the praise of Him who made
and orchestrates the world!

Yet we, made in the image of God, stand higher—stand,
in fact, as the crown of creation, broken though we be.

Adam squandered our dominion-glory,
But the New Adam, God the Son,
came into the world as a man to restore it.

In submission once to creaturely decay,
Jesus now tames the universe as Lord.
All who own their guilt,
and run to his cross of Mercy for cover,
taste even now the Coming Reversal:
when death shall give way to life,
and all created things flourish
under the sweet rule of the redeemed of the Lord.
Blessed be his Name!



Scripture Readings

Old Testament: Genesis 1:1-10
New Testament: Matthew 8:23-27

— Sermon —

“Pressing On to Know the Lord Christ—in Power and Pain” Part 2
Philippians 3:4-16

Ron Lutjens, senior pastor, preaching

The Nature Tamer

As a child, I saw miracles as magic. Now, I see them as signs. When John the Baptist languished in prison, Jesus sent him reports of healings and resurrections to prove that he was “the one”; a short time later, though, John himself died at an executioner's hand. Jesus' message to John did nothing to alleviate his physical condition, and we do not know what effect it might have had on his faith. Regardless, the message did express the character of the kingdom Jesus had come to set in motion. It was a kingdom of liberation in which the blind would see, the lame would leap, the deaf would hear, the leprous would be cleansed, and the poor set free. For some (in three dozen miraculous instances that we know of), liberation occurred while Jesus walked the roads of Galilee and Judea. Others have realized liberation through the dedicated service of Jesus' followers. But others, John the Baptist among them, did not achieve such liberation on earth at all.

Why, then, any miracles? Did they make any difference? I readily concede that Jesus, with a few dozen healings and a handful of resurrections from the dead, did little to solve the problem of pain on this planet. That is not why he came. Nevertheless, it was in Jesus' nature to counteract the effects of the fallen world during his time on earth. As he strode through life Jesus used supernatural power to set right what was wrong. Every physical healing pointed back to a time in Eden when physical bodies did not go blind, get crippled, or bleed nonstop for twelve years—and also pointed forward to a time of re-creation to come. The miracles he did perform, breaking as they did the chains of sickness and death, give me a glimpse of what the world was meant to be and instill hope that one day God will right its wrongs. To put it mildly, God is no more satisfied with this earth than we are; Jesus' miracles offer a hint of what God intends to do about it.

Some see miracles as an implausible suspension of the laws of the physical universe. As signs, though, they serve just the opposite function. Death, decay, entropy, and destruction are the true suspensions of God's laws; miracles are the early glimpses of restoration. In the words of one theologian,

“Jesus' healings are not supernatural miracles in a natural world. They are the only truly ‘natural’ things in a world that is unnatural, demonized and wounded.”

—Philip Yancey in *The Jesus I Never Knew* (1995)



We celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly—and in a circle, at the end of worship. A word of direction is given, and with this everyone stands and moves to the walls. The cup is passed in two forms: in a chalice and then in small individual cups. You are free to choose.

And as this is the Supper of the Lord Christ, please listen to the instructions we give as to what qualifies a visitor to participate. **But whether you intend to take communion or not, please join us in the circle.**