



FLOWERS DEVOTIONAL

LUKE 12:27

“Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”

EXPERIENCE

Our family was driving through North Carolina in early May and the roadside was resplendent with thousands of gorgeous wildflowers. The above picture is a good representation of what we saw, row upon row of red and pink poppies. The sight whetted my appetite for when the fields here in Pennsylvania would also burst with the colors of springtime. Our wildflowers have finally arrived. Just last night I was delighting in a delicate purple and white European Columbine.

God has not created a drab or dull world of purely utilitarian purposes, but a painted landscape filled with an array of colors upon a grass green backdrop. Whether wildflowers on the roadside or cultivated flowers in landscaped front yards or hanging baskets on

porches, cruising around neighborhoods and the countryside is a feast for the eyes and the nose. The varied colors, shapes, and smells of all the flowers is a testimony to the Lord's creativity and his delight in displaying beauty. Have you heeded Jesus's call to consider the beauty of flowers this season? Have flowers led you to ponder the glorious beauty of Christ Jesus?

CONTEMPLATION

Jesus tells his disciples to meditate upon lilies. In his commentary on Luke, scholar James Edwards explains that "the Greek for 'wildflowers,' *krina*, is normally translated 'lilies,' but it may include the autumn crocus, anemone [poppies], gladiolus, or simply the happy flowers of Galilee."¹ Jesus directs the disciples' attention to how wildflowers grow. Lilies do not anxiously toil; thus, neither should believers have anxiety about how they will clothe themselves. The wildflowers simply wear what God gave them. The flowers' glory is evident in God's providing their beauty for them. Though their aesthetic splendor is temporary, we understand that the beauty of the God who created them is eternal. Jesus was deriving pleasure from admiring and considering the grandeur of the flowers he created and how they reflect God's glorious provision.² Jesus's moment of delight is a reminder of the pleasures of meditating upon the elements of God's created world (trees, birds, flowers, etc.). The flowers communicate both the fleeting nature of human beauty and the perennial nature of divine beauty. Human beauty and prosperity

¹ James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Luke*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 249. The poppies of Galilee and the poppies of North Carolina are not the same, but they resemble one another.

² Philip Graham Ryken, *Luke*, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2009), 672.

fades, but God's beauty is unfading. Flowers' loveliness point beyond themselves to God's unfading glory.

Likewise, believers' lives glorify God by trust and enjoyment of his provision for them. As believers trust in Christ and are clothed in his righteousness, they manifest the beauty of God's provision of salvation. Human displays of beauty are temporary, for we like flowers, are frail, but God's beauty is forever. Christ reveals how flowers communicate the glory of God's character, especially as a gracious provider for his people. How have you observed the beauty of God in his provision for you?

PRAYER

Gracious God, thank you for your incredible provision for us. You provide our daily sustenance. You provide for all our needs. In Christ Jesus you have gloriously provided salvation, so that, clothed in your righteousness, we might stand before you beautifully redeemed. What a gift to be in right relationship with you O Lord. Free us from anxiety. We cast our cares on you, trusting in you to graciously provide for our daily needs. Might our trust in you be a beautiful display for others to see. Grant us the courage to share the good news of the gospel and might they see your beauty and also trust in you O God. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

CONFIRMATION

Humans have an innate desire to search for meaning in the elements of creation—stars for example. Astrology is a sinful example of this human urge. Another example is plants and flowers. One of my favorite mobile apps is "PictureThis". The app uses plant recognition

technology to help users identify plants and flowers by taking a picture. Each plant has a section entitled “symbolism” which describes what the plant symbolizes. For instance, the app claims that common poppies are symbolic of fertility, love, and sleep. I do not know the app’s methodology of deriving meaning from plants, but I am sure it is humanistic.

The desire to extract meaning from creation is not in itself sinful, for God clearly has communicated via his creation. This communication is called general revelation. Furthermore, attaching some personal meaning to certain plants and flowers is not necessarily sinful either. My wife picked daisies for her wedding bouquet, so when I see daisies, I often think of her and express to God my thankfulness for her. However, we as humans quickly fall into sin when we twist this desire to understand the meaning in creation into idolatry. We look to creation itself to meet our spiritual needs instead of the Creator. We preference inanimate objects or animals over the resurrected Lord Jesus and his Spirit whom he has given to live and dwell within us. Humans overlook the Spirit-inspired Word of God when they approach created things to meet needs that those created things were never designed to meet. Created elements are not giving us direct or specific personal revelations of God’s will. Created elements are communicating general truths about God and his divine nature. They are always ultimately directing our gaze to the glories of our Creator and to rest in God as our glorious provider.

Flowers, as evidenced by Luke 12:27, Matthew 6:28-29, James 1:11, and Isaiah 40:6 are an emblem of God’s own glory and beauty and his delight to display beauty in creation. Flowers also are an emblem of the fleeting nature of human beauty and prosperity.



Charles Spurgeon

Sermon #2302 “Watching for Christ’s Coming”.

“The lilies simply stand still in the sunlight and silently say to us, “See how beautiful are the thoughts of God?” If we could just drink in God’s love and then, almost without speech, show it in our lives, how we should

glorify His name!”³



Lady’s Slipper Orchid

My friend, Stokes Clarke, is a nature photographer. He wrote to me in response to the rain devotional in May. Here is his reflection on this wildflower:

I took this rainy day photo of a Lady’s Slipper Orchid - a rare wildflower. My intent in my nature photography is to

show folks things that we might miss, or perhaps a new way to look at a little part of God’s miraculous creation. Another fascinating facet of God’s creation are the intricate processes that take place in the natural world that we never see. The lady’s slipper needs a specific fungus in the soil to reproduce. The threads of the fungus open the seed and attach themselves to the seed and pass nutrients to the seed. When the plant matures and produces its own nutrients it returns the favor to the fungus. It is these processes that, to me, are evidence of God’s presence in every minute detail of life.

³ <https://www.spurgeongems.org/sermon/chs2302.pdf>