

The Sunday School Lesson

BY JOHN R. BRAYBOY
SALEM MISSIONARY
BAPTIST CHURCH

Never Alone (Psalm 139:1-14, 23-24)
Outline

- I. God Knows Us (Psalm 139:1-6)
- II. God Accompanies Us (Psalm 139:7-12)
- III. God Made Us (Psalm 139:13-14)
- IV. God Purifies Us (Psalm 139:23-24)

I. God Knows Us (Psalm 139:1-6)

The writer of this passage of scripture recognizes the knowledge of the all knowing God. He realizes that he has examined him and knows his ups and downs. God is aware of our shortcomings as well as the positive things about us. God even knows what we are thinking even before we think it. Think about it! Nothing ever occurred to God because He is all knowing.

The writer acknowledges that the places he goes, and even when he sleeps God knows all about him. It would do all of God's children good to come to his knowledge. God even knows what we are going to say before we say it. Whatever a person does or wherever he may go God knows it before hand. This might not sound good, an acquaintance knew everything about you because he might use it to bring harm to you. God, on the other hand, uses His knowledge of us to make us better people.

The infinite mind of man has trouble grasping how great God is in His knowledge of him. The writer here is appalled all things God knows about him: it is just beyond anything that our mind can comprehend.

II. God Accompanies Us (Psalm 139:7-12)

The writer recognizes his inability to escape from the presence of God or from His spirit. Whatever direction that he goes, God is there. If he goes to heaven or by contrast to hell, He is there. He realizes that he cannot get away from God. A person who goes to hell will have a constant reminder that he could have been spending eternity in heaven with God. Even in hell a person will not get away from God. But He will not take him out of there.

Even though darkness may come and one cannot see, the writer reminds us that darkness does not provide a cover from God. Many people do wrong under the cover of darkness to hid from people, but while they may hide from people, they cannot hide from God because He can see in the dark, as well as He can in the day. We need not worry about what man sees us do, but we need to be concerned about what we do because God is the final authority that we have to answer to. Many times we complain about drug dealers, crooked dealings, etc but God is keeping perfect records and all those who do wrong will face an accounting day.

III. God Made Us (Psalm 139:13-14)

The writer moves from the awe of the all knowing God to the same God that made him. Here he marvels at the fact that God was in control of his emotions and even protected him even before his birth. That tells me that life of an unborn begins with conception.

There is reason to give honor and praise to the almighty. He made us in his own image and likeness. He loves us and knows all about us. Think about it, brethren, the human body is marvelously made and only the almighty could have made a body that functions in such harmony. Not only that, but He gives us the Holy Spirit to bear witness to our soul that we could know.

IV. God Purifies Us (Psalm 139:23-24)

The writer now makes a request to God to do what has already been done. In other words, he is saying God examine my life and show me what is lacking in my life. God looks on the heart of man and He alone knows a man's heart. Most of us do not want God to test us or know our thoughts. This needs to be every Christian's request so that God could make us better Christians and soldiers of the cross. Too many times we want to keep the unfavorable things about ourselves hid, even from ourselves.

When we allow God to show us where we need to improve and allow Him to lead us, then we will follow Him in the path of righteousness. We need to let God show us the wickedness that is lurking in our hearts so that He can remove it.

There are two paths in life for many to choose to follow: (1) the path of righteousness or the path of wickedness. If you are on the path of wickedness, you need to seek God and His forgiveness and follow after righteousness. God wants to save you for Christ's sake. Get on the right path today. Jesus is soon coming after his own. Will you be ready?

God bless you until next week.

A Need for Reform of General Statutes of State and Federal Wildlife Agency

There is a GREAT NEED for all people to understand the reverence, respect, and connection that Indian Traditionalists feel towards the Earth, mankind, and animals.

The American Indian does not believe in the taking of a bird's life or fur-bearing animals simply to obtain its garment or parts. The taking of such has always been done in order to provide food for our people. We believe in and support regulations that protect endangered species, birds of prey, and yes especially our nation's symbol, the Eagle. We do not condone the willful killing of these birds.

When we find a bird of prey (road kill) along the road side, traditionalists believe it is proper to extend its life through the taking and respectful use of its feathers and other parts. Traditionalists also believe in reverencing a moment to reunite its body to the Earth, that its spirit may forever soar the skies with descendants that follow. This is a traditional custom of the American Indian and has been for thousands of years... long before the arrival of the white man. The current law forbids most Indians the right to possess the revered feathers and claws of the birds of prey and migratory birds.

The current law allows one to hunt the deer, turkey, and dove, and to possess its meat and eat thereof. But it is illegal to sell its antlers on a knife handle or to sell a bow quiver made from its hide. It is also illegal to use or sell the dove feather in a dream catcher. It is even illegal to possess or sell the feather of a turkey. And, in regards to the eagle feather... according to the laws administered by the "Department of Interior" via the "United States Fish and Wildlife Agency", no American Indian can legally possess an

Indian Voice.

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Pembroke Kiwanis Report

The weekly meeting was held Tuesday evening at the Town and Country Restaurant at 7:00PM. Program Chairman Furnie Lambert presented Miss Rebekah Revels, Miss Lumbee for 1997 and her mother Decena Revels. Miss Lumbee will be accompanied by her mother to the Miss Indian Nation Pageant in the near future. Miss Lumbee performed in her beautiful soprano voice "This Is My Beloved" and also "The 23rd Psalm". The Kiwanis and the LRDA are helping Miss Lumbee in her endeavors of speaking to groups and schools. Her at these functions are "Respect for the Elderly", the value of prayer and the value of a good Christian Family. The audience was thoroughly impressed with Miss Lumbee's talent and speaking abilities.

We believe and hope that she wins the Miss Indian USA.

Lt. Governor Dick Fisher inducted new members - Elaine Nance, Burnese Branch and Todd Jones. Miss Nance is a classmate of Miss Lumbee's mother Decena Revels. Both are graduates of UNCP. Miss Branch and Mr. Jones are also UNCP graduates. Mr. Jones is also the proud father of a four year old son "We Welcome was sponsored by Bob Lowry. Governor Fisher cited the goals of the Kiwanis and stressed the value of getting involved as the responsibilities of Kiwanis. Fred West accompanied Gov. Fisher. Invocation was lead by Garth Locklear. Presiding - Furnie Lambert; Song Leader - Ray Lowry; Reporter - Ken Johnson.

eagle feather or any part of the eagle thereof unless he or she are members of a Federally recognized Tribe; and then the feather(s) are to be inventoried with the "Federal Fish And Wildlife Agency". This regulation has been in place for nearly 50 years and is in direct contradiction to the "American Indian Religious Freedom Act, 42-USA 1996". And to top that, Federal Agents may audit your inventory of Eagle feather(s) (should you have any) to determine your compliance or non-compliance. The "Federal Fish And Wildlife Agency" isn't the only agency that needs reform. The "North Carolina Wildlife's" Regulations are just as much out-dated and contradictory to the "American Indian Religious Freedom Act". In fact, many believe that both the current Federal and State Regulations discriminate against the American Indians, their freedom, and pursuit of happiness in the observance of their heritage, spiritual gatherings, and culture. The time is at hand for a change in both the State and Federal Wildlife Regulations. There is a great need for a change!!

The need of reform to the "General Statutes" of the "State and Federal Wildlife Agency" will provide state recognized tribes, Native American Organizations, communities, and public officials an opportunity to interact with one another to achieve greater freedom for all our American Indian citizenship.

The current "General Statutes" are well over half-a-century old! It is time for changes!

We as an indigenous People, and as the 7th largest State in Indian population should envision a collaborative effort that will provide freedom and opportunity in the God given right to possess, own, and use feathers and furs in our traditional celebrations, religious events, and other everyday life activities.

The accomplishment of a reform will not be an easy or short-termed task. A cooperative partnership must be initiated by Local, State, and Federal Agencies.

A statewide set or rules that revises and defines current regulations on the use of migratory birds, birds of prey, and fur-bearing animals is long past due.

Such an act would enable the Indians of North Carolina, as well as, all other States the opportunity to legally wear any feather or any part thereof of a bird of prey, migratory birds, and/or fur-bearing animals without fear of incarceration due to the current and outdated State and Federal Regulations.

The Statewide set of rules and Federal rules must not contradict one

another, thus, again... a cooperative partnership must be initiated by all entities in order to accomplish this task.

This enactment would ease the current stringent regulations while easing discrimination and unfair regulations affecting the American Indian. A revised enactment would strengthen the traditional, spiritual values held by the American Indians, and permit us a greater freedom.

The organizational development of the enactment would consist of a staff of Native American Organizations, Tribal Bodies, State Agencies, Federal Agencies, and public input as a part of the cooperative process of developing and promulgating new regulations pertaining to feather, furs, and parts thereof.

In order to maximize the public's response, the State's applicable agencies should lead in developing and administering a survey that will lead in developing a new enactment. All Indian Communities and Organizations should also be targeted in this survey.

There is a great need to ease the current State and Federal Regulations as how they discriminate against the traditional values and religious beliefs of the American Indian.

There is a great need to simplify current Federal Regulations as pertaining to the taking, possession, and use of feathers, furs, and parts thereof.

There is a great need to simply and ease stringent regulations, i.e., salvage permits, documentation forms, reports, etc.

There is a great need to revise State and Federal Wildlife Regulations so as they are not contradictory to the "American Indian Religious Freedom Law 95-341" enacted by the 95th Congress on August 11, 1978 and revised in 1996.

There is a great need for all American Indians and Indian Organizations to rally together, nationwide, to fix that which has been so wrong for so long. We as American Citizens have the right to celebrate our heritage and to preserve our traditional values and customs, after all, are we not the "First Americans"?

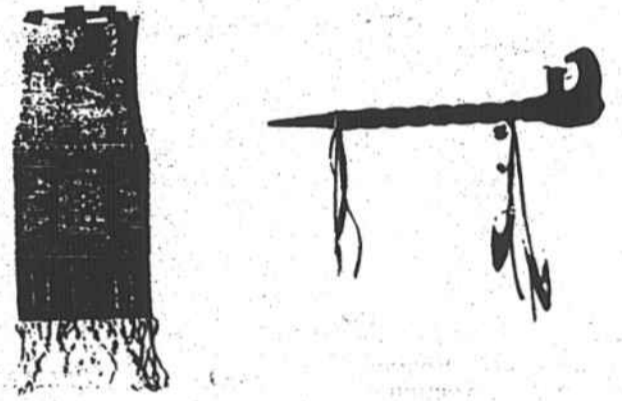
Your silence will be your acceptance to the status quo.

I urge you not to sit idle and wait for someone else to do something. Take action today in contacting your State Tribal Leaders and the "North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs"!

AHO!!
by John "Tall Bird" Marshall

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