August 8

Happy Monday, everyone.

For the next few weeks, I’d like to continue with our break from looking at the books of the Bible in order and walk down some different paths for a while. Today I’d like to talk about the Chicago Cubs (I can see you Sox fans rolling your eyes, but stay with me).

Our son Matt is in town for our daughter’s wedding, and he had given me two Cubs tickets for Father’s Day. It has been a number of years since I’ve made the trek to Wrigley, so I was very much looking forward to spending the day there with our son.

I grew up going to Wrigley Field. It was an annual trip for my family, and it was always a special treat. My mom would make meat loaf sandwiches (we all ate them with ketchup except for my dad. His were with mustard.) We would share a bag of potato chips and a jug of Kool-Aid. We were allowed to get one treat. Mine was usually either a box of cracker jack or an orange sherbet pish-up. Of course, there was no such thing as buying tickets in advance, so we would show up and wait in line at the ticket booth and buy whatever five seats they had together.

My dad would buy a scorecard and one of those little pencils, both of which together cost a quarter, and when we got to our seats, he would light a cigar and pour a cup of black coffee from his thermos. When the announcer would say, “Ladies and gentlemen. Get your pencils and scorecards ready. This is the lineup for your Chicago Cubs,” he would pencil in the lineup and keep score through the whole game. Banks at first, Kessinger at short, Beckert at second, Santo at third, Billy Williams in left, Jim Hickman in right, Adolfo Phillips in center, and Randy Hundley behind the plate. If we were lucky, Fergie Jenkins was on the mound. Those days with my family were very special.

So off Matt and I went last Friday. It was a picture-perfect day. Breeze off the lake, temperature about 76 degrees. Barely a cloud in the sky. This was the view from our seats:
We had a great time. Great conversation, mostly about nothing in particular, just a dad and his adult son being together and enjoying the day, as I did with my dad many years ago. For those of you who are interested, the Cubs won that day off a Wislon Contreras home run in the bottom of the 8th. That’s the good news. The bad news is that we left at the 7th inning stretch in order to beat the traffic (which means it took us “only” an hour and a half to get home). So it goes.

As I reflect on that day, it occurs to me that the ball game was just the setting. The real joy was in being together. Sharing the experience, the conversation, the memories, and putting another brick in the wall that cements families together. And as I think about that, I am reminded that as much as I delight in being in our son’s company, how much more the Lord delights when we take the time to sit with Him. This is what the psalmist says:

“For the Lord takes pleasure in his people; he adorns the humble with salvation” (149:4); and this: “Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart” (37:4).

So go ahead. Sit with the Lord today. Have a conversation, even if it’s about nothing in particular. And delight in His presence, as He delights in yours.

IHS,

Pastor Lou
August 9

Grace and peace to you this day.

Judy and I are at war. Not with each other, but with critters. My war is with the squirrels, hers is with the bunnies. Today we’ll talk about the squirrels.

I have a bird feeder that our daughter Jillian gave me that attaches to the window with suction cups. It’s on the south-facing window of my office at home. I thought I had hung it in a place where the squirrels couldn’t get at it, but I was wrong. The neighborhood squirrel, a tenacious female, has figured out that she can jump onto my window screen and from there onto the bird feeder. This is her in action:

![Squirrel on bird feeder](image)

At first, I was annoyed. How dare that squirrel eat my bird seed! And then I realized that the birds didn’t really seem to mind. They just wait patiently in the bushes while the squirrel eats her fill. And because Madame Squirrel is a messy eater, there are seeds that scatter all over the ground. I came to understand that the birds didn’t mind that either. They just peck the seeds off the ground. No need to take the effort to fly up onto the feeder.

And so now I’ve reached a sort of truce with my squirrel friend. She obviously has no fear of me since she looks me right in the eye as I work in my office. As for my part, I get a close-up view of God’s handiwork, even something as common as a squirrel, right outside my office window. It reminds me of this passage from Job:
“But ask the animals, and they will teach you,  
or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you;  
or speak to the earth, and it will teach you,  
or let the fish in the sea inform you.  
Which of all these does not know  
that the hand of the Lord has done this?  
In his hand is the life of every creature  
and the breath of all mankind" (7:10).

So today, I would encourage you to go out and experience God’s Creation. As you do so, know that what the “animals will teach you,” and what “the birds in the sky will tell you” is that “the hand of the Lord has done this,” even to the point of putting the “breath” of life into you, and into me.

IHS,

Pastor Lou
Greetings to you this day in the name of Jesus the Messiah.

Our driveway has become something of a bathhouse for the birds in the neighborhood. There’s an indentation in the asphalt at the end of our driveway and when in rains, the it fills with water and becomes a bathing area for the local robins, sparrows, and the like.

In addition to the birdbath, we also have a robin's nest in under the eave of our house right above where the downspout curves immediately outside our front door. We got in the habit of going out the garage door instead of the front door so as not to disturb Mrs. Robin as she incubated her eggs and then fed the hatchlings, of which there were three. (One of them didn't make it. Yours truly played the role of baby robin undertaker.)

In any case, one morning as I was leaving the house, I forgot about the robin's nest and opened the front door. Off flew Mrs. Robin, who sat in the tree in our front yard and scolded me for my forgetfulness and rudeness. And then, undaunted, she decided to take a bath. Here she is:
Since she was blocking my car, and feeling guilty for having disrupted her morning, I decided to wait until she was done. After she was finished, she flew back to the nest, and I went on my way. All was right with the world once again.

You know, I have to believe that the Lord is something of a birdwatcher. Seeing that robin that day, I have to believe that God was watching out for her and her young. This is what the psalmist says:

“I know every bird on the mountains, and all the animals of the field are mine” (50:11-12).

And yet, as important as the birds are to God, we are still so much more important. These are the words of God’s Son:

“Consider the sparrows: They do not sow or reap; they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds!” (Luke 12:24).

So today, rest assured. Rest assure that you are valuable and valued. Rest assured that you are watched over with a steady, unblinking eye. And rest assured that you are so deeply loved by your Creator, the Most High, God Himself.

IHS,
Pastor Lou

August 11

Greetings to you, DGCC Family,

Well, tomorrow is “the big day,” our daughter Jillian’s wedding.

Weddings are important to God. So much so that Jesus chose a wedding to perform His first miracle. So rather than a written devotional, I thought we’d have a video devotional today: Take a look:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kCXSp19YHww

IHS,
Pastor Lou
August 12

Happy Friday, everyone!

As always, we’ll do a musical devotional today, but if you’ll allow me a personal moment today since this is our daughter’s wedding day, here we go.

This one is for you, Jellybeans, from your Pops.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Xz8uSgg5Q4

IHS,

The Father of the Bride