



Turtle Tyrants

Spring is history for 2024 in our hemisphere. Sadness flashers before my eyes occasionally as spring seems to brighten my days and put 'spring' back into my steps. Spring flowers replace hints of winter snow. The brightness of the day light helps me spring into work. Watching the tiny green leaves poke their heads above the soil creates a delightful scene.

Yes, spring is a beautiful time for all – well, maybe not for all. Mostly spring is a time of beauty but there is a balance of sadness. Gulls, crows, or even large fish may gobble up new born cygnets, despite the watchful eye of mama and papa swans. A pair of baby doves, birthed on a patio chair here at Concordia, was carefully guarded by their parents for fear a hawk would swoop down for a bird snack.

The other day a friend shared an observation that stirred her heart while she was walking around our little pond. A large turtle was grabbing wee, innocent ducklings. Mother duck was unable to protect her children. Aggressor Turtle would be well fed that afternoon. I wonder, however, if ducks shed tears or experience broken hearts at the loss of their children?

Newborns have little defensive ability and the cycle of life continues – all creatures need food. Tomorrow it may be the doves eating baby bugs. Somehow we seldom shed a tear for the mother of an ant or mosquito just smashed by an aggressive human. Recently I watched a short YouTube flick as a small feline helped lead seven, very young ducklings to a pond for their first swim. I prefer observing a young kitten caring for a few yellow, fuzzy, fur balls than a turtle snapping them up.

As I type these thoughts, my mind careens off to humans. Almost everyday, I suppose, the life of an animal has been taken to create my hamburger or beef stew. Few of us are vegetarians. Even Christ helped feed the 5,000 who came to hear him teach with five loaves and a pair of small fish a young boy had brought for his lunch. Our lives are connected to others. There is an interdependence between and among all creation.

The turtle must be alert for determined predators, including carnivorous mammals, like raccoons and opossums. Even more significant for turtle parents is the protection of their eggs and hatchlings. A turtle nest may contain over one hundred pre-turtles (eggs) or little ones - perfect snack food for a predator. Who is more important – a turtle or a raccoon? Both are creatures God created. He made them dependent on others.

So with humans. We have families that care for us, who try to protect their children both from physical harm but even more importantly, from spiritual destruction. Our heavenly Father desires to help us avoid spiritual death because of satan's interference in our lives. Satan is like a sneaky turtle seeing whom he can destroy. *"Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour"* (I Peter 5:8-9a). Resist him.

Satan works through people to hurt and destroy. Stand firm in your faith. Extend a helping hand to others, just as our little kitty helped the chicks. *"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ"* (Galatians 6:2). John 15:12 reminds us to love each other as I (Christ) loved us. I Thessalonians 5:11 is always a challenge but a blessing. *"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up . . ."* Dear reader, take a moment and think, 'Who do I know needs a helping hand, encouragement, a kind word, or a trip to the ice cream store for a sweet treat and a few minutes of pleasant conversation, maybe even followed by a word of prayer?

Let us spring forth, even today,
demonstrating kitty-kindness
rather than turtle tyranny.
Help and rescue rather than
kill and destroy God's human creations.
Well, maybe also even save a
precious, little yellow duck.

