

Devotion Sixth Week of Easter, 2021

Rev. Jeanne Simpson

We have an idiot squirrel in our back yard. I thought he learned his lesson some weeks ago, but no – he's not high up in the mental IQ department. We bought bird seed that's been baked with cayenne pepper a while back. We were tired of the squirrels and the raccoons eating everything. For a while, nothing happened, and we weren't sure those critters had even found the food yet. But one morning I looked out and here came the squirrel we always see around our garden. Up it jumped onto the top of the deck seat, and then it stretched WWAAAAAYYY over and finally got onto the tray of the feeder. I waited. It picked up a seed, put it in its mouth, and nothing happened. Oh no, I thought! All that expense for this stuff and it doesn't work! But then, the squirrel started shaking its head and rubbing the side of it with its paw. Finally, it grabbed its tail, pulled it around to the front, and wiped its face with it. Then it hopped off. So I thought we were done with the squirrel. But this morning it hopped up there (now it may not be same one of course but it sure looked like it) and grabbed a seed, jumped down to the deck seat, and proceeded I think to swallow it. Suddenly it began wiping the side of its face with its paw and took off at a run. It may be down at the creek right now drinking lots of water!

As you can tell from past emails, we like our yard and garden. It's a lot of work, and our knees and backs don't handle all the planting and weeding as well as they used to. But when I sit on my back deck, I feel like I'm in a little garden of Eden. We carved this house out of the woods, so we don't see anything related to "civilization" around us at all. And this year some flowers that hadn't bloomed at all or very well in several years suddenly popped out. Dark purple irises, a volunteer yellow daisy, and Big Mama's red climber rose. That rose was lovingly brought from Jim's grandmother's farm before we sold it several years ago, and it had done nothing. Suddenly we have massive deep red roses blooming.

I'm reminded that God's gifts of creation to us are not only free, but they are incredibly beautiful. I don't understand how a tiny seed can turn into all the different flowers and plants I see, and I don't understand how a little bloom can turn into a bell pepper or a luscious tomato, but God understands. I'm just grateful for them.

I'm reminded of one of my favorite choir anthems: "All Good Gifts." The words are printed below, and here's a link to a beautiful rendition on Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m0y5sqWaCzA>

We plow the fields and scatter the good seed on the land
But it is fed and watered by God's almighty hand
He sends us snow in winter, the warmth to swell the grain
The breezes and the sunshine and soft refreshing rain
All good gifts around us, are sent from Heaven above
So thank the Lord, oh, thank the Lord for all His love.

We thank Thee then, O Father, for all things bright and good
The seed time and the harvest, our life, our health, our food
No gifts have we to offer for all Thy love imparts
But that which Thou desirest, our humble thankful hearts
All good gifts around us, are sent from Heaven above

Jeanne