

**Devotion for Week of August 14, 2022**  
**Rev. Jeanne Simpson**

I don't know what it is with hummingbirds, but they seem rather dumb. Little, cute, but dumb. Or maybe just super aggressive little warriors. In spite of two feeders with 10 feeding holes, there are three that constantly fight over them at my house. They spend so much time driving each other off the feeders that the energy they get from what little nectar they are lucky to obtain must immediately get burned up in all their bird fights.

Charles Seabrook, environmental writer for the Atlanta Journal Constitution, says that each hummingbird needs 50 feet of area as territory before it stops fighting others for space. Well folks, that's like saying that a human needs an entire football field for territory. We certainly get along as neighbors better than that. So I don't know how these three on my feeders are going to get fattened up to fly south for the winter – they're too busy buzzing and attacking each other to gain weight.

Hummingbirds burn massive amounts of energy each day in order to sustain their rapid wingbeats of up to 60-80 beats each second. They need to eat almost constantly, maintaining blood sugar levels high enough to cause serious disease in humans. To process that high volume of sugar, hummingbirds have evolved a metabolism 77 times faster than a human's, made possible by hyper efficient enzymes. Scientists at Johns Hopkins are studying those enzymes to look for insights into human diabetes and obesity, by showing how hummingbird evolution has solved them. So maybe the little sip they get occasionally in between dog (oops, I mean bird) fights is enough. All I know is that it is fascinating to watch them swoop in for a slurp and then get dive bombed by another one.

I'm reminded of Matthew 6:25-26: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?"

So somehow in God's wonderful creation, these tiny little birds have learned to process high volumes of sugar nectar efficiently, but I sure wish they'd learn to get along with their neighbors and realize there's enough for each of them! The next time I feel myself getting pushy while waiting in line for something, I'm going to think about those hummers, and remind myself that there's enough for everybody, if we just share.

*Jeanne*