

November 29th

Isaiah 59:12-13

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Growing up in northeast Louisiana, the bayous are often lined with Bald Cypress trees with long strings of epiphytes hanging down (better known as Spanish moss). Playing on the banks of Lake Darbonne or the Ouachita River, I would jump from knee to knee, using them like pedestals, looking for tadpoles and more importantly staying clear of water moccasins. Decades later, in New Braunfels, Texas, less than a mile away is Cypress Bend Park. A park that has massive 400 year-old, Montezuma Cypress trees lining the Guadalupe River that dwarf anything, or anyone near, as they are 20 feet around. Throughout Scripture, trees are used in parables, to enclose the inside of the temple, for carving of weapons, to symbolize holy entrances, and in the crucifixion and resurrection, and so much more. Trees are mentioned in the Bible more than any other living thing, other than humans. And in Isaiah 55:13, the iconic Cypress replaces the thorns from the fall as God's everlasting sign of salvation replacing judgment. Nature once again takes part in redemption as it also took part in the Noahic covenant. Repeatedly creation sings and claps their hands and here ushers humanity out of Babylon into divine communion. God called God's people to turn their backs on Babylon and to so with joy and be led forth with peace. For the oldest living things on earth join in on this celebration of transformation. We know that trees communicate with all different types of species of plants, insects, and animals through mycorrhizal networks and have the ability to see through photoreceptors, so why is it sometimes difficult for humanity to imagine creation praising God? Often humanity's worldview of the Holy Spirit and God are limited to self-centered relationships, however over and over scripture reminds us of creation taking part in the covenants of promise and redemption. And even today, communing with the majestic Cypress trees growing near the river, I am reminded that they are God's sign that we will never be abandoned or cut off and that we may praise the Almighty together.

Action: Spend some time listening to the sounds of a tree. Really listen. Discern different forms of wisdom in creation that God has for you.

Prayer: Creator God, as we look inward and out into the world to seek and know You, may we know the thing for which we were sent and do so in joy and peace, through your Son Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

