Worms and Birds
“I know every bird on the mountains, and all the animals of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for all the world is mine and everything in it.” Psalm 50:11-12

I peered out the window one very early morning, and a large, brightly colored, plump robin arrived to survey the premises. He looked around carefully, made one plunge with his long beak into the grass, and came up with a huge, wriggling worm.

I thought of the old adage, “The early bird gets the worm,” and asked a friend why robins find more worms in the morning. It seems, he says, that during the night the worms rise to the surface when it is cooler, and go back deeper to get away from the heat of the day.

Worms get their oxygen from the soil around them, and when it rains, they have to surface for while since they can no longer breathe. A field day for the robins!

So really, a bird on a rainy day is going to get all the worms he might want or need! If he is early!

The robin is not only looking for worms early, he is one of the earliest birds to nest and raise their young, so he is one of the first birds to look for worms to feed the current, and next generation of robins. He also has keen eyesight, which he uses to find the next wriggling meal.

God cares for these robins, and the other birds of the world, but he cares for us as well. When we rise early, we see the sunrise and are there when the earth begins to wake up. We can feel a certain communion with him as we begin that day together.

Every morning is a chance to commit that day to the Lord, to converse about more important things than we shall face later in the day. There is a certain kind of magic when we see the sun come up, as the birds begin to sing and the world puts on its bright and glorious colors in the early morning.

One writer put it this way. “I love early mornings when it feels like the rest of the world is fast asleep and you’re the only one who’s awake and everything feels like it isn’t really real and you kind of forget about all your problems because for now it’s just you, the world, and the sunrise.”

~ Anonymous

Not everyone is an early riser, so perhaps every now and then getting up to find these moments might be even more of a treat. They, and God wait for us every day.

When we look at the birds and their worm journeys as well as their flights, the building of their nests, the way they take care of their broods, and the beauty God has given them, we should give thanks to God who made them. We should also rest in the assurance that God loves us even more than them, because he says he does.
“That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn’t life more than food, and your body more than clothing? Look at the birds. They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren’t you far more valuable to him than they are? Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?” ~Matthew 6:25-27

We must also think beyond the wisdom of that early bird thought. Yes the early bird catches the worm, but as Steven Wright once remarked, “the second mouse gets the cheese.” Or as Ralph Augustine thinks, “the worm gets eaten”

But here is a more helpful thought. President Franklin D, Roosevelt widened the thought a little when he wrote, “I sometimes think we consider too much the good luck of the early bird and not enough the bad luck of the early worm.”

We should think of the needs of others more than our own. The worm is not just food. It provides certain services to the world, and gardens and fishermen would not have very much to speak of if it were not for the lowly worm. Sometimes we are the worm, sometimes the bird.

So as we fly back to the bird imagery, let us trust in God who gives flight, food, and faith to the believer. We must never think that we are destined to be confined by earth. Even the caterpillar, another excellent snack for a bird, can become a butterfly and take its flight to the heavens.

“Those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.” Isaiah 40:30-31