

Daily View

“But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today’” Hebrews 3:13

April 13, 2020



Something about this scene that makes me hear frogs and crickets

Frogs

Maybe you feel like I do today. I woke up this morning feeling a bit melancholy, not happy about be locked out of the our building for all these weeks. It's a hard pill to swallow. I was going to write about that, but I decided to wait a day or two and see if I still feel the same way. If I do, then you can expect a *Daily View* that is brimming with moaning and murmuring. You may choose not to read that one.

Meanwhile, in the spirit of staying upbeat in these troubled times, let's talk about frogs. A preacher, in a church where they bring the little kids down front and ask them questions, said, *“Today, I'm going to talk to you about frogs; what do you think about when you hear the word ‘frog’?”* A little boy: *“I think about God.”* The preacher asked, *“Why do you think about God?”* The boy said, *“Because I know you didn't bring us down here to talk about frogs.”*

Frogs seem harmless enough. In our time, we see them in lighthearted advertising, cartoons, stuffed animals and on coffee cups. In the Bible, though, frogs are sinister little creatures. I could find no positive statements about frogs. They were one of the nasty plagues God sent on Egypt (Exodus 8; cf. Psalm 105) and Revelation 16:13 is just scary:

And I saw, coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs.

But, typically, while you wouldn't want frogs hopping free in your house, you do appreciate them in your garden. We don't tend to think of them in a negative way. In fact, I enjoyed some little froggy friends when I was living in Orange County in my youth. The topography of Orange County back then was primarily beaches, strawberry fields and orange groves. It was almost rural, compared to LA thirty miles north. It was a great place for a little boy with a bicycle. One of my favorite pastimes was to visit this little shallow pond near our house. I became interested in it because on my first stop there, the pond was full of tadpoles. All I knew about tadpoles was that they turned into frogs.

I stopped by every day to check out the progress of the little creatures and, one day, I was delighted to find the pond teeming with baby frogs. So, in one of my daily visits, I decided to separate the frogs by size and name them after Dodger players — a little froggy baseball team. I named the largest one “Frank Howard” after the Dodgers rookie outfielder who was 6' 7" and weighed 250 pounds. I named the smallest frog “Pee Wee” after Pee Wee Reese who was still on the Dodgers roster.

These are the kinds of things kids did before the invention of video games, Netflix and social media. You rode your bicycle and you discovered stuff. Due to multiple moves and disruptions, my formal educational history is complicated and even worse, my spiritual education in churches was almost non-existent. Maybe I've blocked it out for some reason, but I honestly cannot remember any Bible classes. The entirety of my spiritual education was from my parents not the church.

But I've always been curious so, on my own, I discovered a lot things. Finding Frank Howard and Pee Wee led me to study about frogs. And I think I learned more about frogs than I did when I dissected them later on in 8th grade. I collected other stuff besides frogs — stamps, coins, rocks, baseball cards — and I learned all I could about them. That took awhile. My mom and the local library was my “Internet.”

I woke up kind of forlorn today, sad that our meetings at the building have ceased for awhile. Writing these daily thoughts has helped me realize, though, that we have a rare opportunity to discover some things in the world and about ourselves that we haven't taken the time to discover in the rush and hubbub that is so characteristic of our lives today. Maybe you should consider, if you haven't already, separating your kids from their phones, turning off the TV and video games and then send them to the backyard with an assignment. Pretend it's 1958 and tell them to see what they can find back there — without the Internet or Google. You may be surprised what they find on their own and they may well remember what they discovered for the rest of their lives.