

24<sup>th</sup> September 2021

## Fascinated

**“Look at the birds of the air; they don’t sow or reap or store in barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? See how the flowers of the field grow. They don’t labour or spin, yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these.”**

*Bible, Matthew 6: 26, 28, 29*

Spoiler alert! This piece is about spiders. If that’s a problem, you might not want to read any further ...

I watched a spider have lunch the other day. Sitting in my garden, my eye fell on a spider’s web, delicately constructed between two bushes. It was beautiful, two feet in diameter, anchored by several strands to the bushes on either side and completed with forty or more concentric circles. The gentle breeze made the web shimmer in the sunlight. And in the middle was the spider’s lunch, in the shape of a small, motionless fly.

As I watched, a large, brown spider scuttled from its hiding place in a bush and started on its lunchtime repast. Taking a closer look, I could see the spider clinging to its web with a few legs – I never figured out how many – and turning the fly round this way and that with a few more.

I’m sorry if this is a bit off-putting for some of you, and I apologise for giving you the heebie-jeebies. But, in truth, I was fascinated. And as I watched and marvelled at this wonder of nature (David Attenborough, eat your heart out!) I pictured Jesus doing the same, making people aware of the birds, flowers *and* insects around them, and using them as metaphors for his teaching. So he *might* have said:

*Consider the spider in its delicate web. See how it works with patience and skill. God has given you abilities too. Have you not got many more than the spider?*

But I was also fascinated by me! When did I last take time to wonder at something as delicate, enthralling and beautiful as this, to gaze in silent wonder at a spider and give myself space *really* to see how remarkable my world is? I watched a bee, a butterfly, a flower, a sparrow and ... When I looked again, the spider had gone. Ah well, I can only hope that a satisfied spider was as grateful for its wonderful world as it helped me to be today.

### **A prayer for today**

*Lord, I’ve considered the birds, the flowers, and even the spiders ... And to be honest, I’m just fascinated! Will that be thanks enough for today? Amen.*