

COOING AND WOOING

I went outdoors and used the weedeater in our backyard on the glorious spring day we enjoyed yesterday. No virus rules were broken. My task let me stay at home, and I was attacking that outburst of fence-row weeds all by myself. The late-afternoon sun was brighter and much warmer than I anticipated, though, so I worked up a good sweat. I was glad when both of my weedeater's batteries ran out of juice, because I had too.

To cool down and to recharge my own batteries, I plopped down on our front-porch swing on the shady side of the house. And soon I discovered that I had chosen a ringside seat to the springtime courtship of at least three pairs of doves.

Stay-at-home virus restrictions had reduced the usual traffic flow on our busy residential street. Only a pickup or two drifted by during that half hour of dove-watching. The loudest vehicle that passed our house was a tiny motorized plastic car driven down the sidewalk by a four-year-old girl as she dragged her six-year-old brother on skates. His skate wheels and her hard-plastic tires rattled and rumbled on the concrete so raucously that all the doves scattered.

But not for long. Soon they fluttered back. Their romancing on that perfect spring day was way too important to be interrupted very long by a couple of kids. I watched as two of the doves decided to get romantic in the middle of our street. For the longest time they nudged and pecked each other and dined together on tree blossom seeds scattered by the previous night's wind. A second pair spent almost that entire half hour cooing and wooing on a fork high in a cottonwood behind a house across from ours. I don't think I'd ever seen a bird stay that long in the same place on a limb.

Do I have to tell you that I like birds? Always have. So getting to witness those displays of dove love delighted me. At some point during this unexpected entertainment, I told myself though, that none of it would have been possible had it not been for COVID-19. On a normal Sunday—one that had not been squelched by virus concerns—I would never have spent that hour running that weedeater and therefore needing to rest on that swing. Nor would our street have been quiet enough for those lovebirds to feel comfortable flirting with each other where I could be their audience.

So not everything about novel coronavirus is bad.

For those who can see beyond immediate pain or threat, life has always been that way. "We rejoice in our suffering," the apostle said, because he and his converts could see the good that would come from it. So should we.