

Sermon: Sunday June 21st 2020 : Psalm 8, Gods Majesty and our place.

This Sunday finds us at the beginning of a new mini series in our thinking. The next few weeks we are going to focus on the book of Psalms. Found of course in the Old Testament, and generally most are believed to have been written by King David.

On our journey through the Psalms we will engage with every human emotion. From Psalms that are full of joy and Praise, to poems about pain and sorrow, doubt and despair, retribution, and frustration. There is almost a Psalm for every possible occasion, and our first one today is perhaps one of the greatest in terms of Praise and Adoration.

Psalm 8 explores the theme of Gods majestic splendour and our puny insignificance. At the same time, it rejoices that God has created us in His image and graciously crowned us with glory and majesty too. He has, as part of his plan, assigned us roles over His creation. All these thoughts should lead us to declare in worship.

“O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!”

We are not sure when David wrote this psalm, but it clearly sprang from his vast experience of gazing up into the night and marvelling at its vastness compared to his own sense of self-worth, and his insignificance in the universe on the planet called Earth.

When we consider Gods majesty as seen in all the earth, you don't have to look very far or too carefully to find examples, all of creation shouts of Gods majesty, every snowflake, every leaf, every blade of grass.

The human brain has 10 million nerve cells interacting in coordination to enable us to function as we do. Our eyes have approx. 10 billion receptor cells in each retina, which also contains four other layers of nerve cells. The whole system makes billions of calculations per second, traveling through our optic nerve to our brain, which has more than a dozen separate vision centres needed to process the information. Our skin has more than 2 million tiny sweat glands, about 3,000 per square inch of skin, to regulate our temperature...I could go on to describe the heart beating on average 75 times per minute, 40 million times a year, or the 200 finely designed bones that support your body, etc etc etc, and this is just a tiny part of the human body.

What about the complicated balance of the natural world and the hydrological way in which plants grow and process carbon dioxide to produce oxygen, the seasons, the balance between insects, birds and other animals, how could anyone ever imagine all this happened by accident without a creator?

David considers the splendour of Gods heavens before the telescope was even invented. He did not know how big the Universe really was, what would he have thought if he had known? The vastness of outer space and the coordination of it all is literally mindboggling. If you travel at the speed of light (186,000 miles per second) it would take you 8 minutes to get to the Sun. To then go from the Sun to the centre of the Milky way would take you a

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further 33,000 years. To cross the Milky Way (still at the speed of light remember) would take around 2 million years. To cross the entire universe as we currently know it would take you 20 billion light years, according to National Geographic Magazine.

David knew that in spite of all the evidence of Gods glory in His creation, there are still those who won't believe in Him, who oppose Him, because they want to be lords of their own lives, and have no room for God. From the mouths of babies and infants you have established your strength, who, looking into the eyes of a new born baby can doubt that there is a creator, and that very little happens by sheer chance. David realises how small he is when set against all this and marvels "what is humankind that you thought of us, and the Son of Man that you care for Him". This is the first mention of the term Son of Man that is later picked up in the conversation between Jesus and His disciples about His identity and His part in the overall plan of God. We are clearly, as far as David believes, related to God through His son Jesus Christ, and that gives our little puny lives eternal significance.

We should resist the temptation to worship the creation, rather than the Creator, we should not neglect the fact that we are stewards over God's creation, we should oppose the greed that often destroys creation with no regard for its beauty or preservation. Take the message that David proclaims in this Psalm; every legitimate occupation is a God-given vocation, no matter how lowly we may feel, and we should take every opportunity to enjoy our God through the wonders that He has made.

Oh Lord our God, how majestic is your name.