

Trinity Sunday 2022
June 12, 2022
Psalm 8/Romans 5:1-5
John 16:12-15
Pastor Ann Hultquist

Do you have a favorite book in the Bible? Not everyone does, but if you were to talk to some of the people around you today, it's a pretty good bet that someone would say "the Psalms." After all, that book contains some of the most loved and well-known verses, descriptions of God and descriptions of faith. Think about a few familiar phrases: "The Lord is my Shepherd; I lift my eyes to the hills; O Lord, you have searched me and known me; Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth." The 150 Psalms pretty much cover every emotion, every struggle in life and with God; and also everything that makes us want to praise and thank God.

While the book of Psalms looks a lot like any other book of the Bible, it is really quite different. It is a collection of *songs* that were sung by the Jewish people throughout their long history. Followers of Jesus inherited these psalms and have continued to include them in worship as well as in personal devotion. We have no idea *how* they were sung thousands of years ago, but for many years the Church has chanted them in one way or another as we do most Sundays. I know not everyone is a big fan of that--in a previous congregation someone said "You know, we could shorten the service by taking out that *thing* that's between the readings."

During the summer, we'll be reading them responsively, which might give us more time to hear the words and the emotion they contain. If we skipped the psalm, we'd miss a great deal, like the opening verse of Psalm 8 this morning: "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!" It's a wonderful phrase for any time of year, but summertime especially, when we might see and experience the majesty of God in mountains, lakes, seashores, forests, deserts, flower gardens, in the faces of people we love but rarely see, and in the stars in the sky.

The ancient people who wrote this psalm had no concept of the universe as we have learned about it--of black holes, super novas, the Milky Way and the planets and universes beyond our own. But they could see, couldn't they, see what most of

the people in the world can't see anymore: a dark, dark sky, and thousands of stars. It was the glory of creation and the glory of the *Creator* spread out above them, and someone wrote a song about it.

Can you think of the last time you experienced that kind of awe and wonder? So often we are too busy to notice, too distracted, maybe too hypnotized by the screen on our phone. We've lost sight of the splendor of creation, and our own splendor as people created by God. But it is a good place to start on this Trinity Sunday as we immerse ourselves in the Mystery of God who is present as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit--Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.

The *mystery* of God--not somehow the *doctrine* of God, but our lived experience of the Trinity: the baptismal water poured on our heads, the cross we trace on our body, the Benediction that sends us out from worship. Millions of people will agree that they believe in God--a God--who is often both removed from the world and daily life and yet also makes "everything happen for a reason." The Christian faith invites us to a relationship with God who wants to be known, who wants to draw us into a deeper relationship--and into a faith that is so much more than trite sayings.

That's where the psalm writer goes next: "What are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?" It's not really a question, is it? It's a marvel. That in all the vastness of creation, that in God's majesty, God remembers *us*, cares for *us*--all people. That care is clearly shown in the life of Jesus, who we call "Emmanuel"--God With Us. In flesh and bone, with beating heart and breath like ours, God's love became human. Jesus loved--loves--without limit, inviting us to be drawn to God's heart, to know not only our value in God's eyes, but know God's grace.

Grace is the word that Lutherans love and one we also sometimes forget in the ways we live--our *if/then*, the "you get what you pay for" mentality is blown apart by the love of God in Christ for the world--for each of us. Unearned, just simply a gift that washes over us again and again, "poured into our hearts," Paul says today, "through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us." Paul's words today and Jesus' words today--(just those few short verses from John) are a window into the whole

message of Scripture: The Creator is at work to form a Christ-like people in whom the Holy Spirit is undeniably active. It's not a doctrine, it's a promise--it's an *experience* that we get to live.

Writer and theologian C.S. Lewis described it this way: Imagine yourself praying. Your prayer is directed to God, but it is also prompted by the Holy Spirit. At the same time, you are with and within Jesus as part of the Body of Christ. So as you pray, God is the One you speak with, the call within you to pray, and your beloved companion in the journey of life. The mystery of the triune God who longs also to be known.