

Text: Psalm 8 (NIV)

Sunday 5th July 2020

Brightons Parish Church

Let us take a moment now to pray before we think about God's Word. May the words of my mouth, and the meditation of all our hearts, be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, our strength and our redeemer. Amen.

Boys and girls, in our drama today the Wonder Zone scientists got knocked off course as they tried to investigate Saturn, but that helped them to see the wonders of our solar system!

Have you ever looked up at the stars in the night sky? Have you tried counting as many stars as you can see? Why not give it a shot this summer, if you're allowed to stay up a bit later? Apparently, it's possible to see with our eyes between 5- 10,000 stars. But even that is just a small proportion, because we think there...

might be at least 10 billion galaxies and each galaxy could have 100 billion stars – that’s a lot of stars!

Boys and girls, some of these stars have been grouped into patterns, “constellations” is what we call them, so that when we can look up at the stars, we can see different shapes. The names given to these shapes were based upon famous stories like Hercules and Pegasus. Maybe you could try finding them over the summer too.

The psalm we read today also has a story behind it, and it also involves the stars. More than three thousand years ago there lived a man called David. He was no ordinary man, he was a king - he was king of God's people called the Israelites.

David loved God and wanted to live God's way and sometimes David got it right, sometimes he got it wrong. But he knew that he could talk to God about whatever happened. Sometimes he had to say sorry to God. Sometimes he needed to ask God to help him and sometimes he just had to shout about the amazing things God had done.

Our psalm today is one of the songs David wrote to God and it was all about the stars, the planets, the Sun and the moon. David was basically **saying to God**, "Oh God you are in charge of everything. Your name is amazing and the whole earth knows it. When I look into the night sky, I can see how wonderful you are. I know it. Children know it. Even toddlers and tiny babies know it. They all sing to you about your great and marvellous deeds..."

The praises of children cause your enemies to fall silent. Everyone who has turned against you can think of nothing else to say. I think about everything in the sky, the whole breadth of the heavens that you have made. I think about the moon and the stars, the Sun and the planets. You put all of these things in their own special place. I ask myself, why do you care about us humans? We are tiny, we are weak. We don't live very long compared to you and yet we are only second to you. You have given us crowns of glory and honour. You have put us in charge of everything You have made. You put it all under our power: the sheep, the cow, every wild animal, the birds in the sky, the fish in the sea and all the creatures of the ocean. Oh, God you are in charge of everything. Your name is amazing and the whole earth knows it."

That's basically what David was saying to God in the psalm, the song we read today. I wonder, when you look at the night sky, and you see the moon, the Stars, the planets, what you want to say to God? I'll give you thirty seconds to talk or think about that at home.

(PAUSE)

The universe is vast and amazing, and it can sometimes boggle our minds when we try to think about it all. We're still learning things about the universe, still learning things about our solar system. For example, some scientists think there might be another planet beyond Neptune, a ninth planet, ten times the size of earth – but they have not found it yet. So, scientists are still learning things about the stars, and we're all still learning things about God – hopefully we have a risky curiosity.

One of the things that startled and amazed David, was to realise that the God who made everything, the God who was powerful and creative enough to make the whole universe, that same God cares about you and me. **David said to God,** ‘...what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?’ (v4) We may not seem as important, big or amazing as the stars, but God knows us and loves us.

David says that God is ‘mindful’ of us – God remembers us, God has His mind filled with thoughts about us. **David struggles** to understand that, because God is as big as the universe and yet He concerns Himself with you and me.

But not only do we sometimes struggle to understand this, we can struggle to believe or accept it at all...

In preparation for the “Science and Faith” night last Tuesday, someone sent me a text message, but I got it too late to include in our recording. At the heart of their message was a question about suffering; about believing in a God who is supposedly mindful and caring of us, and yet, so much is wrong in our world. I think that person, like all of us, struggled with the daily reality we face.

To be honest, even if I had received the message in time, I’m not sure what answer I would have given. For there’s really no answer that truly satisfies the pain we feel, the wondering and frustration in our souls, as we look around the world and see **that not everything** is ‘under [our] feet’ (v6), not everything is under our control, and at times it doesn’t feel like everything is under God’s control.

So, do we just naively carry on? Do we simply bury our heads in the sand? Are we clinging to a lie when a truth is maybe staring us in the face?

Well, as you might guess, I don't think so. I still don't have the answers, but the Bible doesn't duck the reality of the world either. **The writer of Hebrews says, "Yet at present we do not see everything subject to them [humanity]. But we do see Jesus..." (Heb. 2:5–9) In Jesus we see the mindfulness and care of God compel Him towards us, such that He – the vast, powerful, creative God of all – **was willing to become** a weak infant and then die in the most humiliating way, all in order to save us, to provide us with a hope and a future. Because the claim of Christianity, is that Jesus conquered the worst, He conquered death itself, for we claim He is alive even now.**

And so, the claim of the Christian faith, is that God raised this Jesus to have all authority and power, it's just that right now it's not fully revealed, but it will be one day, and on that day, the final enemy to be destroyed will be death itself (1 Cor. 15:25-26).

I still don't have "answers" but I do have continuing faith in God, because He has proven Himself, through Jesus, to be the mindful and caring God of our psalm, so much so, that He wouldn't stay distant, but came to die, He came and '...suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.' (Heb. 2:9)

You and I not just mere specks of dust in a vast and uncaring universe. We are so dearly loved, that the God who made it all, came near, because He could not...

imagine, He could not keep thinking about, a future where you and I are not with Him and resting in His care and His love.

I pray, that in your wrestling, in your dark seasons and times, in your marvelling at the starry night, that you would know this God close to you, ever faithful, never leaving.

May it be so. Amen.

We close our time together with our final hymn...

HYMN *MP-1087 Lord I come before Your throne of grace*