

Text: Psalm 139:1-6, 13-17 (NIV)

Sunday 19th July 2020

Brightons Parish Church

Let us take a moment 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, so far in our summer services, we've looked up with wonder to the stars and planets! Last week we looked in wonder at light and how it makes a difference in our world. Every week though, we've also marvelled at the God who made it all.

But today our drama reminded us of the incredible variety of life around us – from the tiny ant, to human beings, to magnificent trees and underground caves. Every animal, every plant, every part of this world has something amazing about it!

Those ants from the drama can do things we can't – ants can lift 20 times their own body weight, which is the same as me lifting an Indian Rhinoceros – can you imagine?! I can't! Also, ants don't have ears but they "hear" by feeling vibrations through their feet, and they also don't have lungs, instead, oxygen enters through tiny holes all over the body – that's amazing!

I've also met some other amazing animals - **when Gill and** I travelled to Zambia in Africa we got to touch a lion and a cheetah, who were part of a programme to reintroduce their cubs to the wild. And with the cheetah in particular, such was its size that when I purred it shook the air – that was amazing and slightly intimidating at the same time!

The people who wrote the Bible included songs and poems about the world around us. One of these psalms, Psalm 104, goes like this:

“My God with all my heart, I want to tell you how amazing you are! You built the earth and covered it with the ocean, your voice thundered and mountains rose up, valleys appeared and the oceans were created! You provide water for the donkeys and other wild animals, birds build their nests and sing in the trees. You cause the earth to produce food for all creatures, including us! Storks make their home in the fir trees, goats make their home in the mountains, small animals make their homes between the rocks! You created the sun and the moon to rule the day and the night. At night lions roar and hunt but in the morning they go back to their dens, while we go off to work. By your wisdom you made so many things!

The whole earth is covered with living creatures and the oceans are alive with creatures big and small! Lord God let your glory last forever and ever! Let everyone see and know how amazing you are! May you be pleased with everything you have created...I will sing of your astounding deeds for as long as I live because you make me glad.”

We truly live in an amazing world, with amazing creatures and plants. So, here’s a question **for you today: what is your most favourite animal or plant, and what is so special about it that you would thank God for it? I’ll give you 60 seconds to think or talk about that at home.**

(PAUSE)

The psalm we read today is another psalm which speaks of God's wonderful creation, but instead of talking about plants and animals, it focuses on you and me, human beings. We read these **incredible words**:

'For you created my inmost being;

you knit me together in my mother's womb.

I praise you

because I am fearfully and wonderfully made...' (v13-14)

In the original language, which was Hebrew, the final line there simply reads: 'I am fearfully wonderful.' 'I am fearfully wonderful.' Not only are the stars and planets, the plants and the animals wonderful - we are wonderful, says God. You are wonderful! The complexity and intricacy of your body, mind, soul is beyond our understanding, it fills us with wonder and amazement...

It was Isaac Newton who said, 'In the absence of any other proof, the thumb alone would convince me of God's existence.' And yet the thumb pales in significance to what makes us human, for there is so much which sets us apart from the animal world and confirms that we are made **in the image of God**. Each of us has a degree of creativity within us and a desire for purpose and meaning; each of us can appreciate beauty; each of us has intelligence, morality and a spirituality. These things are not taught, these things are not modern or ancient developments, they are unique but universal to humanity. God created your inmost being, made in His likeness, and so you are fearfully wonderful.

Instead of a question just now, let us instead take a moment to pray. Boys and girls, you can get involved...

in this as well because in a moment, we're going to ask God a question, and then wait for God to answer. The question to ask God is this: 'who do you want me to tell, this week, that they are wonderful?' You can ask it out loud, you can whisper into your hands, or you can think it in your head, but ask God, 'who do you want me to tell, this week, that they are wonderful?' And then whoever comes to mind, first off, maybe that's who God wants you to tell. So, don't over complicate it, just the first person who comes to mind.

Let's take a moment to pray.

(PAUSE)

Today we've been thinking about the amazing world around us and that we are fearfully wonderful.

But the psalms we've looked at today remind us that it all exists because there is an amazing God who made this amazing world and made all of you amazing people. And this God wants a relationship with you. The psalmist says **that God:**

- Knows us (v1)
- Follows us (v2-3)
- Hears us (v4)
- Surrounds us (v5)

This is a God who is not only amazingly powerful and creative, this God is also caring and close. There is nowhere in fact that we can go where He is not already there, and wherever we journey God personally pursues us, for we are the continual object of His thoughts. He loves you so much that He wants to relate to you at the deepest level.

But I wonder if you want that? This way of talking about God can appear quite intimidating – is God just the ultimate Big Brother? Is He just waiting to pounce and catch us out? Well, the Apostle John reminds us of the relationship we can **have with God**, for John wrote: ‘See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!...This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. **This is love**: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins...There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment.’ (1 John 3:1; 4:9-10, 18)

We don't need to fear God's attention if we have come to know His forgiveness. In that place of being His child, we can allow God to expose all the areas of our lives, just as David prayed, and so allow Him to lead us '...in the way everlasting', the way of life with God close, now and for all eternity.

I pray that each of us knows this powerful, creative and caring God close to us day-by-day, as we rest in the amazing forgiveness and love He offers through Jesus.

May it be so. Amen.

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

HYMN *MP-59 Blessed assurance*