

Psalm 8
June 11, '17
Trinity Sunday

“THROUGH GOD’S EYES”

**IT MUST HAVE BEEN 20 YEARS AGO – PERHAPS
EVEN MORE.**

**AS A FAMILY, WE WERE TRAVELING TO
NORTHERN MICHIGAN – UP TO MACKINAC ISLAND
NEAR THE PLACE THE MOGAVEROS VACATION
EVERY SUMMER.**

**WE WERE GOING UP I-75, A COUPLE HUNDRED
MILES NORTH OF DETROIT.**

**WE HAD HEARD THERE WAS A MAGNIFICENT
METEOR SHOWER IN THE FORECAST & NORTHERN
MICHIGAN WOULD BE ONE OF THE VERY BEST
SPOTS ON EARTH TO EXPERIENCE IT.**

**WE TIMED OUR DRIVE SO THAT WE WOULD BE
IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE LATE AT NIGHT.**

**WE DROVE OFF THE INTERSTATE & ONTO A
TYPICAL NORTHERN MICHIGAN SINGLE-LANE DIRT
ROAD.**

**WE WENT TWO OR THREE MILES TO A SPOT
WITH NO TREES TO IMPEDE OUR VIEW.**

THE SKY ABOVE WAS COMPLETELY CLOUDLESS.

**IT WAS A PLEASANT NIGHT WITH JUST A BIT OF
A BREEZE.**

**EMMA SUE & I, ALONG WITH DEREK, DREW &
DAVID – ALL THREE OF THEM UNDER THE AGE OF 17
– GOT OUT OF THE CAR AND WE ALL LAID ON THE
HOOD OF OUR YELLOW BUICK STATION WAGON.**

WE LOOKED UP TO THE SKY & JUST WAITED.

**IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG FOR ONE OF US TO POINT
UPWARDS & EXCLAIM – “*THERE GOES ONE*” AND SEE
A SHOOTING STAR MAKES IT WAY ACROSS THE SKY.**

**SECONDS LATER, THERE WAS ANOTHER ONE –
AND THEN ANOTHER AND THEN ANOTHER.**

**WE QUICKLY LOST COUNT, BUT IT WAS WELL
OVER 200 PASSING METEORS THAT WE SAW IN THE
BARELY 30 MINUTES THAT WE LAY ON THE HOOD OF
THAT OLD YELLOW STATION WAGON.**

**LET’S FACE IT – NOT MANY OF US VERY OFTEN
ENJOY THE EXPERIENCE OF A CLEAR, NIGHTTIME
SKY ANYMORE – MILES AND MILES AWAY FROM
ANY LIGHTS TO BLOCK OUT THE MAGNIFICENT
VIEW ABOVE – ESPECIALLY IN THE MIDST OF A
BREATHTAKING METEOR SHOWER!**

**IN THOSE MOMENTS, THOUGH, WE WERE
TRANSPORTED BACK TO THE ANCIENT TIMES OF
DARK NIGHTS & CLEAR SKIES.**

**WE EXPERIENCED SOMETHING THAT MUST
HAVE BEEN FELT BY THE WRITER OF THIS PSALM.**

**IT'S A CELEBRATION OF GOD'S WONDERFUL,
AMAZING, BEAUTIFUL CREATION.**

**IN MOMENTS LIKE THE ONE WE EXPERIENCED
THAT NIGHT, WE CATCH A GLIMPSE OF WHAT THE
PSALMIST MEANT WHEN HE WROTE – *“WHEN I LOOK
AT YOUR HEAVENS, THE WORK OF YOUR FINGERS, THE
MOON AND THE STARS THAT YOU HAVE
ESTABLISHED...”***

**THE PSALMIST THEN MOVES, QUITE
LOGICALLY, TO THE INEVITABLE CONCLUSION –
*“WHAT ARE HUMAN BEINGS THAT YOU ARE MINDFUL
OF THEM, MORTALS THAT YOU CARE FOR THEM?”***

**WE CAN'T HELP BUT THINK OF OURSELVES AS
TINY, MEANINGLESS SPECKS IN AN INFINITE**

UNIVERSE – SPECKS OF LIFE THAT ARE HERE BUT FOR A FRACTION OF A SECOND IN THE GRAND SWEEP OF HISTORY.

IT CAN BE OVERWHELMING & LEAD US INTO THE DEPTHS OF DESPAIR & MEANINGLESSNESS.

BLAISE PASCAL HAD SUCH AN EXPERIENCE.

PASCAL WAS AN INCREDIBLY GIFTED MAN.

HE LIVED JUST 39 YEARS IN THE 17TH CENTURY, BUT AS SOMEONE SAID OF HIM – “*HE BELONGS TO THAT RARE CIRCLE OF CREATIVE SOULS WHO CRAM SEVERAL LIFETIMES INTO A FEW FLEETING YEARS.*”

HE WAS A MATHEMATICIAN, A PHYSICIST, A PHILOSOPHER & A WRITER.

EARLY IN HIS LIFE, PASCAL HAD THE FEELING THAT MANY OF US HAVE AS WE THINK ABOUT THE

**UTTER MEANINGLESSNESS & INSIGNIFICANCE OF
OUR LIVES.**

**HE LOOKED UP AT THE SKY ONE NIGHT &
WROTE – “*THESE INFINITE SPACES, THEY FRIGHTEN
ME.*”**

**BUT FOR PASCAL, THERE WAS SOMETHING
MORE TO COME.**

**YEARS LATER, HE REALIZED THAT HE COULD
LOOK AT THAT NIGHTTIME SKY & BE FILLED WITH
DESPAIR – OR HE COULD BE FILLED WITH
SOMETHING ENTIRELY DIFFERENT.**

**HE DOCUMENTED THE EXACT MOMENT WHEN
HE CAME TO THIS DIFFERENT REALIZATION.**

**HE WROTE IT DOWN & HE SEWED IT INTO THE
LINING OF HIS JACKET WHERE IT WAS FOUND BY A**

**SERVANT AFTER HIS DEATH, NEARLY 10 YEARS
LATER.**

HERE'S WHAT IT SAID:

***“IN THE YEAR OF GRACE, 1654, ON MONDAY, 23RD
OF NOVEMBER, FROM ABOUT HALF PAST TEN IN THE
EVENING UNTIL ABOUT HALF PAST TWELVE, FIRE!***

CERTITUDE. CERTITUDE. FEELING. JOY. PEACE.

JOY, JOY, JOY, TEARS OF JOY!

LET ME NEVER BE SEPARATED FROM HIM.

TOTAL SUBMISSION TO JESUS CHRIST.

***ETERNALLY IN JOY FOR A DAY'S TRAINING ON
EARTH.”***

**PASCAL CAME TO THE REALIZATION THAT HIS
LIFE WASN'T MEANINGLESS & INSIGNIFICANT.**

**HE RECOGNIZED THE MESSAGE THAT WAS
BEING PROCLAIMED BY THE PSALMIST THAT**

**FOLLOWED HIS PRAISE OF GOD'S GLORIOUS
CREATION.**

**FOR THE PSALMIST DIDN'T STOP WITH THAT
QUESTION – *“WHAT ARE HUMAN BEINGS THAT YOU
ARE MINDFUL OF THEM, MORTALS THAT YOU CARE
FOR THEM?”***

**HE DIDN'T WALLOW IN DESPAIR OR ALLOW
HIMSELF TO BE OVERCOME BY THE
OVERWHELMING AWARENESS OF HIS
INSIGNIFICANCE.**

**HE OFFERS A DIFFERENT WAY OF LOOKING AT
HIS OWN LIFE.**

**HE SEES HIMSELF – NOT THROUGH HIS OWN
EYES - BUT THROUGH GOD'S EYES.**

HE SAYS, “*YET YOU HAVE MADE THEM A LITTLE LOWER THAN GOD, AND CROWNED THEM WITH GLORY AND HONOR.*”

SUCH A STATEMENT & REALIZATION IS ABSOLUTELY STAGGERING!

IT DOESN'T JUST BALANCE OUT THE OTHER ONE – IT GOES TO THE COMPLETE OPPOSITE EXTREME!

C.S. LEWIS TOUCHES ON THIS WHEN HE WRITES ABOUT THAT LINE IN THE PSALM, “*YOU HAVE CROWNED THEM WITH GLORY.*”

HE EXPLORES WHAT IT MEANS FOR US TO UNDERSTAND THAT GOD HAS ENTRUSTED US WITH SIGNIFICANCE.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN WHEN WE DISCOVER THAT OUR FELLOW HUMAN BEINGS ARE CREATED AS LITTLE LESS THAN THE ANGELS?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN WHEN WE REALIZE THAT WE HUMANS ARE NOT MERE MORTALS, BUT NEARLY – DARE WE SAY IT – DIVINE?

LEWIS SAID, “*IT’S A SERIOUS THING TO LIVE IN A SOCIETY OF POSSIBLE GODS & GODDESSES.*”

HE SAYS THAT IF WE SAW EACH OTHER AS GOD SEES US, WE WOULD BE STRONGLY TEMPTED TO BOW DOWN AND WORSHIP EVEN THE DULLEST, MOST UNINTERESTING PERSON WE’VE EVER KNOWN.

IN LEWIS’S WORDS, “*THERE ARE NO ORDINARY PEOPLE – YOU HAVE NEVER TALKED TO A MERE MORTAL.*”

AGAIN, THAT’S STAGGERING!

**THROUGH GOD’S EYES, THAT’S WHO YOU ARE –
SOMEONE CREATED BY GOD WHO IS JUST A TINY
BIT LOWER THAN DIVINE!**

**AND – JUST AS IMPORTANTLY – THAT’S WHO
EVERYONE AROUND YOU IS AS WELL.**

**WHAT IF WE WERE TO BEGIN TO LOOK AT
OURSELVES “THROUGH GOD’S EYES?”**

**WHAT IF WE WERE TO SEE THE PEOPLE AROUND
US “THROUGH GOD’S EYES?”**

**WE HAVE TO TAKE THIS A STEP FURTHER,
THOUGH.**

**THIS PSALM HEARKENS BACK TO CREATION
ITSELF.**

**AND IN THE STORY OF CREATION, WE HEAR –
OVER & OVER AGAIN – THE WORDS “*AND GOD SAW
THAT IT WAS GOOD.*”**

**THROUGH GOD’S EYES, THE CREATED WORLD
WAS GOOD.**

**GOD WAS PLEASED WITH THE WORK OF
CREATION.**

**NOW GO BACK TO THE PSALM WE’VE READ THIS
MORNING.**

**ECHOING OTHER WORDS FROM THE GENESIS
ACCOUNT OF CREATION, THE PSALMIST SAYS, “*YOU
HAVE GIVEN THEM DOMINION OVER THE WORKS OF
YOUR HANDS; YOU HAVE PUT ALL THINGS UNDER
THEIR FEET.*”**

**GOD MAY HOLD THE WHOLE WORLD IN HIS
HANDS, BUT GOD HAS ENTRUSTED EVERYTHING TO
OUR CARE.**

**IN ONE OF HIS PARABLES, JESUS SAYS “*TO
WHOM MUCH IS GIVEN, MUCH IS REQUIRED.*”**

**IF WE HAVE BEEN MADE LITTLE LOWER THAN
THE ANGELS – IF WE ARE JUST SLIGHTLY LESS THAN
DIVINE – A GREAT DEAL SHOULD LOGICALLY BE
EXPECTED OF US IN RETURN.**

**IT’S LIKE THE WORDS OF WISDOM OFFERED TO
PETER PARKER – A LA SPIDERMAN – “*WITH GREAT
POWER COMES GREAT RESPONSIBILITY.*”**

**SWITCH BACK TO THE CREATION STORY – GOD
LOOKED AT WHAT HAD BEEN CREATED AND WAS
VERY PLEASED WITH IT.**

**IT WAS SOMETHING THAT WAS WORTHY OF
PRAISE – SOMETHING WORTHY OF BEING
MAINTAINED & CARED FOR.**

**GOD WOULD NOT ENTRUST THE
RESPONSIBILITY OF CARING FOR HIS MAGNIFICENT
CREATION TO JUST ANYONE!**

GOD GAVE THAT RESPONSIBILITY TO US.

**GOD THOUGHT SO HIGHLY OF YOU & ME THAT
WE WERE GIVEN CHARGE OF GOD'S ENTIRE
CREATION.**

**INDIVIDUALLY & COLLECTIVELY, WE NEED TO
TAKE THAT RESPONSIBILITY SERIOUSLY.**

ARE WE?

**ARE YOU INDIVIDUALLY CONSCIENTIOUS
ABOUT YOUR CARE OF GOD'S CREATION?**

**ARE WE COLLECTIVELY TAKING THAT ROLE
SERIOUSLY?**

AS A FAITH COMMUNITY, HOW ARE WE DOING?

AS A LOCAL COMMUNITY, HOW ARE WE DOING?

**AS A NATION, COMPARED TO THE REST OF THE
WORLD, HOW ARE WE DOING?**

**ALL TOO OFTEN IT SEEMS AS THOUGH OUR
ATTITUDE IS A VERY SHORT-SIGHTED ONE.**

**WHEN IT COMES TO THE CARE OF GOD'S
CREATION WITH WHICH WE HAVE BEEN
ENTRUSTED, WE THINK ONLY OF OURSELVES & OUR
OWN WELL-BEING.**

**WE BECOME ENTRENCHED IN SELF-SERVING
ATTITUDES THAT NEGLECT – NOT ONLY THE REST
OF THE WORLD – BUT FUTURE GENERATIONS AS
WELL.**

**JAMES FREEMAN CLARK WAS A MINISTER IN
LOUISVILLE DURING THE MID-19TH CENTURY.**

**HIS OPPOSITION TO SLAVERY LED MANY TO
LEAVE HIS CHURCH, BUT HE REFUSED TO WAVER
FROM HIS COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS.**

**IT WAS JAMES FREEMAN CLARK WHO WROTE
THAT WELL-KNOWN, OFTEN-UTTERED STATEMENT,
THAT “*A POLITICIAN LOOKS TO THE NEXT ELECTION.
A STATESMAN LOOKS TO THE NEXT GENERATION.*”**

**THAT STATEMENT CERTAINLY APPLIES
DIRECTLY TO OUR RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CARE
OF GOD’S CREATION.**

**WHEN WE TRULY UNDERSTAND THAT GOD HAS
CREATED US “*A LITTLE LOWER THAN DIVINE,*” WE
CAN FEEL OURSELVES EMPOWERED TO LOOK
BEYOND OUR OWN SELFISH MOTIVES & DESIRES
AND DO WHAT’S BEST – NOT JUST FOR OURSELVES –
BUT FOR THE REST OF THE WORLD AND FOR THE
GENERATIONS THAT WILL FOLLOW US.**

**THE SAME PRINCIPLE APPLIES IN SO MANY
OTHER AREAS OF LIFE.**

I THINK, QUITE OFTEN, OF BOTH THE HONOR & RESPONSIBILITY I HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO BE A PART OF THIS CONGREGATION FOR THE PAST QUARTER CENTURY.

I HOPE YOU THINK ABOUT THAT AS WELL.

WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE STRENGTH, THE FAITHFULNESS, THE VITALITY, THE FUTURE OF THIS CHURCH IN OUR COMMUNITY.

IT'S SOMETHING THAT HAS BEEN PASSED ON TO US FROM PREVIOUS GENERATIONS.

THEY HAVE ENTRUSTED ITS FUTURE TO US.

WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE RESPONSIBILITY TO TEND TO IT, TO CARE FOR IT, TO ENRICH IT, TO MAKE IT GROW & CONTINUE TO THRIVE.

THOSE OF THE PAST DIDN'T JUST SHOW UP OCCASIONALLY ON SUNDAY MORNING.

**THEY SAW THEIR COMMITMENT TO THIS
CHURCH BODY AS A SIGNIFICANT PART OF THEIR
COMMITMENT TO JESUS CHRIST AS THEIR LORD &
SAVIOR.**

**THEY GAVE THEIR TIME, THEIR RESOURCES,
THEIR TALENTS TO ENABLE US TO BE HERE TODAY.**

**WE OWE THAT SAME DEDICATION TO THOSE
WHO WILL COME AFTER US.**

WE HAVE THAT POWER & THAT CAPABILITY.

**YOU HAVE BEEN CREATED JUST A LITTLE
LOWER THAN DIVINE.**

**THROUGH GOD'S EYES, YOU ARE A SPECIAL &
UNIQUELY CREATED HUMAN BEING.**

**AS SO MANY OF US HAVE HEARD PRESBYTERIAN
MINISTER, MR. ROGERS SAY, "*THERE'S ONLY ONE
LIKE YOU.*"**

**REGARDLESS OF WHAT YOU MAY THINK OF
YOURSELF, THROUGH GOD'S EYES, YOU HAVE THE
IMAGE OF GOD INSIDE YOU.**

GOD HAS BLESSED YOU.

**GOD HAS GIVEN YOU DOMINION &
RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR PART IN GOD'S
CREATION – YOUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS &
YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PLANET ON WHICH
GOD HAS PLACED US. AMEN.**

*The Reverend Dr. Dennis R. Davenport
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