

Preacher: Pastor Twyla

Scripture: Psalm 8

- ¹ O Lord, our Sovereign,
 how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory above the heavens.
² Out of the mouths of babes and infants
you have founded a bulwark because of your foes,
 to silence the enemy and the avenger.
³ When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
 the moon and the stars that you have established;
⁴ what are human beings that you are mindful of them,
 mortals that you care for them?
⁵ Yet you have made them a little lower than God,
 and crowned them with glory and honor.
⁶ You have given them dominion over the works of your hands;
 you have put all things under their feet,
⁷ all sheep and oxen,
 and also the beasts of the field,
⁸ the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,
 whatever passes along the paths of the seas.
⁹ O Lord, our Sovereign,
 how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

A little boy was working hard on a drawing and his daddy asked him what he was doing. The son replied, “Drawing a picture of God.” His daddy said, “You can’t do that, honey. Nobody knows what God looks like.” But the little boy was undeterred and continued to draw, looked at his picture with satisfaction and said matter-of-factly, “They will in a few minutes.”

Have you ever wondered what God looks like? Often times when we try to describe God, we say things like we see God in nature, and we see God in the kindness of others, and indeed we do. But do you ever get curious about what God looks like and all of the other things we do not know about God? The Bible tells us a lot about God, but as the Psalmist reminds us today, we certainly don’t know everything about God.

Just to get us started in thinking about this topic, let’s ponder other imponderables, here are a few to consider:

- You tell a man there are 400 billion stars, and he’ll believe you. But tell him a bench has wet paint, and he has to touch it. Why?
- Why doesn’t glue stick to the inside of the bottle?
- Why isn’t there mouse-flavored cat food?
- Why do you put suits in garment bags and put garments in suitcases?
- Why do they lock gas station bathrooms – are they afraid someone will sneak in and clean them?
- If man evolved from monkeys and apes, why do we still have monkeys and apes?
- When two airplanes almost collide, why do they call it a near miss instead of a near hit?

- Why do banks charge you a nonsufficient funds fee on money they know you don’t have?
- Why do you drive in a parkway and park in a driveway?
- If the black box flight recorder is never damaged during a plane crash, why isn’t the whole airplane made out of that stuff?

At birth the human brain weighs, on average, fourteen ounces. It usually reaches its maximum size at age fifteen (proving the size of the brain has nothing to do with intelligence level). At its maximum size, the brain weighs an average of forty-six ounces, slightly less than three pounds. In liquid measurement, that’s about a Big Gulp from the soda machine at a 7-Eleven.

There is no way for medical professionals to prove this, but the old theory was that we use only about ten percent of our brain capacity. If that were true and we start out with only a Big Gulp in the first place, we’re down to about a quarter-pounder with cheese by the time we’re done. And we think that with our quarter-pounder with cheese, we’re going to comprehend the infinite, decipher the mysteries of the millennia, and answer all the questions? Right!

Isn’t it logically impossible that we as finite creatures could ever fully understand the infinite? So, can we ever fully understand God? The Psalmist invites us to ponder the mysteries and greatness of God.

Psalm 8 is a hymn of praise. There are many examples of hymns of praise in the book of Psalms. But this one is unique in two ways:

- It is the first hymn we read when we work our way through the book of Psalms from start to finish. The psalms that come before this one, are prayers spoken by people who are suffering or who are being persecuted. Psalm 8 then goes on and tells us that those suffering at the hands of evil are those most made in the image of God and valued highly by their Creator. The Psalmist declares that humans are God’s representatives on earth.
- Secondly, his psalm is the only hymn where the Psalmist speaks entirely to God. It emphasizes God’s power and authority and proclaims that humans exercise their rightful authority within the rule of God.

The first half of verses one and nine are the same in that they draw attention to the majesty and sovereignty of God. He declares that the whole created order gives evidence of God’s sovereignty. The psalmist is not trying to tell us that he admires elements of creation as though God is in them. Rather the psalmist wonders at the natural world because of the majesty of God who stands over them and who made them. He cannot wrap his thoughts around how God created everything just by speaking it into existence.

The psalmist says even the weakest creatures like babies and infants cry out and give voice to the power of God that defeats all forces that would obstruct God’s will. Yet, all he can do is praise God. Try as we may, we cannot know everything about God. We simply can stand in awe of the greatness and power of God. There are things of God that will always be a mystery to us.

Today is Trinity Sunday, a day when we celebrate and ponder the mystery of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—the Three in One. Preachers struggle to write a meaningful sermon about a subject that defies human expression. There is a danger that we explain the Trinity in such simple and uncomplicated terms that we lose the magnificence and glory of God. This is one of the mysteries of God we accept by faith.

This would then mean too that we could never find the words to describe God. If we try to explain God we need to fit him in our own frame of reference. We have to comprehend what it means to be God. We need to find the words that are able to describe something that is greater than anything we have ever experienced in the world, and we simply do not have those words. It's easy to come up with formulas and explanations about God but to do that we have to put him in a box and restrict him only to what we can understand. And as soon as we do that God is no longer the God of majesty, power, and grace, but something less than all that because we can't comprehend anything greater than our own world of experience.

The psalmist than turns our attention to ponder on ourselves as human beings and our place in the created order. He points out that humans have a high place in creation even as we marvel at the magnificence of the rest of God's work of creation.

He presents us with the question, “what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?” Let's face it, we humans constantly disappoint God. We let God down with our lack of concern for one another and for his creation. We make ourselves into gods with our selfish desires. And yet, God cares. God loves us. The scripture tells us that God created us only a little lower than himself and the angels. God considers us highly valuable. Since God has already declared how valuable we are to him, we can be set free if we are willing to let go from feelings of worthlessness.

The pesky housefly is the most talented aerodynamicist on the planet – superior to any bird, bot, or bee. According to a British scientist, “a housefly can make six turns a second, hover, fly straight up, fly straight down, fly backwards, do somersaults, land on the ceiling, and perform various other show-off maneuvers. And it has a brain smaller than a sesame seed.”

Flies are also loaded with sensors. In addition to their compound eyes, which permit panoramic imagery and are excellent at detecting motion, flies have wind-sensitive hairs and antennae. They also have three light sensors called ocelli, on top of their heads, which tell them which way is up. Roughly two-thirds of a fly's entire nervous system is devoted to processing visual images.

If God put so much wisdom into ordinary houseflies, imagine what it means to know that we are, “fearfully and wonderfully made.”

God values us so much that he given us great authority to care for the earth, all of creation, including each other. A lot of responsibility comes with that authority. There's plenty of evidence revealing that as humans we have not taken this responsibility seriously.

Perhaps if we got back to recognizing who it is that gave us this responsibility, we would all wake up and do a better job. Spending more time with God, pondering his power and majesty, and receiving from that the affirmation and joy that is ours to be had that God values us highly will bind us more to him and to each other. It will help motivate us to take seriously the authority and responsibility to God has given us over all creation, instilling in us respect for God's mighty works. May we all make time to expand our awareness of God. Amen.