

God the Creator

Psalm 8

I decorated up my shelves today in a throwback to Harvest Festivals of my childhood when there was a hierarchy of windowsill that could be decorated and my job was to push bracken into the umbrella holsters on the pew-ends. Working with the rule of 3, potatoes and carrots would be grouped along the communion kneeler and huge pompom chrysanthemums would tower majestically above the pulpit on the top of the door, which had a huge flat surface (more bracken)... the smell of harvest festival had a perfume that was distinct... flowers and vegetables, foliage and branches of leaves and fruit festooned and filled every flat surface. So here it is! Tins of beans and mounds of fray-bentos pies don't smell like harvest - although they are much more use to the food bank than a branch of crab-apples and a huge marrow would be.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth... and when better to consider the wonder and miracle of God our creator than at Harvest Festival? I don't need an actual answer for this one, but you get my drift... There had long been a tendency to worship and make sacrifice to fertility gods and creation gods for a good harvest when David wrote psalm 8 - or when he began to worship God using psalm 8. It is like a tiny jewel of a creation account sitting there in among the Psalms, both about the amazing Creator God who is the only God and also TO that same God. "I see you" says David, "I see what you have done and it defies category, it defies title and defies all limits I thought I knew about you."

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest, sun, moon and stars in their courses above, join with all nature in manifold witness to thy great faithfulness, mercy and love... Genesis 1 declares the goodness of God who Creates the heavens and the earth, the sun and moon and stars. Psalm 8 does similar: The vastness of creation praised by David and his name set high over it all...

Do you remember writing your name at the top of your work? Try to forget the comments written by those marking it unless that was a good experience! Your name was over your work. You had done it! Or a piece of TV with the names of the creators always attached to it. You could recognise a David Lean film by its style and quality - my favourite is Lawrence of Arabia... His authorship was clear by style and quality... Whether it was art by Banksy or Turner, it has a style we recognise, and a name set over it, not simply on the top line, like your work, but a name that overarched it. The majestic name of the Lord God is set over his creation with his style and content being the beauty and diversity of creation in all of its goodness, richness and detail. You know a David Lean film - or you're googling him as I speak! You know a Creator God. David too makes this song of praise to God anthemic in its style and applause for God who makes all things.

Harvest is hard this year and so too is finding our song of praise! We aren't together with our piles of tins and non-perishables. Mildred's famous font decor of a real

canary sitting atop a blazing nest of Virginia creeper and potatoes will not be happening - and we are poorer for it.

How do we celebrate 'all is safely gathered in' when actually 'safely' isn't a guarantee in 2020? How do we sing at all when there are so many mixed messages about telling us what is and isn't safe to do - you can sing in a choir but not in church and if there's five people in a church behind a screen, they can sing but you must all wear masks because we don't really know how covid is transmitted. How can we possibly sing out praise to Creator God in thanksgiving in these situation?

David found a way. He found a way to remember the goodness of God in the face of often hideous adversity. In Psalm 8, we find not only God at the root and origin of all things, but we find also the love and delight God has in you and I, his children... The creator of the mighty heavens, whose delicate finger work, the detail of his creation included 'tickling' the stars into being not only made us, but gave us special status and honour within that creation. How absolutely brilliant is that? The world may be struggling, but the things of God's goodness that make it good remain. His Glory and majesty still reign in the heavens. His earth still produces good fruit and produce. Babies are still born and grow. Children reach milestones and leave home... And his great love and mercy are still the same. Still, there is a place for us, as David reminds us within the covenant of God's care and blessing.

The Creator God is not some overlord who has set the universe in motion and looks on, with mild interest at his unimportant work. David's declaration of "O Lord, Our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth." The God who we know is the God of Creation. The God of Creation is the one who knows us by name and whose name is the source and direction of our praise. We are reminded of the goodness of God and of his promise, the Covenant promise - yes I know It's not Methodist Covenant service this week - but actually the Covenant promise of God to be our God is the promise of Salvation and relationship which he makes to his people again and again throughout the Bible and ultimately through the unalterable and incredible death and resurrection of Jesus who is God incarnate. Lord, our Lord is with us. Creator God, who tickled the stars into being is near us. Not generally, but specifically with you now. In your mansion, your apartment, your flat, your bungalow, your shed, your car, your bike, your pushing the buggy or driving your motor-scooter down the pavement - He is your God and his is your Lord and he is with you and he chooses to declare you his friend... made "a little lower than the angels and crowned with glory and honour." Verse 5. How unutterably incredible. There's our identity. Not in earthly stuff, but given by God. Precious life.

That massive blessing has come with verse 6 which is about responsibility and this is where it gets tricky because it challenges us... 2020 eh? We look at the things 'under our feet - the stewardship we should exercise over creation has been knocked off course... before COVID, we were making good inroads into acknowledging our abuse of plastics and challenging the throwaway culture. Before COVID we were addressing the

issues of fast fashion and challenging for fair wages for factory workers. None of this has gone away. Our responsibilities still remain. But so too does our position... Creator God has given us an honour and blessing for the work of stewardship, which we do under his majestic rule. We love our creator God and that love acknowledges our responsibility to care for that which he has made in such detail. From lobbying for clean fuel to making sure our carbon footprint is acceptable to checking our needs/wants list isn't out of kilter. And even to ensuring we are responsible stewards of creation during the pandemic. By responsibly wearing a mask and observing our distance. By checking on one another and by supporting small and local businesses and farmers. I believe in God, the Creator of heaven and earth and although I have not always done well in my stewardship, 2020 has spurred my on to be the best Glory and Honour wearer I can be - because that is how God has created me and how he has created you too. The covenant is still in place and we are still able to praise God because in a world that is reeling, we need to acknowledge the strength and faithfulness of Creator God and just how much he loves you and the world the he has made and declared good.

The Creed

I Believe in God

The Father Almighty, Creator of heaven & Earth

I believe in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord

Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit

Born of the Virgin Mary

Suffered under Pontius Pilate

Was Crucified, died and was buried.

He descended to. The dead

On the third day he rose again

He ascended into heaven

He is seated at the right hand of the Father

And will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the holy Spirit

The holy catholic church,

The communion of saints,

The forgiveness of sins

The resurrection of the body

And the life everlasting

Amen