



Morrison Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church
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January 1, 2010
New Year's Day
Psalm 8
Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: Numbers 6:22-27
Psalm of the Day: Psalm 8
Second Lesson: Philippians 2:9-13
Gospel: Luke 2:21

How Majestic Is Your Name, O Lord

Think of the word "majestic" or "majesty." If you think of something "majestic," what do you think about? If you've stood at the edge of the Grand Canyon and looked across that incredible physical feature, maybe you thought, "Boy, that's pretty majestic." Or maybe you've stood at the bottom of the Rocky Mountains and looked up at snowcapped peaks, or you've done that some other place in the world, and thought that was majestic. There are different things I think that we think of in nature that are majestic and we just stand in awe at this world around us.

It's kind of interesting this morning as the Lord had David write this Psalm about how majestic is God's name that he uses so many images from nature. *"When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place"* (Psalm 8:3); when he stands and looks at this world that God has created, David looks around at it and says, "You know what? I feel kind of small. In comparison to the stars in the night sky, what am I? When I look at the beauty of creation, what am I?" When you look at the things around you, what am I? What is man that you are mindful of him? We see how majestic God's name is, not in the things he has created, although that reveals to us a portion of his majesty. But the only portion of the majesty of his name that Creation reveals to us ought to scare us.

When you look around at nature, you see that God is powerful, right? He said, "Let there be," and there was. He put the stars in their courses. He has it so they run their course day after day, season after season, to mark the seasons, days and years. He is powerful and wise in the way that he made us and in the way that he made nature. But nowhere in nature do you see evidence that he is gracious, that he is loving and forgives sins. In nature, he has our conscience inside of us that tells us we are sinners. It tells us that he is a Holy God and he hates sin. And guess what? I'm a sinner. So the question of David is really poignant. "What is man that you are mindful of him? You are wise, you are powerful, you are holy, and I'm not."

You read this Psalm and you might get the idea; *"what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor"* (Psalm 8:4-5); that's just talking about us, because it fits. We are lower than the angels. God put all the rule of Creation under the feet of Adam and Even when he created them. He told them that they had

authority over Creation. *“You made him ruler of the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet”* (Psalm 8:6). But it’s more than that.

When the writer to the Hebrews wrote his letter in Chapter 2, he took verses 4-6 of this Psalm (*⁴what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? ⁵You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. ⁶You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet*) and applied it, not to us, but to the name that is above every name. He applied it to Jesus.

The son of man is a title that Jesus often used for himself to show that he was taking our place, to live in our place and die in our place. He had come to save us. If you want to see God’s true majesty, it’s not just in what he has created or the world around us or the gifts that he gives. It’s in his grace and in his mercy that has taken away our sins. It’s in his grace and in his mercy that sent Jesus, even though he was the creator of all these things, to be a little lower than the heavenly beings. Even though he had made all things, he came to live and die for us. And then God, as we heard in our Second Lesson, exalted him to the place and gave him the name that is above every name and put everything under his feet, as it says in Philippians.

So, if we want to see God’s majesty, yes you can see it in nature. But you can’t see it fully. If you want to see it fully, you need to see it in the light of your own sinfulness. You need to see it in the light of the truth that no matter what you offer up to God, it is nothing compared to your sinfulness. Every time we get to be a little proud and a little arrogant about how we are better than others because “on a morning like this, we’re here and they’re probably back in bed, maybe even nursing a hangover, so God obviously must love us more than he loves them;” we sin. That kind of spiritual pride and arrogance is not of God. It’s of Satan.

God’s majesty is that he forgives all sin. Even the sins that we at many things think are good things. God loves us because he is majestic. God loves us because he sent the Son to live and die in our place when we were unlovable. The more clearly we see the nature of our sin, the sooner we get over thinking that we have something to offer to God, the more clearly his majesty comes into focus. It’s like that auto zoom on your camera. It is focused clearly now.

You see God’s majesty has nothing to do with you or your response to him. It has to do with him and his love for us. That’s what the name of Jesus is. It isn’t just a title, a title that means Savior. It’s who he is and what he has done. It’s who he is and what he has done in spite of who those are that he has done it for. This is the majesty of God that we begin a year in. This is the majesty of God that we continue to grow in throughout a year. This is the majesty of God that we live in. And when we forget that his majesty centers in him and not in us, then we need the reminder of God’s Law to get over ourselves and to focus again on him.

Majestic views, if you want to talk about a majestic view, you can start at the cradle of Christ. But as you look at the cradle of Christ, lift your eyes a little higher and look to where that cradle leads, to the cross of Calvary. There you see the fullness of why he came to this earth. You see the depth of his love for you. And you see that all his purposes center in opening heaven's doors for you. That's majesty. That's glory. And that's why we praise him.