

WHERE ARE YOU?
Psalm 8, Matthew 28: 16-20
June 7, 2020...Trinity Sunday
Eastminster Presbyterian Church

“O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!”

Really? Then why is this world that God created in such a mess?

That is the question that troubles the hearts of many and many faithful believers in our time. Terror, terrorism, violence, virus, hatred, hardened hearts, injustices, inequities, deceit, divisiveness, fault-finding and failure to listening. “O Lord, our sovereign, where are you?”

A fair question from God to us just might be, “Where are you, my partners?”

Life has never been about easy answers, but it is also not about being in the dark. The Psalmist gives us an honest look at the questions of living and a good place to start looking for some light. And that searching starts with a deep-seated, persistent hope that God is trustworthy. The Lord who made heaven and earth and us, and created us good sent to us our greatest hope: Jesus, Light of the World! Hope and light because in Jesus we can find our way back to our inborn goodness.

Through the years non-believers and even the sometimes-doubting faithful, liken the message of Psalm 8 to a “Pollyanna attitude,” a God’s in control, so no need for us to do anything thinking. Just ride out life until we get to heaven.

But God being “in control” and sovereign are not the same thing. God is the beginning and ending source of power and authority of all that exists, but God is not about controlling us like puppets. God’s power is lived out in the grace of God that gives us free will to believe or not believe that God had, has and will always have the best plan and purpose for our world.

We were created for partnership. Trusted with stewardship. Gifted Jesus as a return to love for each other and our way back to the goodness God planted in us! It is there; we humans choose to embrace or ignore or strike it from our lives.

To believe fully in the sovereign God calls us to trust and persistent hope that in God’s way and God’s time, the world will be good again, not just because God

wants it that way, but because God wants us to also want it that way. That is called partnership.

The words of the Psalmist pull no punches. This partnership is between the divine and the human, and, so, sin is going to rear its ugly head. So, this Psalm is about truth. It comes from the experiences of real life. And, it is about trusting the all-encompassing care of God in real life, even when we not have all the answers or even understand why the world is so messy.

We find every emotion from praising, lamenting, praying, crying, rejoicing, raging...and more. Just as the universe is the large expanse of God's majestic and beautiful art, Psalm 8 holds together the vastness of our human emotions and faith. I find comfort when I read the Psalms because I feel a connection to the real life situations of others. My heart is calmed in knowing that I am not alone in my emotions, someone else before me has felt as I have felt. Someone else gets me! Someone else understands that even with a strong faith, the human side of me, like King David, still needs reassurances.

This song of praise, was written by David as he struggled with some of the same questions we have and are having right now in the midst of such pain: God, why did you create the world and us, full of joy AND weighed down by sorrow? God, sinful wanderer that I am, how can you keep loving me enough to welcome me back with arms that want to reach out and hold?

David, in all of his humanness, questions his worth, value, his purpose in light of the vastness of God's power and glory, and in the end, it is not a set of calculated measures about his value that sustain him, it is his faith in the sustaining and saving power and glory of God that grounds David as a worthy partner. He is able to answer our own question: why would God spend a moment of concern on us little specks of dust? Why? Because out of love God created us and called us worthy.

The Psalm begins and ends: "O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!" To the ends of the earth which circles round and round with a love that has not end. It is a love beyond our comprehension, but not beyond our reach.

I cannot prove that. I cannot explain it. All I can do is share the conviction of my heart that I believe it is truth. That, my friends, is what a disciple does; shares from the heart what we believe to be the truth about our Triune God.

And if that truth is not being shared, God has every reason to ask us, “Where are you, partners?”

We are located in a big, scary world, but our Lord does not call us out into it minus hope. In our sending out, the Spirit empowers each of us with certain gifts and powers and authority to carry out Jesus’ mission to make more disciples. And Jesus’ authority came directly from God, our partner.

When we embrace the magnitude of this commission, then the classroom, the work place, the playground, the grocery store, the vacation spot—wherever we are—becomes the mission field in which we can practice all the dimensions of discipleship.

The height of that discipleship is that in our serving, ALL authority comes from God.

The width of our serving? ALL nations and all peoples.

The depth of our serving? It is the power of the Spirit, not us, but through us, who changes the human soul, transforming the way we love into the way God loves.

The length of our serving? Until the END of the ages.

Matthew’s gospel uses mountaintop experiences to signify that something new and powerful is about to happen. And here, on this mountain, with all the authority of heaven and earth, Jesus commissions the disciples, gives them their job description, their purpose, their mission statement. It is the same job description, same purpose, same mission statement that continues with us. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ we are commissioned to: Go! Make disciples! Baptize! Teach!

There is no doubt about it, our world is a mess! It has been since sin entered. And yet, the Psalmist reminds us that even in this mess, there is hope, because God was, is and will ever be sovereign.

The world is in a mess, but I cannot fathom what it would be like, if God had come to us to at least show us humans what love says and does. But that is the rub, is it not? Not everyone has experienced that limitless love of Christ.

And that is where our work begins. We have been called and commissioned and sent out to tell all we meet that there is a hope beyond the human and sinful chaos

of terror, terrorism, violence, virus, hatred, hardened hearts, injustices, inequities, deceit, divisiveness, fault-finding and failure to listening.

Listening to a decades-old song is where I want to leave us today. It asks timely questions; questions that as believers in the sovereignty of God, the grace our Lord, and the guidance of the Spirit we much wrestle with.

And, given the state of our world, one that calls for a commitment to discipleship sooner than later, now or never. Amen