

Seventh Sunday of Easter
May 13, 2018
Psalm 8
God Makes Himself Known and Reveals His Glory
Rev. George Ferch

Dear friends in Christ Jesus,

What's in a name? In God's case, his name is the expression of his essence. God has revealed himself on the earth for who he is. As we learned in catechism, God makes the revelation of his glory in two ways; in Creation and in the works of our salvation. We think of the first in terms of God's power. We think of the latter in the realm of God's grace.

King David wrote Psalm 8 to be presented to the director of the choir for musical presentation. The singing would be accompanied by a gittith. This musical instrument had its origin in the Philistine city of Gath.

We are familiar with this Psalm because we use it regularly among the Psalms we sing in worship. On this Sunday after Jesus' Ascension when he returned to his heavenly throne after redeeming us it is the psalm of the day. David's words help us reflect on God's power and work under this theme: **God Makes Himself Known and Reveals His Glory**. In the works of Creation; and, in the works of salvation.

David addressed God as our "Lord." This is not the word for the God of the covenant seen in all capital letters. This is the Lord that means ruler, or king. With the plural pronoun David puts the words of the psalm in the mouths of all the members of the congregation. God is our King who rules over the heavens and the earth. In Creation, he has set his glory across the universe.

God's glory is his wisdom, his power and his love in making all things good and perfect. Paul's words to the Romans in chapter 1 come to mind, "his invisible qualities-his eternal power and divine nature-have been clearly seen since the creation of the world." Think of looking at a beautiful well build mansion. You can see the qualities and skills of the builder even though you do not see the builder with your eyes.

This time of year as the earth comes to life again, we marvel at our Lord's creating and preserving heart and hand. The budding trees, the changing temps, the return of the birds from their winter safe havens, the stars and planets in the spring sky that make the days longer and nights shorter all reveal the glory of their Creator. It is good to pause and reflect and praise. "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. Set this glory of yours above the heavens."

This praise of God as our King is not limited to us adults. The very existence of new babies and young children testify to God's glory. We truly are blessed as a congregation to have so many children as a testimony to God's glory among us. These children are the future of the church. Even though their intellect is not fully developed, David says that they cry out with their lips the name of the Lord.

We bring babies and young children to faith in Christ through baptism and the Word. They now belong to the pious and devout people of God. The Lord gives them faith by which they can overcome all their spiritual enemies. They can put a stop to those enemies. They are to God's praise in the face of our enemies as God has given them the power and strength of Christ.

This verse is a strong statement to the power and blessing of baptism and instruction of our children. "From the lips of little children and nursing babies you have established strength

because of your foes, to put a stop to the enemy and the avenger.” Baptized babies have the power to stop Satan, the enemy and avenger.

How empty and sad are the lives of those who do not believe that the “heavens declare the glory of God and the skies proclaim the work of his hands.” They are missing so much by missing the glory of God as he spreads it across the universe. How sad they do not see babies as creations of God’s power to his glory rather than the product of human interaction, to be kept or discarded as one desires. Or, reject baptism as the means of grace to create faith and give them strength to overcome Satan.

In the second part of Psalm 8 the glory of God that is the majesty of his name appears to come in a lesser way than the Creation of the universe. It is not, however, lesser glory. David asked a good question to compare God’s glory we see in the universe and his glory in the works of salvation for fallen humanity.

When David looked up into the heavens at all the glory and then at sinful man, he asked, “What is man that you remember him?” Why would the God whose glory we see in his power care to remember us fallen creatures and redeem us? The answer lies in the other revelation of his glory, Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Jesus is the Son of Man the Father paid attention to. The Father made his Son lower than the angels. Jesus came to earth and suffered need as he humbly held back the full and constant use of his divine power and majesty. For a time, the son of man acted apart from that use of divine nature. On the cross for the hours between noon and three the Father actually withdrew from his Son.

We think of Paul’s words to the Philippians in chapter 2, “He did not consider equality with God as a prize to be displayed but emptied himself by taking the nature of a servant.” God makes himself known and reveals his glory in the works of salvation. We see God’s glory in Christ in his service of suffering and dying for our sins on the cross. It is on the cross of Calvary we see God being mindful of us fallen creatures. It is the glory of God’s grace, no less than the glory of God’s power the Father makes known in the death of his Son.

But now things have changed. Last Thursday was Ascension Day. The third great festival of the church year proclaims that the Father gave the Son of Man a great reward and glory for being our redeemer. He has ascended on high not only to return to heaven as the Son of God but as the Son of Man to rule over all things for the good of the church. “You crown him with glory and honor. You make him the ruler over the work of your hands. You put everything under his feet.”

David repeats our adoration of our ascended Lord. “O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth.” In this psalm, King David shows us Jesus Christ our Savior. He is the son of man who through his humiliation and exaltation in the works of our salvation has raised up us, his fallen creatures, and has restored to us in Christ honor and dominion. Amen. <SDG>