

Rev. Charlie Holt:

[01:00:05:06 - 01:00:12:03]

Well, I want to reflect with you. Well, first of all, I want to say Happy Father's Day to the fathers that are here.

[01:00:12:03 - 01:00:35:12]

We're very blessed to have you. My dad always has been a bit of a jokester. He'll call up the church, and he's been doing this actually for decades. We need to get him some new material. But he calls up the church and he says, "This is Father Charlie's father, Charlie. "Can I speak with Father Charlie, please?" And for some reason that never gets old.

[01:00:37:04 - 01:02:46:22]

But my dad loves to tease around dad jokes. So you might hear a few dad jokes today. I'm sorry if that happens. But very blessed to have you here. Today's also Trinity Sunday, where we are again lifting up the holy name of the Trinity and seeking after communion with him, as the Lord brings us into fellowship with him. One of the main ways that he does that is actually through our praise. And so I want us to focus on Psalm 8, which is a song of praise by King David, where the Lord is inviting us to lift up our hearts and our praises to him. It's a reflection on the glory of creation. So Psalm 8 verse one, "O Lord our Lord, how majestic is your name "in all the earth." And that's the way the Psalm begins, and it actually ends with the same line. "O Lord our Lord, how majestic is your name "in all the earth." Now the word Lord and Lord there are actually two different words in the Hebrew. When you look at the English versions of the Bible, sometimes you'll see the Lord in the Old Testament written with all caps. And this is one of those occasions when it says, "O Lord our Lord," the first Lord is written in all caps. And that is the Hebrew name for God. So like my name's Charlie, I'm a father, Father Charlie, and that's how you can distinguish me from say Father Eric out there, that's his name, Eric. And God actually has a proper name. I don't know if you knew that or not, but when Abraham and Isaac, and Jacob were entering into a personal relationship with God, God revealed the name Yahweh to them. And it says in the book of Genesis that men began to worship God as Yahweh and call upon his name.

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When Moses went into the Mount Sinai and there was the burning bush, and Moses was being called to speak to Pharaoh and famously say, "Let my people go," as well as tell the Israelites, "Follow me into this wilderness," and I'm going to rescue you from tyranny and bondage.

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One of the insecurities of Moses was, "Well, I'm just a guy, and here you're telling me to do this. "When I go to the people of Israel and I say, "God told me to tell this, what is your name? "What name should I tell them as the God who sent me?" Because during that time, people worshiped a lot of different gods by a lot of different names. And so the Lord said to Moses, "Tell them Yahweh sent you." And so again, this is the proper name of God. But then it goes on to say, "O Lord, our Lord," and that's the second word for Lord that is translated Lord, and it could be translated Governor, King, it's the Hebrew word Adonai.

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You've probably heard that before, Adonai. And so what the psalmist is saying is, "Yahweh, you are my king. "You are my Lord.

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"I'm going to give my allegiance to you "as my authority in life. "You're my God and my ruler." That's a very important thing for any of us to do, is to affirm the Lordship of God in our lives. And one of the ways in which we do that is very often by our praises,

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by singing and worshiping the Lord.

[01:04:43:09 - 01:04:50:04]

A different psalm says, "The Lord is enthroned on the praises of his people."

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And so when we say these types of psalms and we're offering them up in praise, or we sing songs like the one that we just did, great are you, Lord, we are enthroning God on our praises. And that has a very important other impact and effect. It actually dethrones false gods in our life.

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And we begin to diminish the role of idols and false worship in our lives. So it enthrones the Lord as we praise and it dethrones any false Lord in our life, and in our family, in our household, and ultimately as a people in the church. And so praising is so important. And one of the things that really gets the psalmist going in his praise here is actually the contemplation

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of the drama of the created order. And I think for a lot of us, this is the case. When we get out and we look at a beautiful mountain vista, or we get out on the St. John's River, or we take a look up at the skies and the heavens, and we just see God's artwork displayed before us, maybe a beautiful sunrise on the beach, or at night with the Milky Way and the stars and the galaxy before us. But there's something about the grander of creation, and this is throughout the pages of Scripture that this is acknowledged, that the heavens declare the handiwork of God, that it is literally us walking around in an amphitheater to God's glory every time we are outside. And it's almost as if the Lord is shouting at us, worship me, worship me, can't you see how powerful I am, how majestic I am, how creative I am, and so on. All the attributes of God are being displayed before our very eyes in the works of his hands. And this is what is happening with the psalmist. In fact, this particular psalm has inspired great hymns that do the very thing that I'm describing, reflecting on nature and giving glory to the Lord.

[01:07:14:20 - 01:07:19:18]

O Lord my God, when I an awesome wonder You know the song "How Great Thou Art?"

[01:07:20:18 - 01:08:18:18]

Consider all the works thy hands have made I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder Thy power throughout the universe displayed You know the song, right? You wanna sing it with me? Then sings my soul, my Savior God to thee How great thou art, how great thou art Then sings my soul, my Savior God to thee How great thou art, how great thou art So beautiful, beautiful hymn. And one of the things about praising with music, and this is why it's so important to sing when you actually come to church, it's so important to sing, is that the songs of praise don't just enthrone God in our praises, but they enthrone the Lord in our hearts.

[01:08:20:22 - 01:08:39:18]

That's where his rule and his reign has to take place, and it drives out the darkness by our praises. And so the psalmist is thinking about the majesty of the name of the Lord and all the earth, you have set your glory above the heavens.

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But as he's contemplating the glory of, and the grandeur of the vastness of creation, he actually begins to think about human beings, which is very interesting,

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which is another part of creation, and human beings are a marvel and a wonder in and of themselves and confusing, and oftentimes very frustrating actually, especially when they go off the rails and do some crazy things. So it's interesting that his mind of praise starts to contemplate and reflect on the nature of humanity and its relationship with God. And there are three C's here that I would point out, and that's to help me remember my points, but the first one is children. Talks about children, and then he talks about a crown, and then he talks about our commission.

[01:09:34:09 - 01:09:47:21]

So first of all, he says this, out of the mouth of babes and infants, you have established strength because of your foes to still the enemy and the avenger.

[01:09:49:04 - 01:10:00:19]

It's kind of a paradoxical thing to say, that out of the mouth of babes, out of the mouth of children, you have stilled the enemy.

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Some people that have translated this particular line have actually divided those two thoughts out of each other and said, "Well, out of the mouths of babes, praising the Lord," and they put a period there, and then they say, "God has stilled the mouth of the avenger and the enemy." Because how in the world could praise from children silence the evil one? But it's actually exactly what the psalmist is saying, and this is a major theme actually, through the pages of Scripture, that it's the faith of a child. It's going to be through a child that salvation is brought to the earth and to the world.

[01:10:47:18 - 01:11:06:15]

Just at the very beginning of the Bible, in Genesis chapters one through three, the story of the fall and Adam and Eve, and remember they partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and Adam blamed his wife, she'd made me do it, and the wife blamed the serpent, and the serpent didn't have a leg to stand on.

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It's a dad joke.

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It's Father's Day.

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But there were three curses that were there,

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and so the first one was of course to the man, because it was his fault. So Adam was told that you will have futility in your work from now on, your thorns and thistles. And then there was a curse given to the woman, she would have pain and childbirth, and there would be sort of a futility and the pains of labor. And then the third was to the serpent, that yes, he would crawl on the belly and eat dust. But there was something else in the curse to the serpent that is known as the protoevangelion. It's the first statement of the gospel.

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And what it says is that there will be enmity between the woman and the serpent, and this is why women don't like snakes. It's one reason, because of this curse. But there's gonna be a battle going on between women and the serpent. But then there's also going to be a battle going on between the children of Eve and the children of the serpent.

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And then there's this line, this is the protoevangelion,

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chapter three of Genesis. It says, he, meaning the serpent,

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is going to strike the heel of the seed of the woman.

[01:12:33:21 - 01:12:37:15]

But the seed of the woman is going to crush

[01:12:38:23 - 01:13:29:04]

the head of the serpent. So a beautiful illustration of this and the passion of the Christ. That was the Mel Gibson movie from decades or so ago, where Jesus is in the garden of Gethsemane and he's praying to the Lord. Father, if it's possible, take this cup from me. He's contemplating going to the cross. And he doesn't want, personally, to go to the cross. And Mel Gibson, in that moment, puts Satan in the scene in the form of a snake. I don't know if you remember that. But there was a serpent that was like all over Jesus. It was such an icky, evil feel, because here's Jesus in his perhaps weakest moment wrestling with the problem of suffering and evil and so on. And here's the serpent crawling all over him.

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And then there's the moment where Jesus resolves to do his father's will.

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And he says, "But not my will but yours."

[01:13:39:10 - 01:13:49:05]

And he stands up and the serpent strikes his ankle in that moment and Jesus stomps his head.

[01:13:51:21 - 01:14:25:03]

It's Genesis chapter three. The proto-Evangelion just displayed beautifully, cinematically. And this has been the promise all throughout the Scriptures that a child will be born, a son will be given, and he will be called Wonderful Counselor, the mighty God, the Prince of Peace, the Everlasting Father. That there will be this child of Eve who will become the one out of the mouths of babes who will silence the evil one.

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So what does that mean for us? Well, one, it demonstrates the humility of humanity. That there is something about a childlike faith that we need to embrace about ourselves.

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And it says something about our weakness, our finiteness, our immaturity. But even in the midst of our weakness and our smallness and our childlikeness, our praises destroy the works. Our praises destroy the works of the devil.

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In fact, God loves to use our humility to destroy the evil one. It's in our weakness, actually, that His strength is displayed.

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It's in our finiteness and our brokenness that we, like broken pots Paul says,

[01:15:32:08 - 01:15:35:08]

"The light of the glory of God."

[01:15:37:01 - 01:16:16:00]

So on one level, as the psalmist is reflecting on humanity, he sees in humility a mysterious outworking of the plan of God to overcome evil. Then he goes on to reflect, and we come to our second see, he says, "When I look at your heavens, "the work of your fingers, the moon, "the stars which you have set in place, "what is man that you are mindful of him "and the Son of Man that you care for him?" I'm sure all of us at one point or another have sat underneath the Milky Way and looked up and said, "Wow, that's big."

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And then maybe had the corresponding thought,

[01:16:21:01 - 01:16:39:22]

"I'm just a little speck of dust. "I'm just a small little ant "compared to the vastness of the universe. "And does God even care about me? "Does he even interested in what's going on in my life? "How could he possibly care about me "when he's got this entire universe to manage?"

[01:16:42:03 - 01:16:58:13]

This is what the psalmist is doing, is he's contemplating the vastness of the created order of God, and then he turns his mirror back to himself and he goes, "How could I have any sense "that God cares about me, and my problems, "and my issues, and my challenges?"

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And you might expect him to come to the conclusion that, well, of course, he doesn't care. How could he possibly care? This thing is just way too big for God to manage.

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I'm probably just an afterthought. I bet he didn't even think about me. But that's not what the psalmist says. What the psalmist goes on to say is,

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"You have made him," talking about man, humanity,

[01:17:26:09 - 01:17:28:12]

"a little lower than the heavenly beings,

[01:17:29:14 - 01:17:37:04]

"and you have crowned him," and there's our second C, "crowned him with glory and honor."

[01:17:38:10 - 01:17:40:12]

And so while we are mere children,

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when it comes to the things of God,

[01:17:45:08 - 01:17:51:17]

we are powerful children, children that have the power in our praises to silence the evil one,

[01:17:52:23 - 01:18:01:17]

because we are crowned children. We're not just any children. We are children of God, children of the king,

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daughters and sons of the Lord, our Lord,

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whose name is majestic, and we bear his image in our personhood, and therefore we too are of majestic stock.

[01:18:20:03 - 01:18:26:05]

We are crowned with his glory and honor.

[01:18:27:09 - 01:18:29:00]

And then we come to our third C,

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you have given him dominion over the works of your hands. In other words, you have given him command or commission

[01:18:39:09 - 01:18:58:23]

to be stewards over the created order. Listen to the way the psalmist poetically says it. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands. You have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen and the beasts of the field, the birds of the heaven, the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the sea,

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everything, all of life has been put under the authority of humanity to rule and to reign. Again, this was part of the original design of the created order, is that the crowning achievement of creation when God was saying, "This is good, this is good, this is good," and he got to humanity and he said, "That's very good."

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And then he gives a creation mandate. I want you to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it. In other words, I need you to reflect my glory, reproduce, and reign over my creation, the three R's of the creation mandate. And it's in that orientation of praise

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where we have our hearts aligned to the Lord where we are reflecting his glory, that we become the glorious agents of his rule and his reign and we rightly and profoundly steward the creation as his vice-regents,

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as the created order has been placed in our care and in our steward. And this goes not only for all the little creatures, all the animals, and so forth,

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but it goes right down to the way that we steward our homes, we steward our businesses, we steward the church, we steward our community, the city of Jacksonville.

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Whatever the Lord has put under your authority and leadership and every single one of you has authority and leadership over something. And one of the reasons why I think it's so good for us to give our children pets

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is so they learn actually how to be the stewards of God's creation and to shepherd something in their life.

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And so as parents, you know, we're coaching our kids in the stewardship of their animals even,

[01:21:06:19 - 01:21:09:00]

how to be stewards for life

[01:21:10:06 - 01:21:16:14]

and to fulfill the beautiful mandate that is reflected upon here.

[01:21:17:17 - 01:21:22:16]

And so the psalmist ends, "Our Lord, our Lord, "how majestic is your name in all of the earth."

[01:21:23:17 - 01:21:39:09]

The Lord has given us a posture of praise that rightly sets us in a place that will give us ultimate meaning and significance as human beings. I mean, this is where our identity is truly found as human beings.

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One last thing, I wanna end with this thought.

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So when the New Testament reflects back on Psalm 8,

[01:21:49:16 - 01:21:53:04]

it actually applies the Psalm to Jesus.

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It does it over and over again. Jesus himself applies the Psalm when the Pharisees are giving him a hard time after he entered into Jerusalem riding on the donkey and the colt and people are throwing down their robes and palm branches and they're saying, "Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." And he goes into the temple courts and he starts throwing over the tables of the money changers. And the Pharisees, the religious leaders, they say to him, "You need to quiet these children down." There probably were some kids there that were praising Jesus.

[01:22:36:16 - 01:22:42:04]

And Jesus repeats Psalm 8. He says, "Well, it's out of the mouths of babes

[01:22:43:16 - 01:22:45:09]

that the praises of the Lord come

[01:22:46:12 - 01:22:50:01]

and the evil one is being dethroned."

[01:22:51:06 - 01:22:57:16]

Out of the mouths of babes. "These children are my children," Jesus says.

[01:22:58:22 - 01:23:08:10]

And their praises are powerful and appropriate. And if we could be so bold, you children of Satan are now being put on notice.

[01:23:10:07 - 01:23:13:05]

The King of Kings has come to his home.

[01:23:14:10 - 01:23:17:06]

He is enthroned on the praises of his people.

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The writer of Hebrews reflects on Psalm 8 in a little different way. It reflects on that question of, you know, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the answer that comes that you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings?

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And what the writer of Hebrews says is that's actually talking about Jesus.

[01:23:43:08 - 01:23:51:23]

That Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be grasped. This is a different part of the New Testament.

[01:23:53:01 - 01:23:57:01]

But Jesus humbled himself and he actually became lower than the angels.

[01:23:59:02 - 01:24:12:11]

And what the writer of Hebrews takes, he cues in on that word a little. And a little could mean something spatially or it could mean something temporally. And the writer of Hebrews decides it means temporal.

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That he will be lower than the angels for a little while, he says.

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And what the argument is is that Jesus, though he is the one who completely fulfills Psalm 8 in the sense that he ascribes to the Lord and he is the one whose praises,

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he humbles himself underneath the angels

[01:24:39:05 - 01:24:43:05]

in order to share with us in our child-likeness and in our humility.

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And to come and enter into our sufferings and our pains and our difficulties in order to gather up his brothers and sisters

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and take them with him,

[01:24:56:20 - 01:25:09:13]

because being underneath the angels is only for a little while, to take them with him into the Godhead of the Trinity, to reign with him in the heavenly realms.

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And so he humbles himself for a little while lower than the angels, but then is exalted above every name, including the names of all the angels.

[01:25:25:16 - 01:25:42:04]

He's quoting a lot of prophecies in Scripture, but particularly the one in Daniel, which the Son of Man is lifted up to the throne of heaven and given the name that is above every name, that at every knee will bow, every tongue confess, Jesus is Lord.

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But the wonderful news about that is that as our man went up and in, he took us with him in his train and brought us into the fellowship of the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and positioned humanity, this is what's just mind-boggling about Trinity Sunday, actually,

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that he positioned humanity into communion and reconciled human beings to the triune God so that we can have access and experience intimate fellowship

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and uninterrupted praise with the living God. What a beautiful thing.

[01:26:35:18 - 01:26:37:22]

O Lord, our Lord,

[01:26:39:01 - 01:26:42:16]

how majestic is your name in all the earth.

[01:26:42:16 - 01:26:53:18]