

Proper 22b 2021  
The Church of the Redeemer, Greenville, SC  
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Job 1:1; 2:1-10 Psalm 26 or psalm 8 Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:5-12 Mark 10:2-16

“In these last days God has spoken to us by a Son, whom God appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds.”

“God left nothing out of their (humankind’s) control.”

How are we doing in caretaking God’s creation? There is a reason that we talk about stewardship at this time of year; we hear scripture that reminds us that we have a role with God, with creation, with one another, and with all that we have. As part of examining our roles, the book of Hebrews gives us answers to questions we might not even know to ask:

Who is Jesus?

Right away the letter to the Hebrews points out that God speaks to us through Jesus, who is “the exact imprint of God’s very being.” Jesus is the reflection of God’s glory, God’s imprint, who was with God at creation and in creation.

Who is the “someone, somewhere” who testifies?

The author of Hebrews is quoting the psalmist, the writer of psalm 8. Hear how the psalm gets to another question; that is,

Who are we human beings?

4 When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, \*

the moon and the stars you have set in their courses,

‘What are human beings that you are mindful of them,  
...or mortals, that you care for them?

Yes, what are we, a single human person, in all of God’s creation? We are terribly insignificant, tiny, next to a sky full of stars, all of the grains of sand on a beach, a seemingly endless cascade of waves on an ocean’s shore. We are tiny specks in the huge canvas of creation.

And yet –

And yet God has chosen us in our tiny personhood, to be partners in creation, to be the caretakers and stewards of all that God has made. We are invaluable in that role because God decided that we are, just as later we are righteous because Jesus declares us so.

Can you imagine? Among the stars, the sky, the ocean and mountains, God trusts **us!**

Theologian Debie Thomas writes that psalm 8 is a psalm not only for antiquity, but for our time as well.

“As a culture,” she writes, “we have lost our capacity to hold the paradox of Psalm 8 — the paradox that we are simultaneously small and big, insignificant and grand, peripheral and essential. We’ve forgotten how to hold this tension, and order our lives according to its wisdom. We tend to spend our days leaning too hard in one direction or another. As soon as we war successfully against insignificance, grandiosity steps onto the battlefield and knocks us over.”

We are caregivers of **God’s** creation, not ours. We are called to give God praise and glory not because God needs our offering, but because we do. Our foundation is God and not ourselves. God is the center of our universe. With the challenges of every day and era, it is good to consider our place in a vast world. It is good to feel small at the edge of the ocean, against the panorama of a mountain, against a backdrop of things that existed long before we did, and that will live long after. We are not the only part of God’s creation with worth and value. Contemplate how we are small and new in God’s timelessness. Wonder at all God has made.

Still, we have a place in God’s universe; we are part of God’s beloved creation. Tiny as we are in time and space, we have value. How often do we berate ourselves when we fail in a task, a career, or something else? As if our lives have value only in what we do or try to perfect. We are God’s beloved children! How often do we spend time resting in God’s love?

That is our tension: our smallness and our grandeur. This is the tension that we find in the book of Job. Job, blameless and righteous, suffers terribly, loses everything and still he centers himself on God. “Curse God and die,” his wife says. She has lost her home, children, and livestock as well, and watches as her husband scatches himself with broken pottery. Does Job matter to God? Yes, *and* redemption is long in coming. Redemption comes most clearly when we begin the next part of our lives – in eternal life. Still, in this life, we not only live with affliction but with help to stave off continual misery: medicine, the knowledge of others that can help us, friends to share our journey, God who hears, sees and intimately knows our suffering.

And so we give thanks in all things, remembering at once how small we are and how much value we have, with God at the center of all that we do and we are. Back to the book of Hebrew’s reminder that we have Jesus; we have Jesus who loves us beyond measure. God goes beyond human law over and over again in order to take us into his arms. Like God’s children that we are, tiny and grand, we are worth redeeming, worth loving so much that God will do anything to let us know that we, too, are wrapped in God’s love. We can sin greatly, and do. We remember that sin is a separation from God, and means that we have something to redeem, to repent, to be forgiven. And we have Jesus, God’s boundless love on earth. We have the Holy Spirit, our advocate and breath.

I leave us with something to ponder; it is a poem entitled “Good and Bad,” by Steve Garness-Holmes.

*Shall we receive the good at the hand of God, and not receive the bad? (Job 2.10)*

What if love does not hand out stuff, good or bad,  
but is simply present in all things?  
Without judging, can I receive it?

What if nothing happens “at the hand of God,”  
but everything is in the hand of God?  
Without judging, can I receive it all?

What if things, like rain, are both good and bad,  
and neither, but simply are?  
Without judging, can I receive them?

What if good and bad  
are so wrapped up in pleasant and unpleasant  
that we can't tell very well?  
Without judging, can I receive everything?

What if my life is neither good nor bad  
but wondrously full of pain and pleasure,  
and the presence of God?  
Without judging, can I receive it?

I open my hands.

Steve Garnaas-Holmes, *Unfolding Light* [www.unfoldinglight.net](http://www.unfoldinglight.net), October 1, 2021