

TALK FOR SUNDAY OCTOBER 3<sup>RD</sup>. Margaret Noel.

*Lord, our Lord how exalted is your name in all the World!*

I always think it is a shame Harvest is only celebrated on one Sunday in September or early October when really harvest goes on for a lot longer. In many countries harvest is celebrated for anything from 3 days up to a month and other food-based celebrations take place throughout the year. We give harvest celebration a day!

Yet how many of us are still harvesting the products from our gardens, especially as there seems to have been a late surge in production with the warm weather of September. I have just picked the last of the blackberries in my garden and Barry has dug the last potatoes- a bit late but still good. Our neighbour's beans are still flourishing, and we haven't started on the apples yet. Plenty of food still coming thanks to our bountiful God. There are many ways we harvest the goodness from God all year round. That is why I have sort of continued Harvest thanksgiving to God with the reading of the psalm this evening.

A psalm written by David to proclaim the greatness of our Creator. And one spoken entirely to God. It emphasizes God's sovereignty and proclaims that humans exercise their legitimate authority within the rule of God.

In July 1969, Apollo 11 carried to the moon a Goodwill Disc that had messages from seventy-three countries. This thin silicon disc was left in a simple cloth pouch in an aluminium case on the Sea of Tranquility by astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin. At the top of the disc is the inscription: "Goodwill messages from around the world brought to the Moon by the astronauts of Apollo 11." Around

the rim is the statement "From Planet Earth—July 1969". In tiny type etched into its surface are goodwill messages from world leaders. The Vatican submitted a message that incorporated a text from the Bible. If you could have made the decision of a part of the Bible to send up to the moon, which would you have chosen? I think I may have chosen the opening verses from St. John's Gospel- 'In the beginning was the word...'

The Vatican submitted the text of Psalm 8, making it the first Biblical text to reach the moon. I bet when David wrote in verse 2 '*I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars you have set in their course*' he never thought that one day the words of his psalm would be placed on the moon.

This psalm is more of a meditation on the God through all he has created. David spent many a long night watching over his father's sheep and had time to study the night sky. We can only do that after midnight when the streetlamps go out, but it is amazing how many stars can be seen on a clear night. David didn't have the astronomical information we have these days; he saw it all as the work of God. To him that is reason enough to praise God, without all the other wonderful ways God works for his people. David reflects how babies, and infants, toddlers and young children recognise who God is and sing his praises, drowning out the voices of the atheists.

David reflects on the way God is willing to work with people, in granting us authority over the world. But wonders why God should bother with us even bothering to take a second look after the way we treat him and his world.

The translation of the verses 5-8 in The Message explains so clearly what David meant.

*You put us in charge of your handcrafted world, repeated to us your Genesis-charge, Made us lords of sheep and cattle, even animals out in the wild, Birds flying and fish swimming, whales singing in the ocean deeps. God, brilliant Lord, your name echoes around the world.*

This is a wonderful psalm of praise to God for his brilliance, his creation, his goodness to us and it resonates as much now as when it was first written. The trouble is it resonates for the wrong reasons!

This psalm would be suitable the climate change movement because we seem to be destroying everything David thanks God for. If David were able to come back now and gaze up at the night sky, would he find it to be the same or would it have changed? Well there are a vast number of satellites and bits of rubbish floating around now. What would he make of the destruction of the earth, the pollution of the sea, the numbers of young children who rejoiced in singing the praises of God, but now so violently abused and very often lost faith in Mankind let alone God? I could go on but you are all aware of what is happening and what we can do in our own small way to save God's creation.

I intended in my talk to continue our harvest celebrations, and the psalm does help us thank God for his greatness and his voice does still echo around the world. We tend to think of Harvest as a celebration of the crops but there are other things we should thank God for which are in a way harvested.

We have a huge harvest of talent. God in his wisdom didn't just grant man the authority of his world, to 'reap and to sow' he granted us a brain and intelligence. Our harvest thanksgiving ought to include a 'thank you to GOD 'for the amazing achievements of our medical scientist over this past year, for the work of doctors , nurses all

medical staff and volunteers willing to give up their time to vaccinate as many people as possible. The carer workers, paramedics, the list is long.

We take for granted the way so many were willing to make sure we could get food etc, only, very often to be rewarded with abuse from a minority of people. God gave his people a wonderful word to live in, we more than any other generation repay him with ingratitude.

Many people have given up their time to reach out to people who were isolating and some still are isolating. The people who run foodbanks and help give financial advice to people struggling. Our priests, and laity, who have gone to extraordinary lengths to provide services and support often by using modern technology. I am sure if David were alive today and writing psalms he would include these in the ways people praise God and use the talents God granted them. We have so much to thank God for and his continuing faith in his people.

Let us read together the final verses of the psalm as a prayer of thanks for all that God has created for us not just the earth and the sky, the crops and the animals but all the immense talent humans have ,and lets us pray the time will come when we will use our intelligence wisely and for the good of mankind and not it's destruction.

*GOD, brilliant Lord, yours is a household name.*

*You put us in charge of your handcrafted world, repeated to us your Genesis-charge, made us stewards of sheep and cattle, even animals out in the wild ,birds flying and fish swimming, whales singing in the ocean deeps*

*Lord, our Lord how exalted is your name in all the World! AMEN*

