

Who are we that you are mindful of us?

(Preached by Cheryl Williams at FBC, October 6th, 2024, Psalm 8 & Mark 10:13-16)

About 6 years ago I was in Alice Springs with a friend and for her 50th birthday she wanted to go stargazing at an observatory just outside of Alice Springs.

At this facility we walked along desert sands in darkness and went into a little white igloo type house which had a very powerful telescope. Once inside we took turns to look at the moon, at Jupiter and her moons and Saturn and her rings. The images were so bright you had to turn away and they were so large. Once outside we gazed at the Milky Way and the planet Venus which you could see with the naked eye.

Amazing, a reminder of just how vast and majestic the universe is. In the words of the Psalmist, God's handiwork.

I have had similar experiences as I walked the Tree Top Walk in a forest in South West Western Australia surrounded by ancient trees, and at the coast line at Kalbarri watching the waves hitting the rocks, and in a small whale watching boat out in the ocean off Busselton surrounded by a pod of about twelve whales. All times when I have pondered my insignificance in the midst of such beauty, in the midst of such enormity, in the midst of such grandeur.

David, who wrote this psalm is pondering all that God had accomplished – moon and the stars, animals and the waters of the sea. As he does, he finds himself pondering his own existence and his relationship to God.

When have you had such an experience? (Get people to think about that and write about it on the piece of paper handed out.)

David asks, why do you God, care for us who are pretty insignificant in the scheme of things? It is clear that he knows God to be someone who cares for him, not in an abstract way, but in a deeply personal way, faults and all.

In what ways have you experienced God's care for you over the years? (Get people to think about that and write about it on the piece of paper handed out.)

The Psalmist then reminds us that with such care and mindfulness comes responsibility. We humankind, have been given the responsibility of caring for, being mindful of the rest of creation. He uses the word dominion, and contrary to popular interpretations, this does not mean power over but rather caring for, of being stewards of all God's handiwork.

In what ways do you think we should be caring for God's majestic creation? (Get people to think about that and write about it on the piece of paper handed out.)

Jesus shows the same kind of care for the vulnerable that the Psalmist says he experiences from God the creator.

The disciples were pretty annoyed that some people were bringing children to see Jesus. They were getting in the way of 'adult stuff'. Jesus is far from impressed with their reaction to the children. The disciples see these young children as insignificant. Jesus on the other hand, shows the disciples that they have an important lesson to teach the adults.

The kingdom of God belongs to such as these, and if you want to be part of it, then you should perhaps adopt some of their characteristics in your journey of faith.

What kind of characteristics might children have that you can learn from? (Get people to think about that and write about it on the piece of paper handed out.)

Perhaps we could learn to wonder, accept and trust like children.
Perhaps we could learn to ask questions like children. Perhaps we could simply learn to enjoy being held in God's love, as children do.

The care and mindfulness that God and Jesus show to us mere mortals, gives dignity and self-esteem to all of us who see themselves as insignificant and vulnerable.

May we too learn to offer such care and be mindful of those parts of God's handiwork, God's creation that are vulnerable – children, homeless, environment, our oceans and waters, our forests. Amen.