

A little more than three thousand years ago a boy was shepherd for the flocks of his father. His brothers were off fighting the enemy – he was left behind to watch over the sheep. A slingshot, a staff, and faith in God – with these he defended newborn lambs from eagle and lion. On many a quiet night when the sky was clear and stars were near he looked up and wondered. From wisdom passed on from mother and father to son and daughter he knew that the Lord was above all that he could see – the Lord who had created all. Sun and moon and stars, land and sea, birds and insects and creatures – all springing into being at the command of the Lord.

And humans.

Maybe it was on one of those quiet nights that the shepherd boy, David, began to sing a song he was composing:

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth

you, whose glory is chanted above the heavens out of the mouths of infants and children;

you have set up a fortress against your enemies to silence the foe and avenger.

When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars you have set in their courses, what are mortals that you should be mindful of them, human beings that you should care for them?

170 billion galaxies – that is the estimate wikipedia gives for the number of galaxies – 170 billion. The Milky Way, with its hundreds of millions of stars is but one – a massive galaxy but only one of 170 billion.

What could we say of the God who created all of these and set them in motion and watches over them in every instant? O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth.

What are we humans that you should even give us a thought?

In our world today we ask that question in quite an opposite way – what is God that we humans should even give God a thought? Look what we have done – we defy gravity with our jumbo jets – we create worlds almost beyond imagining in 3-D – why last week humans created artificial life. We have entertainment to pacify the aches in

our hearts – exciting contests pitting the strongest and tallest and quickest against one another and as we watch we forget our troubles for a moment – we have drugs to alter our mood and delay death’s claim on us – we have weathermen and women to tell us why it will rain and someday may know enough to tell exactly where and when it will rain - what is God that we humans should even give God a thought?

That shepherd boy who knew nothing of lasers or of nuclear reactors was wiser than we are – he knew enough to ask why God would even give us a thought. And then he sang the answer to this question in a most surprising way:

what are mortals that you should be mindful of them, human beings that you should care for them?

Yet you have made them a little less than God; with glory and honor you crown them.

you have made them rule over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet,

all flocks and cattle, even the wild beasts of the field, the birds of the air, the fish of the sea and whatever

passes along the paths of the sea.

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth.

God not only notices we humans – God honors us and gives us glory and makes us rulers over all the creatures of earth. What are humans? Creatures made in the very image of God – ruling over the earth like God.

But when we forget that it is God who gives us glory and honor and not our own accomplishments– when we forget that it is under God’s authority that we rule over the good creation God has made – when we forget to begin and end with praising God then good is turned into evil. One day this shepherd boy saw Bathsheba bathing and took her and murdered her husband. That day David was not singing, “O Lord,, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth, but was singing the song that what David wanted David should have.

When we let money matter more than anything else in this world – more than the good of our neighbor – more than caring about the generations that are before us or after us – when we let money become the measure of all things the name of God is dishonored by us.

Yet the sin of David and Bathsheba is not the last word – Matthew tells us that from their line came Jesus – son of David – Son of God. The love and forgiveness and life that comes through his dying and rising God has made the measure of all things.

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth.