***Creatures Loved by God***

***Psalm 8***

**Devo:** **Read the Psalm, then the material below, then the Psalm again.**

 This is one of four “creation psalms” (8, 19, 104, 139) – or psalms that praise God as creator of heaven and earth. Just to put this in context, there are 150 psalms total and they’re broken into 14 categories, such as prayers for help, liturgies, hymns of praise (which creation psalms are a part of), royal psalms, instructional psalms, acrostic poems, historical psalms, etc. These 150 psalms were written by many different authors, most of whom aren’t identified.

 What’s great about the psalms in general is that they truly cover all the highs and lows of the life of faith. There are some that have us singing from the mountaintops and others that have us crying from the true depths of despair. Jesus, while hanging on the cross actually quotes Psalm 22, asking why God has forsaken him. In these verses, we find the ability to weep, laugh, celebrate, and learn along our path of faith.

 Like most psalms (and most poems, really), there’s an order to this psalm. It starts and ends with praising God as Creator. As bookends, we understand that they are to “hold” everything in between, so we read verses 2-8 in light of verses 1 and 9. The middle verses then also have their own order to them. Think about how you might draw a picture of you and your campers standing in the redwoods along with some of the woodland creatures and even the roots of the trees. At the very top of the page is the sky and clouds and the tops of the trees. As we move down you see us humans, then the fox and the deer, the ground, and then the roots. This psalm draws that same picture, only with words instead of stick figures. The psalmist looks at the heavens and sees God, first and foremost – not necessarily literally above the sky but as more important than the sky. By looking up, the psalmist sees the work of God – the sun, moon, stars – and redwoods! And while standing under the expanse, feels very small and insignificant. If Genesis 1 taught us that we’re just as much a part of creation as the rest, then Psalm 8 reminds us how small we, as individual human beings, are as compared to the rest of this vast earth.

 But as the psalmist is soaking in the joy and beauty and the vastness of God and creation, he goes deeper and asks the question all of us ask – what are human beings that you (God) are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? And it’s stumbling on this question that almost jolts him back to the promise given in Genesis 1. We’ve been made in the image of God – just a little lower than God – and crowned with glory and honor. We’ve been given dominion over the earth. We’re the earth’s royalty, as it were – charged with caring for it, working with it, and finding ways to help it grow and flourish as best it can. Though we’re only one part of the whole creation we are a special part with a valuable role.

 And then, just in case we were feeling really good about our place and position in this world, the final verse comes and reminds us that, while we do have a special place in this world, we’re still under God. This is still God’s world and God is the one to be praised.

 This passage is one of those to keep close by no matter what. When we’re feeling small and insignificant, it reminds us of how God actually sees us. And when we’re feeling like we’re amazing, we’re reminded that really, we’re a pretty small piece in the grand scheme of things. We’re not God, but we’re loved by God and given unique abilities and a unique place in creation.

 We’re small *and* we’re powerful *because* we’re loved. So let your place in this world be a call to humility and action and praise.

**For a Point:** Rewrite this psalm in your own words. To help, maybe go outside and sit in a park or a favorite spot on campus. It doesn’t need to be the same in the number of verses or the exact type of sentiments. But if you were to write a similar song of praise to God, what would it be? Email to Sarah or post in the Facebook group.