

“Wow: Brilliant Lord, Your Name Echoes around the World”

Psalm 8

Today we turn from “Thanks” to “Wow” as we continue our journey through the Psalms and as we do so, we discover a funny thing about this whole “Wow” experience. It can happen at any time and in any place. A “Wow” moment can be brought on by a beautiful painting. A “Wow” moment can come about from seeing a breath-taking sunset. A “Wow” moment can even happen after we experience something that we never believed would ever happen, like “Wow! This man’s words are inspiring, which may have been heard 50 years at a march in Washington or Wow! I can’t believe she did that!” , which has been heard around the country this past week as we have all heard the story how a woman was able to prevent another mass school shooting, all by talking with the troubled young man. In our lives, many things can bring about a “Wow” experience.

And We’ve all had moments like these in our lives. We’ve all experienced something that made us just go “Wow”. We can all remember moments in our lives when we were struck by the sheer amazement, the sheer beauty, the sheer wow factor of whatever it was, and all we could do was just stand there, eyes wide open, jaws dropped, and simply say “Wow”.

Whether it was seeing the ocean for the first time, or looking at the majesty and power of the mountains, or seeing someone walk the tightrope over the Grand Canyon. Sometimes, all we can say is “Wow”.

And after experiencing moments like these, it is only natural for us as people of faith, to start asking questions, questions like, “What does this all mean?” What does this say about our God? “How does this speak to our faith? How are we supposed to incorporate this new found knowledge into our lives as people of faith? How does this affect our belief systems? All these are natural questions, natural questions that we find ourselves asking after we have had such an amazing “Wow” experience, all questions that we find ourselves wondering after we’ve been struck by the sheer astonishment and amazement of something majestic and powerful like the vastness of God’s creation. All these questions that come up after we’ve had a “Wow” moment are designed to help us grow in our faith and our relationship with God. We should embrace them and celebrate them, and certainly never think that they diminish our faith in any way shape or form.

Asking questions, wondering about God, is a natural thing to do after we’ve experienced something that shakes us to our core with its beauty, its vastness, its sheer amazing factor. And it is precisely what is going on in Psalm 8. The Psalmist is struck by the sheer vastness of the night sky, and so he begins to ask questions. He begins to wonder about his God. He begins to wonder about his relationship

with God and where he fits in among God's creation. And as we read Psalm 8, we begin to realize that we are invited to join in on his amazement and ask the same sort of questions as well..

(Read Psalm 8)

Many scholars call this psalm the "star-gazer" psalm for obvious reasons. We can all imagine the psalmist sitting out, looking at the night sky. And as he gazes at the stars, he begins to wonder about the sheer vastness of the universe. Hence the nickname: Star gazer psalm. But we have to realize that this psalm goes beyond just a wonderful experience of star gazing. It also invites us to join the psalmist as he does a little some soul searching as well, all of which gets lost in the translation that we now read in our Bible.

Let me explain. In most translations, especially the NRSV, which is the edition that can be found among our pews, the editors tried to be inclusive, using the plural "us" and "human beings" in verse 4. But the original text isn't written that way. It is singular and is meant to give us a small glimpse into a private conversation between the psalmist and God.

So really, when the psalmist is gazing out on the night sky, he is not just wondering about human beings in general. He is wondering more about himself and God. So instead of saying, "What are human beings that God is mindful of us", what the text really says is, "Why on earth would the Creator of such a vast

universe ever care about me, little ol' me, me who is just a dot on the map, me who is just a blip in the scheme of time? Why on earth would God notice me? Why do I matter to God when God has so much more other stuff to deal with each and every day? Why does God really care about me?

That's what the psalmist really wants to know when he gazes at the stars. Sure he is amazed by God's power in creating the universe but what he really wants to know is Why would God notice me when God has so much more other stuff to worry about? And I think if we are honest with ourselves, we've all asked the same thing. Surely, God has more important things to deal with than me and my problems. Surely, God has forgotten me. Surely, God is more concerned about the world not spinning off its axis than whether or not I understand and accept that God loves me more than I could imagine.

But here's the thing: God really doesn't. God is not more concerned about one part of creation than the other. God has not forgotten us. And God certainly doesn't have more important things to deal with than us and our problems, when it comes to offering us grace and comfort. God made us just lower than the angels. That's how much God loves us, that's how much we matter to God! Wow!

Unlike any other relationship in our lives, not once will God ever say to us, "Come back later. I've got too much to do right now to listen to your problems. Come back later. I'm too busy for you." "Come back later. I don't have time for

you right now. Other people in our lives may say these things to us but God never will. God always makes time for us. God is always there for us. God is always concerned about us. God is always near for us, no matter what is going on in our lives. God is there for us, loving us, caring for us, comforting us, holding us in the palm of God's hand.

That's the God we know. That's the God we experience each and every day. That's the God we are in relationship with, as God's beloved, named and claimed as God's very own.

We matter to God, more than we could ever imagine. And just to prove that fact to us, God did something amazing. God invited us to be partners in God's creation. God invited us to come along in the important business of bringing about of God's Kingdom here on earth. All because God cares that much about us as God's very own children.

From the very beginning of time, God has tried to prove to us how much God loves us, tried to prove to us how much we matter to God. First God tried saying, come and join me in the Garden. We can walk together. We can talk together. We can be in a real authentic relationship with each other. We can be partners. And well, we all know how well that invitation turned out, at least on our part.

So when that real earnest invitation from God and partnership with God wasn't enough for us, all because when we still had our doubts, all because we thought God couldn't really love us, just to prove once again how much we matter to God, God sent God's own Son so that we might live.

Think about it. That's the true Wow of this psalm. That's the true wow of our lives as God's children. Sure our God is amazing. Sure our God is powerful. And when we look at God's creation we say Wow, but our wow should go beyond just seeing God's power and majesty. We need realize and celebrate and stand in amazement that The same God who formed the heavens, who creates life, actually knows us as individuals, actually cares about us as individuals, actually loves us more than we could ever imagine. We really do matter to God, not just as humanity in a big group, but we matter to God as unique children of God, as individuals. Us, who are just Small little dots on the map, blips in time, matter to God, more than we could ever imagine. Wow! Wow!

That puts a whole new spin on it doesn't it? When we read psalm 8, we need to realize that the psalmist isn't just thinking about God's relationship with humanity. He is thinking more about his relationship with God. When he looks at that night sky, he is doing some soul searching and looking for some real answers. Sure he is amazed the beauty of the stars but what really amazes the psalmist the most, what really gets him saying wow is the fact that he knows deep in his heart

that his relationship with God is more than just Creator and creature. He knows that God didn't just create the world in seven days and then walk away. He knows that God stayed with it. He knows that God cares about it. He gets that God cares about every animal, every plant, every person, everything. He knows that God cares for humanity as a whole yes, but God also cares and notices him as an individual child of God.

That's what really brings the Wow to the lips of the psalmist. He comes face to face with the glory of God and discovers that in the midst of the majestic and powerful glory, somehow God still has time for him. That, no matter how vast and massive the universe really is, each and every day, he, as a child of God, is remembered and visited by God. He is cared for and love by God more than he could ever imagine and the same holds true for us today. We are cared for and loved by God, more than we could ever realized, and more than we could ever imagine. How great is that!

This whole psalm is the psalmist big "Wow" experience. Upon discovering that the Creator of this vast universe still has time for him, still cares for him, loves him more than he could ever imagine, all he can do is stand there, eyes wide open, jaw dropped, and bask in the sheer joy, the sheer amazement, the sheer beauty of such wonderful life giving knowledge. The sheer thought of this amazing blessing just blows the psalmist's mind and should blow our mind as well. Wow! God

really does care for us. God really does love us. Even with all that God has to do, God takes the time to notice us. Somehow, someway, in the vastness of God's creation, God still has the time to know and care about us. And not only that, which is pretty great in itself, but God trusts us enough and respects us enough, to give us a part in helping bring about God's Kingdom here on earth. Wow! That is pretty cool! That is pretty amazing! That is pretty life-changing!

We matter to God, more than we could ever imagine. Wow!

And on top of that, God not only knows who we are as individuals but God also has given us, us, as beloved children of God, a part in helping to bring about the kingdom of God here on earth. Wow!

May we always stand in amazement as we remember how much we matter to God, how much God loves us and may we never lose the wonder and Wow factor at this fact. Amen.