

Sermon Title: Discoveries in Deep Space Infinity
Sermon Text: Psalm 8
Trinity Sunday, 2022

I do not know if you missed or not, but earlier in the year, there was an enormous uproar again created by the much-awaited release of more pictures from the Hubble Deep Space telescope. The Hubble beamed back to earth pictures of phenomena from deep space that was quite astonishing to many, many people, including me. Almost 100 years ago, scientists were not sure there was more than one galaxy. Some believed that everything stopped at the edge of the Milky Way galaxy, which is where our solar system resides. The big question was: Is our universe one of millions or the only one?

After tremendous debate, an astronomer from the University of Chicago, Edwin Powell Hubble, proved there were things outside our galaxy. Now based upon pictures from the telescope named after Hubble, we have expanded our estimates from one or millions of galaxies to at least 100 to 200 billion galaxies and some estimates say 500 billion galaxies. Can you imagine that? For the sake of discussion, let's just say 76 billion? One of these wealth magazines said that Bill Gates has 76 billion dollars. God has a galaxy for every dollar that Bill Gates has and then some. **O Lord, our Lord how majestic is your name in all the earth.**

The Hubble Deep Space telescope is truly one of the great marvels of our age. Hubble has revealed the age of the universe to be about 13 to 14 billion years. Hubble played a key role in the discovery of dark energy, a mysterious force that causes the expansion of the universe to accelerate. Hubble has shown scientists galaxies in all stages of evolution, including toddler galaxies that were around when the universe was still young. I could go on and on. The Hubble Deep Space Telescope helps us to say – **“O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. You have set your glory above the heavens.”**

In response to first pictures of the Hubble Deep Space telescope Peter Kendall wrote in an article,

“By showing that the universe is bigger and more diverse than we ever thought, these discoveries, in effect, show that we are even less significant than we ever thought.”

Before there were pictures from the Hubble – approximately twenty-five hundred years ago, the Psalmist looked up at magnificent beauty of a starlit night and said:

“When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you have sent in place, what are mortals that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for us. O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!”

Before space exploration and telescopes, the Psalmist with the naked eye looked up at the stars at night and thought – when I consider your heavens, we are even less significant than what we thought.

This Psalm 8 is unmistakably a hymn of praise, one that follows the typical hymnic structure – an initial call to praise, then an expansion of the reasons for that praise, then concluding with a further and heightened call for praise. As one scholar has said, “the incredible words of Psalm 8 thrust us backward to the time when God created the heavens, the earth, the creatures of the land, sky, and sea, and finally, male and female is in God’s image.” The Psalm calls attention to the scene prior to the fall when things were good and upright and without sin. And though the text grapples with the fall and sin and human dominance, I do not want to grapple with any of that today. I want to focus on wonder and praise – **O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you set in place, what are human beings that you are mindful of us, the human one that you care for us?**

We are less significant we are than we have ever thought -- how small we are – how infinitesimal, little, minute, miniature, tiny, microscopic, how teeny-weeny we are. There are galaxies larger than we can imagine and a God who made the universe that is larger than what we could ever imagine. We are not worshipping the magnificence of creation alone, but pointing to the magnificence of the one who made all creation. **Oh Lord, our Lord how majestic is your name in all the earth. You have set your glory above the heavens.**

The Psalmist teaches a few lessons. First, it is our duty to consider the heavens – the Psalmist says in verse 3 when I consider the heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you have set in place – it is our duty to consider the heavens – it is our duty to lift ourselves beyond ourselves – to lift our gaze, perspective, -- it is our duty to become citizens not only of town, city, nation, and the world, but to become a galactic citizen. We are the stuff of which 500 billion galaxies are made.

Second, when we consider the heavens, how vast the heavens are – everything else but God is small -- 500 billion galaxies. In contrast to the heavens (500 billion galaxies), the earth is tiny; in contrast to God, the 500 billion galaxies heavens are tiny –To show how small everything is, the text in verse 3 says the heavens are the work of God’s fingers. God set the moon and the stars in place. You know what I thought about – play dough that we would mold and make stuff when I was a kid. God rolled out some play dough and made five hundred billion galaxies. O Lord our Lord how majestic is your name in all the earth.

And then finally, we are tiny, minute, infinitesimal, miniature, microscopic, teeny-weeny, but God is mindful of us. God is mindful of us. Some are impressed with the power of God to make and set this whole universe in motion with play dough. Some are impressed with the omnipotence of God and the fact that God is so full of knowledge and wisdom. I am more impressed with the love of God. It is the love of God that makes God mindful of us. You see it is the love of God that brings God to reside with us. The one who owns 500 billion galaxies regards us, thinks about us, cares about us. God does not show up to condemn the world, but through God the world might be saved. For God so loved the world that God gave the only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life. **O Lord our Lord how majestic is your name in all the earth.**

Scientists are so fascinated with the Hubble pictures because not only are the pictures of things far far away, but of things long ago. The photographs are of events that have already occurred billions of years ago. Since the 19th century, astronomers have had a fair grasp of the speed of light. It takes light from the sun nine minutes to reach the earth. So when we see the sun, we see it as it existed nine minutes ago. The further away our telescopes look into the void, the older we see. The Hubble showed a picture of an explosion 12 billion light years away making them pictures of things that happened 12 billion years ago – they see the birth of stars, planets and galaxies that happened billions of years ago.

This Psalm says how majestic is your **name** – I thought to myself this might be like God. Could we say the names that we have for God are of God as God was 12 billion years ago. By the time we comprehend a name of God, God is that, but God has gone beyond that by the time we grasp it. For example, Abraham said, God was Jehovah-Jireh – the one who sees our need and has already provided – I wonder if that revelation was 12 billion light years ago. Isaiah called him the Lilly of the Valley and the Bright and morning star – I wonder if that was 12 billion years ago? How can we know God up to the minute? How can we know God right up to the absolute latest revelation – Find Jesus – he is the up to the minute revelation of God. God shows up in the neighborhood. Eugene Peterson translates the immortal text John 1:14 – and the word was made flesh and moved into the neighborhood. The one who has five hundred billion galaxies resides in a condo in our neighborhood – no wonder the Psalmist said – O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth.

I think I know what the songwriter means when they say –

All hail the power of Jesus name Let angels prostrate fall bring forth the royal diadem and crown him Lord of all. Bring forth the royal diadem...

I know what the songwriter means when they say –

Joyful joyful we adore thee, God of glory, Lord of Love hearts unfold like flowers before thee, opening to the sun above.

2. All thy works with joy surround thee, earth and heaven reflect thy rays, stars and angels sing around thee, center of unbroken praise.

3. Thou art giving and forgiving, ever blessing, ever blest, well-spring of the joy of living, ocean depth of happy rest! Thou our Father, Christ our brother, all who live in love are thine; teach us how to love each other, lift us to the joy divine.

4. Mortals, join the mighty chorus which the morning stars began; love divine is reigning o'er us, binding all within its span. Ever singing, march we onward, victors in the midst of strife; joyful music leads us sunward, in the triumph song of life.