Who Are We?

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Psalm 8:1-9

O LORD, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. 2 Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger. 3 When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; 4 what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? 5 Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. 6 You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, 7 all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, 8 the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas. 9 O LORD, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

1. 2018 Consumer Electronics Show

The Consumer Electronics Show (CES) was held last week from January 9 through 12, 2018 at Las Vegas Convention Center. CES is the biggest consumer technology show in the world. Every year, companies debut some of the newest technology for consumers and many products that we may use in the future are shown at this conference.

One of the things that I thought was interesting about the show were the debut of several robot products. With the updates in technology, robots may soon serve as companions, assistants and even friends. We see some basic forms of these types of technology in our homes, at the shopping center, and at work. Here is a video of one type of robot that was debuted. Her name is Sophia, and she is a humanoid robot from a Hong Kong company called Hanson Robotics.

You can't buy the robot just yet, but it's interesting to see the types of conversations and the human-like shape of this type of robot. In five or ten years, we may see these and other types of technology that we may never have even dreamed of. Where does the creativity to create these products come from? Psalms 8 gives us a clue to the answer.

2. Who Are We?

Psalm 8 is a song of praise, addressed solely to God, celebrating the majestic nature of God's name in all the earth and distinctive role of human beings. This psalm is called "a psalm of David." The author begins and ends with the same exclamation of God's majestic name. He expresses praise and thanksgiving for the wonderful creation. In verse 3, he says, "***When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you***

have established." He probably remembered the nights when he watched his father's flock and was so amazed by the beauty of the universe.

In verse 2, David praises God for using children to give glory to God. Children trust and praise God without doubt. As people get older, we tend to forget to praise God. Or we tend to take God's creation for granted. One of the things on my mind has been the radical changes in weather. Two weeks ago, we had temperatures in the single digits. Last week the temperature rose pretty significantly. Have you noticed the big difference in the water in the canal? Two weeks ago, I saw ice in the canal. Last week almost all the ice was gone.

We often take these types of changes for granted. But if we think about it, this ability to change the earth is a truly powerful sign of just a part of who God is. How often do we praise God for God's almighty power? There are beautiful things that are created and exist in nature, all of which come from the God who created the universe and has power over all things. But the God that makes all these beautiful things doesn't always get the praise and credit he deserves.

In verses 4 & 5, David says, "***What are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor.***" When David looks at the vast expanse of creation and compares humanity to God's greatness, he realizes the smallness of humans. David marvels that God would care about something so insignificant. In verses 6-8, David says that the smallness of humanity is a mystery because God empowers humans to maintain creation.

It is very interesting to notice that Psalm 8:4-6 is quoted in Hebrews 2:6 & 7. While the psalm as a whole is often read as a general statement about the role of man in God's creation, the author of Hebrews reads Psalm 8 as a prophecy about the messiah. He finds a deeper sense to the passage and applies it to Jesus. The author of Hebrews sees Jesus as the one who is crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death. The one crowned was made a little lower than the angels (God in Psalm 8) for the purpose of dying. And by the grace of God, he might taste death for everyone.

Whether we apply Psalm 8:4 to humanity or to Jesus, the author of the psalm emphasizes how worthy we are. Sometimes we question our worth as a person. We tend to minimize our ability and devalue ourselves.

3. Created in the Image of God

However, according to the creation story in Genesis, we are created by God in His image and His likeness. In Genesis 1:26 God says, "***Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every***

creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." This is a so powerful statement about who we are.

In what ways are we created in God's image? The meaning of God's image is understood in many different ways by different people. However, it is clear that God's nature is shared with human beings. Our entire self reflects the characteristics of God. Of course, we can't be like God entirely because God is our creator. But we have the ability to reflect God's character in our love, patience, forgiveness, kindness, and faithfulness. One of the most important God's characteristics would be creativity. If the human beings were created according to God's image, they would also be creative.

How creative are we? How much do we use God's creativity in us? Why do we have to use God's creativity? Verse 6-8 say, "***You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, [7] all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, [8] the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas***." God has given us a big responsibility of taking care of God's creation. In order to implement our mission, we need to use God's creativity. If we look around us, we can find many creative people who help others.

4. The Peanut Man

Have you ever heard about George Washington Carver? He was born a slave in 1860. After slavery was abolished, he was adopted and educated by his owner Moses Carver. He was known as the peanut man or the peanut wizard. Carver is credited with inventing about 300 uses for the peanut. He issued bulletins to farmers and housewives explaining how to use peanuts to make soap, flour, muffins, cattle feed, griddlecakes, salad dressing, face creams, axle grease, insecticides, glue, medicines and charcoal. Upon his death in 1943, Congress passed and President Roosevelt signed legislation making his birthplace a national monument-an honor previously granted only George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. He was enshrined in the Hall of Fame for Great Americans in New York City in 1976.

Where was his creative ideas from? In 1924 at the Marble Collegiate Church in New York, he said he never used books in his work, but depended upon divine revelation for his product ideas and methods. He said that one day an old widow timidly knocked on his laboratory door" and asked what to do with her surplus. He prayed alone in his laboratory to commune with God and listened what the Creator said to him what to do. Carver attributed his success to God. He was known as a person who was careless of money, but devout and humble. He quite often spent time in prayer. Someone asked him what motivated him to invent so many products with the peanut. He said, "Well, someday I will have to leave this world. And when that day comes, I want to feel

that my life has been of some service to my fellow man." He knew that God's creativity was given not to be used for himself, but for other human beings.

5. Conclusion

Who are we? The Bible says that we are created according to God's image and we have God's creativity. God wants us to use God's creativity for God's creation. But our time in this world is not that long. Psalm 90:9-10 say, "***Our years come to an end like a sigh.*** [10] ***The days of our life are seventy years, or perhaps eighty, if we are strong; even then their span is only toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away***." According to Psalm 90, our life is transitory and brief. Our life is limited to roughly 70 years or a few more years for some people. The psalmist asks for wisdom in numbering his days. He prays in verse 12, "***Teach us to count our days that we may gain a wise heart***." Life expectancy in the U.S. as of 2015 is 72 years old for male and 79 years for female. But for some people their time in this world is not that long.

I was saddened when I read a story of an Australian woman Holly Butcher. She died at the age of 27. Before she died, she wrote an open letter which she asked her family to post on Facebook following her death. She wrote, "I always imagined myself growing old, wrinkled and grey – most likely caused by the beautiful family (lots of kiddies)…I don't want to go. I love my life. I am happy… I owe that to my loved ones. But the control is out of my hands… Oh and one last thing, if you can, do a good deed for humanity (and myself) and start regularly donating blood." Holly said, life is "fragile, precious and unpredictable." She said each day was a gift and not a given right. She had Ewing's sarcoma, a rare form of cancer which mostly affects young people, and she passed away on January 4, 2018. Unfortunately, she did not have much time to use God's creativity for others.

6. Application

Last Sunday I asked, what resolutions do you have for 2018? You may not have any. But I would like to suggest every one of us to have at least one. It doesn't have to be for yourself, but it could be a resolution for our church or our community. Maybe you don't know where to start. It could be something as simple as a small contribution to the church, participating in a church event or making the effort to help the person next to you. Ask God for a creative idea that God wants you and me to do. What is going to happen if we do that? I believe our resolutions will bring us joy and happiness. Well, our health, finances, or relationships with friends and family can challenge us. But although there are ups and downs in life, we are called to remember that God is the one who created us in His image and empowers us to use God's creativity to bring joy and happiness not only in our lives but also to the lives of those around us.

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