

SERMON

First Lutheran Church
Aitkin, Minnesota

Psalm 8:1-9

Rev. Darrell J. Pedersen
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CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Kids, how many of you can drive the family car? How many of you have jobs working out around Aitkin somewhere? How many of you can prepare a meal for your family? How many of you can help with dishes?

Today I would like us to talk about "**responsibility**." Responsibility is something that you get more and more of as you grow up. Parents gradually give kids responsibilities like

- throwing your dirty clothes in the hamper,
- taking out the garbage,
- making your own bed,
- helping to mow the lawn...

Do parents give us responsibilities in order to **punish** us or make us **suffer**? No, they give us these jobs in order to **bless us**. They know that we will learn some very good and important things from helping around our homes. We will learn:

- that work is good,
- that we are an important part of our family,
- that we are needed and wanted,
- that we can grow bigger, smarter, happier...
- that we will someday become an adult who can **take care of ourselves**,
- that we will someday become a caring person who can help to **take care of others and of the whole big, wide world**.

That's the job/responsibility that God gives to our parents. God asks our parents to teach us all of the good things we need to know **in order to help God's world and our lives to be the best that they can be**.

When our parents trust us enough to let us try new things, then we can show them that we are trustworthy. If we do well taking out the garbage, some day they will trust us enough to drive our family car. If we drive too soon, we could get hurt, someone else could get hurt and the car could get wrecked.

God does the same thing with all of us. God gives us **responsibilities** to take care of. God asks us to **love God**. Then God asks us to **love other people** and **God's world**. And loving God and other people **sometimes takes some work**. How many of your **drive the family car**? Someday, if you are responsible and trustworthy, you will. How many of you **love and care for each other and for God's world**? You **may already be starting** to do that important work. **And when you do, everyone will be blessed**. Thanks be to God. Amen.

ADULT MESSAGE

Not far from here, **one of my best friends**, my hunting and walking partner, a son, husband and father is battling death-dealing cancer. He is in his **50s**. Not far from here, **one of the life-long saints of this church**, a wife, mother and grandmother is battling death-dealing cancer. She is in her **70s**. Not far from here a **young wife, mom and daughter**, newer to this church, is battling death-dealing cancer. She is in her **40s**.

Tornadoes ripped through Oklahoma last week and a bunch of little kids and adults were buried beneath the rubble of fallen schools.

This summer some **kids in Aitkin County** may not have enough to eat each day if the school district doesn't offer a summer meals program.

And in Brookston, Minnesota, **Lutheran Social Services** is helping my sister and brother-in-law to rebuild their home after last summer's heavy rains and flood. And LSS is providing **Camp Noah** for kids in our

county who could use some help and encouragement for successful living in a tough world.

This is the world that we live in.

Have you heard the tradition about **flocks of geese** as they are flying south for the winter? Supposedly, if one of the geese becomes wounded or sick and can't keep up, another goose will land with it. That second goose will then remain with the first goose until it has either gotten well or died. **That is a beautiful picture, but I'm not sure that it is true with geese** or with any other animal species...

But, I do know that kind of thing is **true with the human species** which God created in **God's own image**. "**Image**" - we don't look like God. "**Image**" - we have been created to be in a loving relationship with God, with each other and with the earth.

Our lesson for today, **Psalm 8**, comes from 2800 years ago and it

- Points out the **majesty, glory and power of God**, (This is a "**Yeah God!**" picture – **even the babbling of babies** praises God...)
- Details the **amazing work of God's creative hand**, (Picture your favorite **natural spot**... Or, think about your **heart beating** within your chest.)
- **Asks how God could possibly care** about tiny, insignificant human beings, (Millions of people, all over the world, centuries of history, graves long forgotten in cemeteries... We may be **mere specks** in the universe, **BUT** we are **specks imbued with God's love**.)
- **Marvels at the high place** God has given to humans in the order of things, ("**A little less than God**...")
- **Celebrates God's call** for us to be **fellow caretakers** with God of the whole creation, ("**Rule over the works of your hands;**

- you have put all things under their feet**” – This **isn’t** about **punishment or burden**. This is about **opportunity, blessing** and the **chance to experience the depth of life which far exceeds the self-centeredness** that we see all around us. Taking care of ourselves is **survival**. Caring for others and the creation brings **depth, meaning and blessing for us and for all.**)
- Concludes with a **reminder of how awesome God, our Lord, is.** (God **doesn’t need us...** **BUT,** God **loves us and wants us!** **Yeah God!**)

And this is one of the most amazing things this Psalm reminds us of - **God not only creates us,** but then God says, **“I’m going to let YOU help ME with my world!”**

It is God’s divine plan when **school teachers shelter little ones** beneath their own bodies as buildings crumble. It is God’s good and compassionate will when **health care workers, family, friends and church family pause to care for the sick,** wounded and grieving. God delights when our tax dollars make sure that **every little kid has enough to eat** regardless of how responsible or irresponsible their adult caregivers are.

And God is using every person who works at **Riverwood Hospital** – the guy mowing the lawn, the person cooking the meals, the nurse changing the IV, and the volunteer welcoming the visitors or helping pastors to find their way when they get lost.

Pastor Bob and I are trying our hardest to be present and to care for hurting parishioners and others. So are the parish nurses. So are the friends. Nobody can do it alone. We need everybody, strangers even. When somebody is sick or wounded somebody else needs to pause to **wait with them,** to **comfort them,** to **help them.** That is God’s plan for us and for our world. And God’s plan brings **blessing to both** the **recipient** and to the **giver of that care.**

How huge and amazing God is. How huge and amazing is God's creation. **How small and insignificant we are.** Yet, God **created** us, **loves** us, **blesses** us and then **commissions** us as caretakers, caregivers of God's precious people and of God's precious creation.

God loves the world enough to die for it. Then God in Christ rises from the dead and says, "**I'm going to let YOU help ME with my world.**"

Driving that truck, building that cabinet, styling that hair, teaching that class, baking that cake – can you see? These are God's work, God's plan... **Do your work well, do your loving and caring well** because you are **doing it in Jesus' Name**, to the **glory of God** and for the **love and care of this world.**

This is **Holy Trinity Sunday.** This week we reflect upon an amazing God who visits us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God is a God who **creates and never deserts** us, who is **enthroned high above but is always at our side.**

Dr. Jim Boyce, my old Greek teacher, says this about Psalm 8. "**If you need some convincing about the greatness of this God, just take a look around at the wonders of creation, from the vast heavens to the beasts, and birds, and fish that inhabit the land the seas. And if you think that is really something, then just imagine that at the pinnacle of this creation God has placed human beings, and then risked it all by entrusting us with the care of the whole.**"

Think about it. God is a gambler. God has **risked the well-being of this world and its people** on you and me. **Little speck, child of God, you matter to God.** You matter to **other people.** And you matter to this **big, old world.** Wow. **Yeah God! We want to help Lord... Thank you Lord...** Amen.