**New Kilpatrick**

**Harvest Podcast**

**1st October 2023**

**Psalm 8**

**Gathering**

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 humans that you are mindful of them,
    mortals[a] that you care for them?

5

Yet you have made them a little lower than God[b]
    and crowned them with glory and honour.

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!

**Welcome**

Hello… I’m Roddy Hamilton the minister of New Kilpatrick Parish… and I’d like to thank you for the space you have created for us today… making that space… a together space … for worship... which is what we do together… because we are together… gathered round a psalm… that questions us… and invites us into God… It is Psalm 8… a liturgical version of creation… suitable today… because this is our harvest festival… and we give thanks for creation… and invite ourselves again… to return to the world… justice… and love… and integrity… the gifts God placed within her it at the beginning… Let us worship.

**Prayer**

In the wonder of all that is

The merging colours

And tapestry of sound

May we find the chorus that is your name

A deep beauty

That sings in our souls

That invites our spirits to soar

With creation’s own alleluia

In such wonder we find thanksgiving

For the riches of the earth

Once so fickle and still so for too many

Yet abundant and costly for us

For we have made the world a competition

We have used its generosity to divide us

Create great distances between us

Rich and poor

West and East

North and South

Have and have nots

May harvest be our corrective

May such spoils convict us

Make us pause

Draw breath

And renew our relationship with creation

And each other

That we might return to the beauty

Recognise it for what it is

A panoply of alleluias

A tapestry of pleasure

A web balanced in the love that made it

And we can whisper

And we can sing

And we can shout

O God, our God how majestic is your name

In all the earth.

So be it

Amen

**Reading**

God, brilliant Lord,
    yours is a household name.

Nursing infants gurgle choruses about you;
    toddlers shout the songs
That drown out enemy talk,
    and silence atheist babble.

I look up at your macro-skies, dark and enormous,
    your handmade sky-jewelry,
Moon and stars mounted in their settings.
    Then I look at my micro-self and wonder,
Why do you bother with us?
    Why take a second look our way?

Yet we’ve so narrowly missed being gods,
    bright with Eden’s dawn light.
You put us in charge of your handcrafted world,
    repeated to us your Genesis-charge,
Made us stewards of sheep and cattle,
    even animals out in the wild,
Birds flying and fish swimming,
    whales singing in the ocean deeps.

God, brilliant Lord,
    your name echoes around the world.

**Reflection**

There are passages in the Bible that are not the basis of teaching or explaining or even understanding… Perhaps most passages in the Bible fit into that category… These are passages to be heard and lived with… paused over… breathed in… Passages we are to rest with… and let the feel of the words… sit on our tongues… and make them our own…

The Psalms are such passages and Psalm 8, one in particular… To analyse and take apart and look at individual items would be to ruin it, what it says and does to us…

So, we will sit with it again… and have it on repeat… because such passages are designed to be told and retold and told again… to embrace them… embody them… And we are already half way there with Psalm 8 and some of the very familiar lines it has… How majestic is your name in all the earth… What are mortals that you remember them… a little lower than God…

The Psalm is shaped like an hourglass… it starts and ends with the same line… God at the beginning and God at the end… and within that tautology… all the questions we want to ask… yet there is really only one that concerns us… why? … Why do you remember us… How can you even see us… Actually, why bother to acknowledge us amidst the vast wonder of all of creation…

Yet we are made… and how can this possibly be true… we are made just a little lower than God…

If the vastness of creation takes our breath away… that truth empties any last drop of air…

There is no explanation… None needed… It is a truth for us to live with… wonder at… be convicted by… humbled by and reason to ask for forgiveness… because of what we do to creation… No need to specifically mention net zero policies being rolled back… short-termism to win elections by panicked leaders… on both sides of politics I fear…

Yet this psalm isn’t about us… Every line is about God… Despite the mess we dig ourselves in more and more deeply… this is a psalm of grace… what are mortals that you consider them…

O boy…

With those few thoughts… none of which explain anything but just offer a shape to the psalm through which to listen… let us again, listen, pause with… and rest in, this psalm… it is food for our world… our souls… and our spirits…

God, O God

Your name: engraved on everything you have made

The sound of newborns shapes your name

Children’s laughter holds it too

Enough to dull those who talk with empty belief

And blether about their own importance

I gasp at the blue of midnight, scattered with gold and white

Every one imagined and shaped by you

A ribbon of stars that stretches beyond possibility

So why, O God

Why turn your head towards us

Why give us a second look?

Yet we have been placed a hair’s breadth under you

Graced with glory and wonder

Made of that same starlight that colours the heavens

Made as servants and stewards of all that breathes

The same breath with which you filled our lungs

And the whales sing

And the sea eagle calls

And the cattle low

The song of creation

God, O God

Your name: engraved on everything you have made

**News**

**Epilogue**

It is easy to be taken in by harvest

Singing the old hymns that bring a romance to the festival

But these hymns meant something different then

There really was a precarious moment when the harvest could be ruined

Unexpected weather

Disease

Birds, locusts etc.

We sing:

Now the harvest gathered in

When, actually, still, it isn’t

Many millions of folk

Are still hungry

Grain prices have risen again

The breadbasket of the world

Is in conflict

Wheat has been politicised

The harvest isn’t safely gathered in

Maybe there are some songs we shouldn’t sing

Until it is gathered in

And everyone has enough

There has to be a hole in the wonder

A fracture in the beauty

That reminds us that

The relationship we have with the world

And with each other

Is not one that will bring justice and fairness

Let’s not be taken in

But recognise Harvest is a deep moment to reflect

When shall the tables be full

For everyone.

**Benediction**