

I apologize in advance for my singing, but today we're studying a psalm--and the Bible does say to make a joyful noise unto the Lord....

Please help me finish this question, "Conjunction junction what's your....(function)? The Andrews Sisters sang of a "boogie woogie bugle boy of....(Company B).

How many years do you suppose you've had that stored away in your memory? (Now who can tell me what you had for lunch two days ago?)

Funny that we can remember our prom songs and our wedding songs, and even the songs that we're popular when we had kids, but we can't remember to pick up the dry cleaning or to buy eggs! Music isn't just about memories, either, but about touchstones.

I can still remember hearing "Eye in the Sky" by the Alan Parsons Project. Anytime I hear it, I'm 13 years old again and back in my kitchen in Lewiston with yellow peg board walls. My parents are in Florida and I'm feeling very grown up, cleaning the kitchen and listening to the radio much louder than would have been possible if I weren't the adult in charge. That song brought me a lot of comfort. I felt as though I wasn't alone with my younger brother, but that God was with us--God was the Eye in the Sky, watching over us. (It was the 70's—there were para-religious songs all over pop radio...and parents could go on vacation and leave adolescents at home!)

Songs can engender confidence, or evoke a mood. They can empower us. Songs are more than just about information, songs are about stimulation. Music can touch our emotions and help us to feel, speaking to us in a way that transcends mere words. Alzheimer patients who have been unresponsive to little else will spring to life when they hear certain music from their past.

Songs unite us. They bridges gaps, real or imaginary. The same song can be sung across a spectrum of age, gender, race, and socioeconomics. Songs unite us.

In Biblical times, singing wasn't just for special occasions, song was for everyday. Music and song were used in traditional worship, both in the temple and the traveling tabernacle. The Psalms are Hebrew poetry, meant to be sung.

Words set to music, or songs, help us to remember information. We can sing different parts--soprano, alto, tenor, or bass and the song is enhanced by our differences.

Today, when we say a lot of good things about another, when we build someone up, when gush about another's accomplishments, we are said to be "singing their praises". That is literally what's happening here in Psalm 8.

This is a psalm of thanksgiving for all that God has done. Look where the creative action is in the psalm. God is the one doing things. And the human speaking is feeling some existential

angst. God 'does' and we 'consider God's handiwork and 'wonder' at God's interest in us.

Lest you feel superior to the psalmist, I want to remind you that you can build a house, but you can't create the wood it's made of... You can have a child, but you aren't responsible for the miracle of life... You can plant a seed, but you didn't pack the potential of the flower inside of it.

We have come a long way in understanding how things work, but we can only work with what we've received as gifts of God. Right now, on a farm in Saco, my brother-in-law is growing beans. They're beans that his father cross-bred 50 years ago. They're beans that have literally been stored in a freezer for 25 years. They're beans that were planted 15 years after his father died. Those beans are growing because Ben understands a bit about how things work, but he was only about to bring them from seed to plant because of the life that God put inside of them.

God put life inside of us, too. Jesus said that he came so that we might have life and have life abundantly.

There's a short video making the rounds on the internet this week. A young boy happened to be seated in front of a woman who took off her shoes on an airplane. She put her foot up on the armrest and while many of us would have been uncomfortable, we probably would have just opened the air vent on high. Instead, this little boy very loudly remarked that someone had stinky feet behind him.

Out of the mouths of babes, huh?

His truth-telling caused a reaction in the woman and she moved her foot. (And we have to hope that she put her shoes back on!)

When we use the saying “out of the mouths of babes”, we're usually noting that a child has said something wise or truthful. Today, let's remember that the first wise truth that babies and children share: God is great and deserving of praise.

And when we praise God, we call forth God's presence—real, powerful, awesome. There have always been those who are blind to God's majesty, deaf to God's power. Over and over in scripture we hear of Jesus 'opening the eyes' of the blind and Christ invited all with ears to hear his words.

Could it be that what we do affects God? Process Theology would say yes; that God feels all of our emotions and actions. When we hurt others or ourselves, we are also hurting God. When we help, we help all, including God.

Why is the praise of infants and children so important? This was written almost 1,000 years before Jesus and we know that even in Christ's time women and children were mostly possessions. They didn't have any rights and not a whole lot of 'worth'. Is it that infants and children who are taught to praise God grow into adults who praise God? Is it that by living in God's glory we bring others to the Father?

And what's this about God's enemy? Who or what is the enemy anyway? Professor Paul Cho of

Wesley Theological Seminary says this, “God’s enemies, in the context of creation, are the forces of chaos and evil that appear elsewhere in the Bible as Leviathan and other sea monsters.

What forces of chaos and evil damage creation today? Is it pesticide manufacturers poisoning crops? Is it those who are genetically modifying food? Is it the companies pouring pollution into rivers and streams? Is it the plastics industry?....Is it you and me? Not recycling. Not composting. Living for today, thinking that this is our playground and that everything is disposable?

When we read, hear, or sing this psalm, we would do well to remember a few things.

On this Father's Day, let us remember our Father who art in Heaven. In doing so, let us also remember that we are precious children of God, called to be caretakers of God's creation. This psalm is calling us to remember that God is our creator in world and culture where it's so easy to forget. It's calling us to remember that humanity (created just lower than the angels) is a part of God's creation along with the heavens, earth, sea, and all living creatures. And it's reminding us that we have a sacred responsibility, a holy vocation. We humans have been entrusted with caring for creation.

The second thing we can remember is that we are not alone in this undertaking. Psalm 8 notes that children and babies praise God and, interestingly, that that very praise does something for God. This is one piece of scripture that is definitely worth reading in many different versions and I encourage you to do so.

Some Bibles say that through the praise of children and infants, God has established a stronghold against God's enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger. (NIV) Other version say, “you have taught children and infants to tell of your strength, silencing your enemies and all who oppose you” (NLT). Still others say, “Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes to silence the enemy and the avenger.” (NRSV) And yet another says, “Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.”

Just like that song, Eye in the Sky, God is there..or rather here, when we call forth God's presence. God **spoke** the world into being. The ancients believed that using God's name was invoking God's presence. That's why we're not supposed to use God's name in vain, by the way...

None of our endeavors are undertaken alone when we call forth God's presence—or sing God's praises....

Listen again to Psalm 8. This version was written by Silvia Purdie (and I'm adding emphasis):

God, our living God, you are amazing! You are higher than I can look, You are wider than I can see.

But I can hear you – Listen! We can hear you in the laughter of a little child, We can hear you in the babbling of a baby. You don't need words to tell us of your power.

Why do you need us at all? We are so small, and the world is so big, the stars are so many and

space is so enormous. God, our living God, you are amazing! You made everything. Why do I matter?

But we do matter! **God cares for us most of all, and through us God cares for all the world.** You put everything into our care, all the animals, all the birds, all the fish, everything that creeps or flies or runs or swims, even the land and the air and the sea. It is all ours to look after. God, our living God, you are amazing! (Silvia Purdie <http://www.conversations.net.nz/psalm-8-out-of-the-mouths-of-babes.html>)

And God is. We are blessed indeed! Amen.