

All Things under Their Feet
Rev. Nicole Farley
First Presbyterian Church of Waukesha
October 4, 2015

Psalm 8

¹ 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!

Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:5-12

¹Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. ³He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

⁵ Now God did not subject the coming world, about which we are speaking, to angels. ⁶But someone has testified somewhere,

'What are human beings that you are mindful of them,
or mortals, that you care for them?

⁷ You have made them for a little while lower than the angels;
you have crowned them with glory and honor,

⁸ subjecting all things under their feet.'

Now in subjecting all things to them, God left nothing outside their control. As it is, we do not yet see everything in subjection to them, ⁹but we do see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

10 It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, ¹²saying, 'I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters, in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.'

Usually when I read Psalm 8 I reflect on God's greatness and the wonder that God cares for us as much as God does. More than ever this week, tremendous is my wonder that God cares for us as much as God does. This week it feels like we are much more than a little lower than God. If we are a little lower than God than the difference must be our willingness to protect our rights over protecting lives. I don't have an answer. I don't know a middle ground to make everyone satisfied. I only know it's too easy for people here to violently kill one another – to kill children – and that seems wrong. Do you know what question I ask Jim before each new semester of college? I ask him to put into our shared family calendar what classes he has at what times in what buildings. Do you know why? So that, if a shooting were to happen at Mizzou, I could know with greater certainty whether he was in the building where and when it happened or not. That should seem wrong to you. It is very wrong to me.

And yet, since a man killed twenty children, and six adults, at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, CT, in December 2012, someone has fired shots in 142 schools in the country. In thirty-four of those occasions people were killed. One hundred and eight times people had to put themselves in harm's way with the shooter to keep that person from killing people. In ninety-seven schools at least one person who was not the shooter was injured by gunfire. We now regularly hear the word "shooter." We read today in Hebrews that Jesus makes purifications for our sins. Over and over and over Jesus is making purification for the sins of our brothers and sisters who kill.

Jesus has made purification for the sins at Apostolic Revival Center Christian School, Taft Union High School, Stevens Institute of Business & Arts, Hazard Community and Technical College, Chicago State University, Lone Star College North Harris Campus, Price Middle School, Morehouse College, Indian River State College, Hillside Elementary School, Henry W. Grady High School, University of Central Florida, Davidson Middle School, New River Community College, Elizabeth City State University, Grambling State University, La Salle High School, Santa Monica College, Alexander W. Dreyfoos School of the Arts, Northwest High School, Ronald E. McNair Discovery Learning Academy, Westside Elementary School, North Panola High School, Carver High School, Savannah State University, New Gloucester High School, Agape Christian Academy, Lanier High School, Sparks Middle School, and Algona High and Middle School.

Jesus has made purification for the sins at North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University, Stephenson High School, South Dakota School of Mines & Technology, West Orange High School, Arapahoe High School, Edison High School, Liberty Technology Magnet High School, Berrendo Middle School, Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School, Delaware Valley Charter High School, Widener University, Purdue University, South Carolina State University, Tennessee State University, again at Grambling State University, Cesar Chavez High School, North High School, Bend High School, Salisbury High School, Brush High School, Union University, Raytown Success Academy, McDaniel College, Madison High School, University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh, University of Delaware, again at Savannah State University, Kent State University, East English Village Preparatory Academy, and Stillman College.

Jesus has made purification for the sins at St. Mary Catholic School, Provo High School, Iowa Western Community College, Marquette University, Horizon Elementary School, Paine College on May 4, 2014, and Paine College on May 5, 2014, Georgetown College, Georgia Gwinnett College, Clark Street School in Milwaukee, Seattle Pacific University, Reynolds High School, Kelly High School, University of Miami, Heather Ridge High School, Saunders Elementary, Idaho State University, and again at Savannah State University, Greenwood Lakes Middle School, Westbrook Elementary School, Joel C. Harris Academy, again at Tennessee State University, Indiana State University, Albermarle High School, Fern Creek High School, Langston Hughes High School, again at Elizabeth City State University, and a third time at Tennessee State University, Langston University, and A. Maceo Walker Middle School.

Jesus has made purification for the sins at Marysville-Pilchuck High School, Delaware State University, Florida State University, St. John's College, Rogers State University, Sunnyside Elementary School, Benton Elementary School, Wisconsin Lutheran High School in Milwaukee, Vanguard High School, Williamson High School, Royal Live Oaks Academy, Hand in Hand Christian Montessori School, Minnesota State University, Frederick High School, University of South Carolina, University of Georgia, Lawson Elementary School, Tenaya Middle School, Bethune-Cookman University, Northwest Passage Alternative High School, American International College, Community College of Beaver County, Lane College, Everett Community College, Wayne Community College, Seguin High School, Johnson C. Smith University, Ruthe Deskin Elementary School, North Thurston High School, and Willow Elementary School.

And Jesus has made purification for the sins at Conyers Middle School, Corona del Sol High School, Robinson High School, Flint Southwestern Classical Academy, Everglades City School, South Macon Elementary School, Fort Calhoun Elementary School, Coppell Middle School East, Elolf

Elementary School, University of Florida – Gainesville, Wichita State University, Paradise High School, William Velasquez Elementary, Hornsby Elementary School, and a fourth time at Savannah State University, Sacramento City College, Northside High School, Delta State University, Central Elementary School, Montana Tech of the University of Montana, Harrisburg High School, and Umpqua Community College.¹

And we read in Hebrews that Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters. If God has made us stewards, as Psalm 8 declares – You have given them dominion over the works of your hands, you have put all things under their feet – how are we being stewards of one another’s lives? Like the lives of children like these who should go to school to learn and play, not to be taught how and where to hide if someone comes into the school with a gun? This list, of course, does not include all the adults on the streets and in their homes and at their places of employment and in their churches who have been killed. **How are we being stewards of one another’s lives?** If we continue to strive for our rights and our privileges over the lives of God’s children, we must not forget that Jesus said, “those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?”²

Let us pray: Almighty God, what are human beings that you are mindful of us, mortals that you care for us? Our deep, deep prayer is that we can live up to the regard you have for us. Amen.

¹ <http://everytown.org/article/schoolshootings/>

² Matthew 16:24-25