

Welcome and opening prayers

Opening question

In 1994 the Northridge earthquake caused major blackouts in the Los Angeles area. During the night people began to call the emergency services to report a strange light in the sky. What they were actually seeing was the Milky Way. Light pollution was usually so bad in the city that many people had never seen the stars.

Are you a stargazer? Have you ever slept under the stars or watched for shooting stars? Has there ever been for you a night when the sky has been especially awe inspiring?

Our Bible reading is Psalm 8. We will listen to it once and leave time for quite personal reflection.

1 LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens.

2 Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.

3 When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,

4 What is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?

5 You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honour.

6 You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet:

7 all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild,

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8 the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.

9 LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

We hear it a second time. After this reading, share phrases or verses which have had an impact on you. Do not explain why they are important to you, just say the words.

We hear it a third time. This time, following the reading we will share what the impact was of the words we have heard.

Reading from Connexion by Charlotte Rumble

Charlotte describes feeling under pressure and being irritated at being asked by her husband to break off from her tasks.

Can we relate to that feeling?

What are the responsibilities that get in the way of finding time to pause and reflect?

The Psalmist looked at the night sky and felt tiny and insignificant. Modern telescopes enable us to see far into space and uncover new mysteries and wonders. We have seen pictures of the earth from space. As our minds are opened up to new learning, how might this lead us to discover new truths about God?

Sing: Mission Praise 173 O Lord my God when I in awesome wonder

The Psalmist ponders on the heavens and asks a question...

‘What are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? (v.4) and goes on to say, yet... ‘You

have given them dominion over the works of your hands, you have put all things under their feet' (v 6)

How might holding these two thoughts in balance help us to reflect on our attitudes to nature and the natural world?

Hebrews 1:1-5 ¹In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. ³The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. ⁴So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs. ⁵For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father"? Or again, "I will be his Father, and he will be my Son"?

'In the past God spoke... in various ways'. Has there been a time in your life when you have been conscious of God speaking to you? If it is not too personal, would you like to share it with the group?

Closing reflection from Connexion