

“Held Together”
Psalm 8 and Romans 5:1-5
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Scripture Readings

Psalm 8

O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory above the heavens.

Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes,
to silence the enemy and the avenger.

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have
established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?

Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honour. You
have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, all
sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever
passes along the paths of the seas.

O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Romans 5:1-5

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of
sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that
suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and
hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy
Spirit that has been given to us.

“Held Together”

On the farm my dad could hold things together with baler twine like MacGyver could get
out of any predicament with duct tape. We had an abundance of baler twine about 2,000 7 foot
strands a year. The twine was used to hold the bales of hay together. A bale weighed between 50
and 100 pounds and was handled by two strands of twine that was wrapped around the bale. Twine
is small, about half the diameter of a pencil, yet very strong able to hold several hundred pounds.
Time was almost always of the essence on the farm. Usually something would break in the evenings
or weekends when we would be unable to get parts or field equipment would break down when we
were trying to plant or harvest the crop before an approaching storm. Dad was a master at using
baler twine to hold things together until they could be properly fixed. Everywhere my Dad went he
carried a small single blade jack knife and 4 strands of baler twine. He always kept additional twine
in every tool box and on every tractor.

My dad often would fix a shorted out electric fence by draping the twine over the wire and
wrapping it around the wire numerous times being very careful to never touch the wire for if he did
he would get zapped. After wrapping the twine around the wire for insulation he would then tie it to
the post and the fence was held together again.

One time the corn planter marker broke off the side of the planter. The marker was an eight foot arm of metal with a disk on the end that would make a mark in the soil so on the next pass you knew where to drive to keep the proper row spacing. The marker was hinged to the side of the planter so it could move up and down as the terrain varied. At the end of a pass hydraulics would rise it up and the one on the other side would come down. As my dad was planting corn late one night the hinge on the marker broke and it was being dragged by the hydraulic line. If that hydraulic line became severed he would be done for sure so my Dad secured the marker to the top of the planter with baler twine. Got a tree branch and lashed it to the side of the planter and dangled a piece of twin from the end so he knew where to drive.

I was most amazed by my dad's ability to hold plumbing together with twine. One night the main pipe that supplied drinking water to the cows broke. A cow drinks about two gallons of water for every gallon of milk produced so on our farm that meant the cows drank about 13,800 gallons a day. You never wanted to leave the cows without water. One night the 2 inch galvanized pipe busted. Thirsty cows were everywhere. Dad ran and got a piece of inner tube rubber and a metal rod. He had me hold the pipe together. He cut the rubber to wrap around the pipe then he tightly wrapped the twine around the pipe about one foot on each side of the break. Finally he put the rod alongside the patch and wrapped another band of twine around everything. To my amazement it held together with only a minor leak.

Scripture proclaims **Colossians 1:17** **"In Jesus all things hold together."** Today is Trinity Sunday, a time to affirm God as Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer three persons yet held together as our one perfect God; no, not with baler twine, rather with love. It is also Memorial Day weekend when we celebrate that God's love never ends for God, Creator, created heaven, God Redeemer, Jesus carries those who physically die to heaven, God Sustainer, the Holy Spirit comforts us until we are reunited with all we love. The essence of God is perfect love that glorifies, compliments and completes each member of the Trinity and holds the entire cosmos and you and I together. Madeleine L'Engle refers to the Trinity as "Earth Maker, Pain Bearer and Life Giver.

Out of love God created the cosmos. The psalmist was likely lying on a hilltop looking up into the nighttime sky sparkling with stars. Our Milky Way galaxy contains billions of stars. The psalmist in awe of the magnitude of God's creative beauty burst into song. **Psalm 8:1** **"O Lord, Our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.** God is really, really big, awesome, amazing and powerful. God is indescribably huge and strong. A beam of light takes eight minutes to cross the 93 million miles between Earth and the sun. If our galaxy were the size of North American then the relative size of our solar system—sun and eight planets would be a quarter. And our galaxy is just one of at least 200 billion galaxies we have identified to date. If you were to count the stars in just our galaxy one per second it would take you 2,500 years to count them. God is indescribable, sovereign and majestic for all of the cosmos is tiny compared to God, for God's finger pushed them into place. God's hands are billions of light years wide holding the heavens in God's palms. All of it is all held together by God. God uses more than baler twine God created orbits, gravity and invisible forces to hold everything together in harmony. Sounds like love on a cosmic scale.

The psalmist is humbled by God's enormity singing **Psalm 8:3-4** **"When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?"** Great point because in relative size to the cosmos we are minutely tiny. Just then God the sustainer touched the psalmist's heart with God's personal love and sparked a thought with God's loving wisdom. The psalmist continues, **Psalm 8:5** **"Yet you have made them,"** that's us, **"a little lower than God and crowned us with glory and honor."** We are infinitesimally small and there are billions of us yet God is mindful of each of us and crowns each of us individually with glory and honor.

Each of us is wonderfully made. You are made up of approximately 75 trillion cells that all came from two cells. God sustains you enabling you to replacing billions of those cells everyday with so much ease that rarely do we even ponder our body's ability to heal itself. God took the time to create each one of us unique. God gives each of us special gifts and abilities. God honors our uniqueness by communicating and filling each of us with love in the way that is ideal for you. Each of us is held together by God. God uses a protein, binding agent called laminin to hold our bodies together. Maybe it is just a coincidence but laminin is the shape of a cross. God created laminin to hold our bodies together. Sounds like love on a molecular scale.

The psalmist continues **Psalm 8:6** **"You have given them,"** that's us **"dominion over the works of your hands;"** You are different from anything else God created because you were created just a little lower than God in God's very own image. You are created to hold your life, your relationships and your environment together with love. In this vast universe the way you live, your stewardship, the way you hold all together matters. God has given us a wonderful gift and a responsibility to enjoy and to care for God's majestic masterpiece so God's glory will continually be revealed through it. God wants you to be God's partner in caring for creation.

We should live kind of like my family did when some friends let us stay in their beach house. We enjoyed all of it for that was our friend's desire for us. We carefully cared for all of it striving to leave it cleaner and better than when we arrived for that was our way of showing our gratitude. When faced with a choice consider what does it mean to be God's guest on earth? What does it mean to be God's partner?

The psalmist concludes as he started **Psalm 8:9** **"O Lord, Our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!** praising the enormity of our Creator God that holds everything and everyone together.

Out of love God redeems everyone and everything. Jesus, our redeemer, is like the ultimate handyman able to fix everything, anything and everyone, all free of charge. Whenever we break something; Jesus is there loving, to hold it together. Whenever we break ourselves or another; Jesus is there loving, to hold us and all people together.

The psalmist declares, **Psalm 8:2** **"Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger"** In other words even the most vulnerable person is given strength to overcome enemies such as hate or death. Jesus is lovingly holding together the vulnerable. At the other extreme sin puffs one up and shrinks God. Jesus is lovingly holding that person together through forgiveness. **Colossians 1:17** **"In Jesus all things hold together."**

Out of love God sustains all. The last three weeks we have explored some of the sustaining work of the Holy Spirit. Steve shared how the Holy Spirit speaks to us. On Ascension Sunday we explored how the Holy Spirit enables us to enjoy abundant life. On Pentecost Sunday we explored how the Holy Spirit empowers us with resurrection power and how we can share God's power by sharing our stories.

God the creator inspires us with God's enormity. God the sustainer comforts us with God's intimacy. God the sustainer fills us with peace, hope, wonder and joy.

Listen for how the love of God is holding all together as the Apostle Paul describes the work of each member of the Trinity. **Romans 5:1-5** **"By entering through faith into what God has always wanted to do for us—set us right with God, make us fit for God—we have it all together with God because of our Master Jesus. And that's not all: We throw open our doors to God and discover at the same moment that God has already thrown open God's door to us. We find ourselves standing where we always hoped we might stand—out in the wide open spaces of God's grace and glory, standing tall and shouting our praise. There's more to come: We continue to shout our praise even when we're hemmed in with troubles, because we know**

how troubles can develop passionate patience in us, and how that patience in turn forges the tempered steel of virtue, keeping us alert for whatever God will do next. In alert expectancy such as this, we're never left feeling shortchanged. Quite the contrary—we can't round up enough containers to hold everything God generously pours into our lives through the Holy Spirit!"

The prophet Isaiah expounded on the Trinity revealing that God is big, God cares and God gives strength. **Isaiah 40:28-31 "God doesn't come and go. God lasts. God's Creator of all you can see or imagine. God doesn't get tired out, doesn't pause to catch God's breath. And God knows everything, inside and out. God energizes those who get tired, gives fresh strength to dropouts. For even young people tire and drop out, young folk in their prime stumble and fall. But those who wait upon God get fresh strength. They spread their wings and soar like eagles, They run and don't get tired, they walk and don't lag behind."** God sees what you are going through, God cares and God is powerful to renew, to redeem, you and your situation.

Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer; Earth Maker, Pain Bearer, Life Giver; our one God of love who holds everything and everyone together. O Lord, Our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! Amen