

## *Devotion from the past ... 2002*

Read [Psalm 8](#)

### **Status**

Mom wanted to be certain her sons got what they deserved. She saw them as key players in a new movement that promised gold at the end Israel's political rainbow. So she boldly asked—probably in a way that educators can almost hear—“Jesus, how about making James and John the chief officers in Your Kingdom?” Dear Mom didn't imagine the high cost of such status. She expected honor and glory; Jesus accurately foresaw only suffering—the cost of discipleship.

One safely doubts that professional church workers enter ministry for glory or fame. Something about managing VBS isn't quite the same as a general convening top advisors in the Pentagon. Advising a hormonal adolescent falls a bit short of telling the President which economic policy he should pursue. And directing a first grade classroom doesn't equate with the position of Chief of Staff—though, on second thought, maybe it comes close!

Status struggles are nothing new to educators in Lutheran ministries. Early childhood teachers hear their young students vie for attention with shouts of “Teacher, teacher!” Elementary teachers see kids maneuver for high status or retreat into low status on the playground. High school teachers and youth workers see their kids push or pull against peer pressure and sometimes collapse under it. Adults in Bible classes live out the same status-seeking, perhaps in more subtle ways such as ability to rapidly locate any of the Minor Prophets or come equipped with decorated Bibles financed by a second mortgage.

So what is your status? We thank God for not giving us what we deserve. Serving in a Lutheran school or congregation for 45 years might earn us the admiration—or pity—of congregation and community, but it earns us nothing in God's sight. That's because we already have the highest possible status with God. And it really doesn't matter that we share this high status with millions of others. We hold the position of redeemed sinners, earned by Jesus Christ on the cross.

As redeemed sinners, God reveals something spectacular to us. He tells us that even the most stunning wonders of the world aren't as astonishing as His redeemed believers. Now that's something to think about.

As I write this, I can see Mount Rainier from the rooftop restaurant of a Seattle hotel. Its lofty peak rises some 14,000 feet closer to heaven than I am. The imposing mountain is wide and snow covered. Magnificent! Yet its wonder and beauty don't match yours and mine. We are cleansed of sin's stain. Jesus washed our robes of righteousness, and they glisten more brilliantly white than the sun glinting from Rainier's snow-capped peak.

Psalm 8 makes our status clear, and it should be no secret to those we teach. They need to know that the Law has condemned to deterioration and mutation even the most spectacular of God's creation. His Law would condemn us too except for His grace and mercy expressed through Jesus Christ.

Status is a strange thing. Status may make us feel as if we're standing boldly on Rainier's peak or cringing and broken on the floor of a deep canyon. But when we place ourselves under the status of the One whose name is majestic, we live in the heady atmosphere of those saved from their sins and waiting to live in God's perfect Kingdom—while teaching others their status in God's Kingdom on Earth.

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*To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. (Phil. 4:20)*