

Psalm 8

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[0 : 0 0] sense. This is about the majesty and the glory of the God of the universe. Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. Just so we are absolutely clear, the psalm says it at the beginning and it says it at the end. It hammers home that this is what we are thinking about this evening. The Lord who is majestic and glorious in all the earth.

So that's what we are going to think about. I've got three hedons this evening to help us think about this majesty and glory of God the Father. Firstly, the greatness of God the Creator. The greatness of God the Creator. And David, as he is writing this psalm, he is clearly meditating on the wonder of God in creation. We worship a God who has made everything that we see, everything that we experience, and everything we do not see, everything we cannot experience, everything in all of creation is the work of God's hands.

And David says that the creation is there to testify to the glory and the majesty of God. Verse 1, you have set your glory in the heavens. Verse 3, when I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place. So the Lord is majestic because he is a God who creates. And David is clearly thinking, pondering the heavens when he looks at these things. Now I have to confess, I was looking at these verses and meditating today, but I did get slightly distracted. That is the curse, if you can call it that, of living in Trune. First time I've lived on the coast and the sunsets in Trune are just the most spectacular things. Tonight it was, the colours were just incredible. Orange sunset, blue skies in the distance, purple clouds. I just stopped and appreciated. And that's what David is calling us to do as well, just to stop and appreciate. See, the heavens to the Jews meant the sky, it meant space, and it meant God's home in heaven. And it's good to stop and think about those things. When you see a beautiful sunset, when you see that, you are seeing the glory of God. You are seeing him as a creator. You are seeing his beauty spread across the sky. And I just, I was thinking about this as I was driving down, that that's just one small coastline. That glorious sunset

I've seen. That's just this part of the world. The sunsets are different depending where you are in the world. Different colours, different experiences. And I wonder if God stops occasionally and appreciates the wonder of what he has created. The beauty of a sunset. And I then thought, even perhaps more speculatively, does God actually stop to enjoy the sunset on the other planets that he has created in the universe. Things that we will never see, beauties we will never experience. Yet God can stop and see the wonder of what he has created. But David goes on from just the heavens and perhaps the sunset. He considers the stars as well. When I consider your heavens the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you have set in place. Ah, the universe speaks of the majesty and the glory of God. We cannot comprehend the enormity of the universe.

We see just a fraction in our world. When we look up at night, we see the stars blanketing the whole sky. That's just a pinprint, a drop in the ocean of the universe that God has set in place.

[4 : 0 4] Trillions upon trillions upon trillions of suns in billions of galaxies across this great universe. Apparently there are more stars in the universe than there are grains of sand on all the seashores in this world that we call home. And God made it. And you know how the Bible describes it, how God describes it back in Genesis when he discussed in the creation of the universe. The Bible says he made the stars also. He just, he made them. The work of his fingers. Uncalculable billions of stars, he just made them also. God is so unlike me. When I do a job for my wife, I make sure she knows about it.

I tell her in great detail the travails I went through to provide for her. But when God works, he does not blow his own trumpet. He is just matter of fact. He made the stars also.

It was not a great source of work for him. It did not require all his strength. It was the work of his fingers. He flung them into space with the power of his voice. By the power of his voice, the stars were made.

And David says, look at them. Look at them and understand the greatness and the majesty of God. It is an incredible thing. And I don't think we can perhaps appreciate just how connected to the stars that writers like David would have been. Remember, David was a man for many years of his life.

He was on the run. He was away from the cities. He was away from the towns. He was in the wilderness. And when you are away from towns and cities, you can see the stars in a way that you just cannot comprehend.

[6 : 0 0] The sky is just lit up with stars upon stars. Too many for you to count. I remember I read a fascinating article. It was years and years ago in a paper.

I won't say the name just in case no one likes it. But the basic premise was that we are suffering as human beings by all the light pollution that we see around us.

Because you can't see the stars. You can see the bright ones in the sky, but you can't see the full majesty of them. And they said the problem with that is that when you can't see all of that, you can't appreciate just how infinite and glorious and amazing the world is.

And then when you appreciate the infinite, it teaches you humility. You realize that you are seemingly small and insignificant in this great, vast universe.

So David would say to us, take the time to look to the stars, look to the heavens, to see the wonder and the glory of what God has created. He made the stars also. He is powerful. He is beautiful. He is an artist of the greatest skill.

[7 : 1 1] Then we continue to see the greatness of God, not just in his creation, but in the praise of his people. It's a fascinating verse in verse 2.

Look with me at it. Through the praise of children and infants, you have established a stronghold against your enemies to silence the foe and the avenger. The writer David is here clearly setting up a strong contrast between two seemingly disparate groups of people.

On the one hand, you have the enemies, you have the foes, you have the avengers. Mighty, powerful, strong. Probably armed, killers, murderers.

People set against God and his people. There are foes that are arrayed against God. The people of Israel knew this. All around them, they were surrounded, are surrounded by hostile peoples.

Wanting to destroy and crush the mighty armies, powerful empires. So against these enemies, what has God got to call on? Verse 2.

[8 : 2 1] Through the praise of children and infants, you have established a stronghold. So against these great armies, against these mighty foes, against these armed enemies, God musters an army of children and infants.

And he's not just asking the children and infants to take up arms, to take up weapons against the foes. No, he's just asking these children and infants to sing praise to God.

What is going on here? Well, David is clearly saying that actually our God is so mighty. Our God is so strong. Our God is so powerful. That he can take the words of the most powerless, insignificant people in all of creation.

He can take the breath of their mouth and he can use it to strike down his foe and his enemies. He is not needing strong and mighty people to do his work.

He just needs people that are willing to praise and speak for him. Because of God, the foe is silenced. Because of his greatness and his power, he is able to silence the foes.

[9 : 31] He can use the most insignificant, the most powerless of people to do his work. And that is such a comfort for us this evening.

Because against the darkness that we see in this country, when we look around, we see so much spiritual apathy, spiritual anger.

I don't know which is worse. Rage against God of complete indifference. At least if someone's angry, you might be able to engage in a somewhat, perhaps fruitless conversation.

But at least I'll talk to you about it. Well, so many people, it's just don't care enough to even talk. Well, you think, what are we? How can we break down these strongholds that have been built up in Scotland?

How can we speak against so much apathy, so much darkness? And we are encouraged that God can do it, not through our strength, but through his power.

[10 : 33] Not through our clever words, but through his spirit speaking through us. Through our praise, we can speak and we can win people to Christ.

So when we think about these verses, verses 1 to 3, we need to think about the greatness of God, his majesty and his power. He is the creator, but he is also the one who can use the powerless to bring about his purposes in this world.

Secondly, when we think about the majesty of God, we want to think about the blessings of God to man. The blessings of God to man, verses 5 to 9.

See, the psalm now shifts its focus. It goes from considering the heavens, the glories of God in creation, and he moves his vision to the earth. And David here is just astounded, is amazed when he stops to ponder the world that he sees around him.

He's thought about the glory of the universe. The infinite universe that he sees around him. The stars, the planets, the amazing works of God's creation.

[11 : 49] And then he is just stunned in verse 4. I'll read from verse 3. David is just astounded that in light of the enormity of creation, that God has anything to do with this seemingly insignificant, inconsequential species on a small planet in the back end of the Milky Way galaxy.

David says, God, what is man? Why is man so significant that you have anything to do with them? It's a staggering truth.

God knows us. That though we are seemingly insignificant in this world, in this universe, God knows us and cares for us.

And we see that not only does God care for us, he loves us, he wants a relationship with us. We see that actually in verse 1.

It's slightly hidden to our eyes, but the phrase, Lord, our Lord, that first Lord, is the Hebrew word Yahweh, which is the covenant name of God.

[13 : 14] This was the name that God gave to his people Israel. He said, this is the name that you shall know me by. This is the name that signifies we are in relationship together.

We are joined together. It is our personal name. He is Yahweh, our Lord. He is our covenant God, the King of all creation.

So we see that not only has man got an interest in human beings, he has a desire to be in relationship with them as well. What is man that you care for him?

What is man that you love him? And we, if we are Christians here tonight, have that enormous, mind-blowing comfort that though we might be insignificant in this town, in this country, that we personally might feel alone and unwanted at many times in many different ways, we have a God who knows us, a God who cares for us, and a God that wants to be in relationship with us.

However you see yourself, however the world sees you, insignificant, unimportant, God says, out of all the stars in this universe, out of all the planets I have created, out of all the species I have made here on earth, I am caring and loving and desire to be in relationship with you human beings.

[14 : 47] And we as Christians can know that not only does God want to be our God, he wants to be our Heavenly Father as well. When we consider the universe, we might think it's too big, we are too small in all of this, but God says, no, I am mindful of you.

I want you to be in relationship with me. So we have a God who is mindful of us, who wants to be in relationship with us.

And we also know that he has made us to be significant. He has made human beings to be significant. Verse 5, You have made them a little lower than the angels, and crowned them with glory and honour.

We as human beings are crowned with glory and honour. And we know that because man has a unique privilege in all of creation.

Human beings alone, out of everything that God has created, is made in the image of God. We are image bearers for the Creator God. So what does it mean to be made in the image of God?

[16 : 00] Well, it doesn't mean that we look like God in our features. God is a spiritual being. He is invisible. He is not a larger, more bearded version of us.

No, to be made in the image of God, it is to have his characteristics. As God is creative, so we are creative. As God is a speaking God, so we are speaking people.

As God is a relational God, we are relational people. And interestingly, as God is made to rule, so we are made to rule on his behalf in this world.

Do you see the significance that he gives to human beings? Verse 6, You made them rulers over the works of your hands. You put everything under their feet, all flocks and herds and the animals of the wild, the birds in the sky and the fish in the sea, all that swims the paths of the seas.

If you go back and read the story of creation in Genesis 1 and 2, God has set human beings as a pinnacle of his creation and he has given them work to do.

[17 : 08] Work was there from the very beginning of creation. It's not a by-product of our sin. It is there from the very beginning. We are made to work on behalf of God.

What does he tell us to do? He tells us to go out and rule over the world, to subdue it, to care for it. Not just the world, but the animals that he has placed in it.

We are set over creation to rule on God's behalf. It's fascinating. You see that in Genesis 2. A significant thing where God brings the animals he has created.

He brings them to Adam so Adam can name them. To name something is to have rulership over it. And it's such a blessing that God has delegated this work to Adam.

He says, you are in command. You are in control. Name these animals and care for them and rule over them as I rule and care over you.

[18 : 10] We have been crowned with glory and honour. We have been given the task of being image bearers and rulers over this world. And we have to understand that that truth has not ended with the fall in Genesis 3.

We are still bearers of the image of God. It is marked. It is spoiled by sin. We are not the image bearers of God that we should be.

Because to be made in the image of God is to be obedient to him and we are not. It is to be beautiful like him and we are not.

It is to be good like him and often we are not. To be caring and loving and we are not. Yet still, at the heart of man, is the image of God.

Every person that you see, that you meet, even the most messed up and broken individual, though it might be hard to see, that person is the bearer of the image of God.

[19 : 16] There are no insignificant people in this world. Every person is made to show and to declare the glory of God, to bear his image, to bear his likeness.

And we need to remember that. It is so easy to see people sin and not believe that they are the image bearers of God. And we want them to be what they were meant to be. We want them to be those that proclaim the glories of God, that seek to do his will and seek to be a blessing to others.

We are all made in the image of God. And we are all called to do the task that he has left for us, to rule over the world, to subdue it, to care, for what he has left.

And man, this is such a huge issue in the world today. As Christians, we are called to rule over and to subdue, to care for the world that God has graciously given to us.

Now, the topic of climate change and man's effect on the world is such a fraught and difficult conversation.

[20 : 26] So many people seem to not care about it at all. So many people seem to care far too much about it. And actually, as Christians, we need to know that ultimately, we are not going to save the planet.

We are not going to fix all the planet's problems. Praise God, God is going to do that. God has promised that he will remake this world. It is not going to be even again until God steps in.

So if you feel the weight that you have to fix all the world's problems, let me unburden you with that. It's not on you. It's on God. But, but God has still left us with the task to rule over the works of his hands.

We talk often of being good stewards of God's money. We think that actually that the money that we have been given, it's not ours, it's God's. He's given it to us to guard, to look after and to use wisely.

And that's the same of every gift of God. Every gift that God gives us, we need to use it widely. The bodies God has given us, we need to care for them and use them wisely.

[21 : 33] The money that he's given us, we need to care for it and use it wisely. The world we live in, God has given it to us as a good gift. This world we live in is beautiful.

And Scotland, what a beautiful place. I'm very happy I married a Scottish girl or not. Someone from like Luton or somewhere like that. Horrible, horrible, horrible place.

No, no, I can look out on a beautiful day when I'm on the way to the train, I can look to see Aaron in the background with the snow-capped mountains, I can see the sea sparkling in the sunshine.

I am so blessed to live where I do and we are so blessed to live in a beautiful country, but with blessing comes responsibility. We have the joy of seeing God's creation, but we have the responsibility to care for God's creation.

Now, I'm not sure of the science. I'm not a climate scientist. Some people say it's all made up. Some people say we're about to die next week.

[22 : 41] The truth is probably somewhere in between, but here's the thing, if there's just a small chance, if there's just a small chance that we are bringing catastrophic plight on this world, if what we are doing is causing suffering to others like those families we were thinking about in Australia, if our actions are causing the seas to rise, if our actions are going to cause untold suffering to the poor as resources and as places to live are reduced and reduced and reduced, if there is just a small chance that what we're doing is causing that problem, then as Christians we need to take that responsibility seriously and think what can we do to govern God's world well?

now we need to not go so far as to think that actually that almost become pagan about it that this world is a being that needs to be cared for and needs to be worshipped no, it's to be received as a good gift and it needs to be cared for as all God's gifts are but as Christians we are called to rule over the works of God's hands so let's take that away as a challenge and think how can we do this calling better in our world so the greatness of God the creator the blessings of God to man and finally as we think about the greatness of God we think about the grace of God in his incarnation the grace of God in his incarnation now at first you might be thinking well where on earth does that come from what on earth is this chaffee from Troon on about because you don't see the name of Jesus you don't see the word incarnation anywhere in these verses but we need to understand that actually this psalm is absolutely crucial to the message of the Bible this psalm is crucial in the development of the New Testament this psalm is quoted extensively four times in the New Testament really heavily used by many different people by Paul by Matthew by the writer to the Hebrews and it's quoted extensively and I just want us to think quickly about the message in Hebrews chapter 2

I'm going to turn there and I'm going to read verses 5 to 10 this is one of the most extensive quotations of this psalm in the New Testament and it just goes to show how fundamental it was to the early understanding of the Christian church I'm going to read Hebrews chapter 2 verses 5 to 10 it is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come about which we are speaking but there is a place where someone has testified what is mankind that you are mindful of a son of man that you care for him you made them a little lower than the angels you crowned them with glory and honour and put everything under their feet in putting everything under them God left nothing that is not subject to them yet at present we do not see everything subject to them but we do see Jesus who was made lower than the angels for a little while now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone in bringing many sons and daughters to glory it was fitting that God for whom and through whom everything exists should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered so here the writer to the Hebrews quotes our psalm extensively and picks up that idea of mankind being a little lower than the angels yet crowned with glory and honour and he picks it up and says well actually this ultimate fulfilment is seen in the person of Jesus Christ

Jesus was made a little lower than the angels and now he is crowned with glory and honour and why is this so important for us well there are many reasons but one thing that really speaks to me about this is that when we think of what we've been asked to think about the heavens declaring the glory of God the universe the stars it can seem cold and distant far off far away well actually these verses in Hebrews say that that God who is in the heavens has stepped down Jesus has lowered himself so that he can come close to us he is not distant he is here on earth for us and with us we have a God who is not only a creator we have a God who draws near to his people and what's so significant for us is that we do live in a fallen and broken world marred by sin marred by rejection and rebellion and yet rather than staying aloof rather than staying away from all the muck and all the sin and all the problems

God the Son has stepped into this world so that he can be the one that deals with the sin and the rebellion of a fallen humanity the incarnation where God the Son became a human being is the most significant miracle the most significant action in human history the eternal God who was so far above the angels we cannot even comprehend how majestic he is compared to these created beings yet that majestic king of all creation the one who flung the stars into space became an insignificant powerless little baby frail dependent he became lower than the angels for us he left the glories of heaven for us he allowed himself to enter this world for us for our good and for our salvation that is the great majesty and glory of God he is powerful he is mighty he is creator and he is humble and loving and sacrificial as well he was made a little lower than the angels how much lower he willingly submitted to rejection and ridicule to beating and flogging he subjected himself to death the most horrific death so that he might pay the penalty for our sin he became like us so that he could pay our penalty he became like us so that he could live the perfect life that we could never live he became like us so that he might save us he lowered himself so that he might raise us up with him see because the glorious truth about this is we are made to rule this world and let's be honest we're not doing a bang up job but God has said he will fix all those mistakes that we have made he has said that he is going to take this world and he's going to remake it he's going to set right all the wrongs that we have done and he's said that then that Jesus then will return and he will rule with his people and we will have a second chance to rule this world rightly and I can promise you we will not subject ourselves we will not mess up again we will not fall into sin again because God the son will rule over us

[31 : 03] God the son will keep us and hold us to the end of time what is mankind that you are mindful of them the son of man that you care for him you made them a little lower than the angels you crowned them with glory and honour and put everything under their feet that is what God has done and that is what God will do in the future as well this leads us surely to say what an amazing God we have powerful and mighty creator maker of everything we see and everything we enjoy God is and yet he is drawn near as well he has come close to us in relationship he has sent his son he has lowered his son so that through death and resurrection we might be made new we might have that full restored relationship with God and the call then is to declare the majesty of

God Lord our Lord how majestic is your name and how majestic is his name in all the earth that's the challenge that this psalm leaves us as we go out into the week ahead the majesty of God needs to be declared in all the earth all people should be declaring the wonder and the glory of God it is our mission as the church to show them the wonder and the glory of his love to declare his majesty that they might proclaim the majesty and the glory of the God we serve so this week please stop and look at the sky above appreciate the wonder and the power and the majesty of our God remember that we have a responsibility to make good use of the gifts he has given us but above all remember that he has lowered himself so that you might be raised up on the last day and set in the place of honour and glory he is majestic and his name will be praised in all the earth let's praise his name together now our gracious heavenly father we praise and we thank you that you are a God who is mighty and powerful you do not need a mighty army to stand against your enemies you merely need weak people who will be used by you thank you that you made the stars awesome that you set them in place that we can see your power and appreciate the beauty that you have made in this world

I thank you above all that you have drawn near to us that you have allowed your son to lower himself that we might be crowned with glory and honour thank you that your son was willing to lower himself even to death even death on a cross that our sin and rebellion might be paid for and claimed we pray father that you would give us opportunities this week to proclaim the majesty of god to those that we know to those that we don't know to those that know you as lord and saviour and those that don't we pray that all the earth would proclaim your wonder and your majesty we pray for the people in bellshill we pray that they would come and proclaim the majesty of god we pray that as we grasp afresh how glorious you are that our praise would spill out to those around us majestic and powerful gracious and loving our lord and our saviour may you bless your word and bless your message to us this evening in Jesus name amen