

Psalm 8

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[0 : 00] Again, today's passage is Psalm 8. If you're not already standing, please stand for the reading of God's word.

To the choir master, according to the Gittith, the Psalm of David. O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. You have set your glory above the heavens.

Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes to still the enemy and the avenger. When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him and the son of man that you care for him?

Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands. You have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen and also the beasts of the fields, the birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. You may be seated. Amen. Good morning again.

[1 : 34] Good morning. Good morning. Again, it is an honor and a privilege for my wife and I to be here this weekend and to share with you.

Thank you so much, Pastor Dave. Thank you so much, Pastor Bing, Brother Doug and the search committee. As I said before, thank you to the search committee for your weeks of interrogation. They have been thoughtful and thorough and deliberate, and I have learned so much about myself through this process.

It's an honor to be here with you. We are grateful for the opportunity to just be here with you this glorious, glorious weekend.

Let's take a moment and look to the Lord in prayer. Father, we thank you for this day that you have made, a day that we've never seen before nor ever will see again, for you are good and you are gracious and you are kind.

[2 : 44] God, we thank you for what you are doing this weekend, the work that you are doing here at Christ Church Chicago. God, we ask that you keep your hand on all of us.

God, that you use us ultimately for your glory. Now, God, let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight.

Say what only you would have to be said in this room. Amen. We give you all glory, all honor, all praise. In your son's precious name, we do pray. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Our text was so wonderfully read from Psalm 8. And if you don't mind, let's tag this message, how great is our God.

Simply how great is our God. The year was 1966. Brand new and indeed groundbreaking television series called Star Trek.

[4 : 14] With Captain James T. Kirk hit living room TV screens for the first time. The now famous opening of the show went something like this.

Space. Space. The final frontier. These are the voyages of the starship Enterprise. Its five-year mission?

To explore strange new worlds. To seek out new life and new civilizations. To boldly go where no man has gone before.

Years later, when I was really able to watch and appreciate the show in syndication, of course. The first time I was really excited about this. We would sit and marvel at all the galaxies and creatures created with poor special effects. And wonder about our place in the universe.

[5 : 15] Well, thankfully, we need look no further than our text today. Psalm 8. To not only reflect upon God's glory shown through his marvelous creation, but also to find the answer about humanity's place in it.

Psalm 8, written by David, is one of those unique psalms that doesn't ask for anything. Doesn't complain about anything.

Doesn't command us to do anything. It exclusively focuses on who God is and what God has done for us. It's interesting to note that after the introductory chapters of Psalm 1 and 2, David spends the next five chapters lamenting all that has happened to him and all that he's going through.

In Psalm 6, he decries, My eye wastes away because of grief. It grows weak because of all my foes. And then in Psalm 7, he pleads to God to please deliver him, saying, Save me from all my pursuers and deliver me, lest like a lion they tear my soul apart.

But then something happens in Psalm 8. David just stops and reflects on who God is.

[6 : 38] Now, there's a message there for all of us. What's your worry-to-worship ratio? How much time do we spend focused on our problems instead of worshiping the God who's bigger than all our problems?

Now, Psalm 8 and its structure uses a literary device called an inclusio, where the writer states a theme or idea both at the beginning and at the end.

Everything in between is written to support or explain the words, making up the bookends, as it were. Here, verse 1 begins with, O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth.

And it ends at verse 9 with the same glorious words. I think we can see a theme taking shape. Now, let's just look at the text with two basic points or movements I'd like to lift from the passage.

First is the significance of God's glory. And secondly is the awesome significance of man's glory. The significance of God's glory.

[7 : 50] Well, first is the glorious name of the Lord. In verse 1, it begins with, O Lord, our Lord. The first Lord, all caps, refers to God's covenant name, Yahweh.

The I am who I am. The eternal self-existent one. Before there was, he was. The second Lord refers to his title, Adonai.

Sovereign, our master, our king, our ruler, our Lord. Let me make a quick side note here. It's clear in this verse that his name and his title go together.

You can't accept him as God, creator of the universe, and then deny him as Lord of your everyday life. No more than you can separate Joe from being a husband.

If he is your God, he must also be your Lord. David then goes on to say, still in verse 1, How majestic is your name in all the earth.

[9 : 09] Majestic implies royal bearing or greatness or splendor of quality or character or weight. His name, who he is and what he's done as revealed in his word is so magnificent, so powerful, so perfect.

It can't be compared to anything on this earth. Now, you're only going to get so far with my name. You're only going to get so far with Pastor Dave's name.

And you might get a little further with Brother Doug's name. But ultimately, all those names will fail you.

But the name of Jesus. I know we don't have time, but we could stay here all day. The name that causes demons to tremble and knees to bow.

The name of Jesus, the bread of life, the light of the world, the good shepherd, the way, the truth, and the life, the true vine, the Lamb of God. His name is majestic in all the earth.

[10 : 18] But there's more. Wait, still in verse 1. You have established your glory above the heavens. I heard Pastor Bing mention last week that his glory is his weight, his presence.

Or as John Piper puts it, the glory of God is the infinite beauty and greatness of God's manifold perfections. As majestic and excellent is his name in all the earth, earthly standards can't begin to measure the glory and excellence of God.

His glory can't be contained here on earth. It even can't be contained in the heavens. Psalm 19.1 says, yes, the heavens declare the glory of God and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

But this verse says that his glory is established even above that. Above the heavens. Above the planets. Above human comprehension.

Above all scientific discovery. Before let there be light, there was God's glory. Before night was called night and day was called day, there was God's glory.

[11 : 34] Before the stars, moon, and sun were hung and the earth started spinning on its axis, there was God's glory. How's that displayed?

Well, we see in verse 2 first, his glory is shown through weakness. In verse 2, the writer declares, out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes to steal the enemy and the avenger.

God has often used weak things to bring down the strong. In 1 Corinthians chapter 17, chapter 1, verses 27 through 29, Paul explains it this way.

But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise. God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are.

Why? So that no human being might boast in the presence of God. God uses the weak so that in the end, when it's all over, you have no choice but to say, God did it.

[12:51] God gets the glory. We're here in this building today because God did it. And God gets the glory. Further, Christ himself uses this passage of scripture in Matthew chapter 21.

After his triumphal entry into Jerusalem on a donkey, no less. And the children were crying out in the temple, Hosanna to the son of David. When he gets back at the indignant chief priests and scribes by saying, do you hear what these children are saying?

Have you not read Psalm 8? Where it says out of the mouths of infants and nursing babies, you have prepared praise. These children in the temple were attesting to the truth of God.

Now, if we can, let's take a moment practically and think about the power, though completely dependent and weak, a little child actually has.

Those of you that are parents can relate to this, whether it's with your children or grandchildren. And my wife and I experienced this phenomenon firsthand on Christmas Day.

[14:05] Our three-year-old granddaughter walks into a room full of grown adults. She steps to the center of the room and declares, I'm ready to open my presence.

And the entire room shuts down. Everybody turns their attention to this three-year-old and joyfully submits to her demands.

What an incredible reminder and display of God's glory in weakness. Secondly, his glory is shown through creation.

In verse 3, David reflects on God's majestic power that fills all creation. When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you have set in place.

Romans chapter 1, verse 20, Paul tells us, For his invisible attributes, namely his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world in the things that have been made.

[15:21] So they are without excuse. David here models for us the true essence of worship. That true essence that often gets lost today.

The wow of worship. The wonder of worship. The awe of worship. The reverence of worship.

Worship that doesn't ask for anything.

Just dwells on God's glory and who he is. If we're not careful, we can over time produce worship that becomes desensitized. Numb.

Even to the awesomeness of the almighty God. Worship that becomes so common and so familiar and takes so much for granted that it borders on arrogance.

Common postures. Common expressions wrapped in common phrases that become devoid of any real meaning or value. What do I mean? When's the last time you, like David, looked into the heavens and just said, wow?

[16:23] When's the last time you looked at the moon and the stars or the snow and just said, wow? It would take a mere eight minutes traveling at the speed of light to get from here to the sun.

And then from there, another 25,000 years at the same rate of speed to get to the center of the Milky Way. Wow.

The human brain has 10 billion nerve cells interacting in coordination to allow us to function the way we do. Without a charger overnight.

Without a battery or solar panels. Wow. My wife will tell you I love the Discovery Channel, Animal Planet, National Geographic. Love all of it.

Despite all of man's discoveries, still 90% of the oceans are unexplored and species yet to be discovered.

[17:22] Wow. Let me further illustrate. I often use this example. Let me further illustrate the essence of pure worship. Let me talk to the brothers for a minute.

Let me talk to the brothers.

Let me talk to the brothers.

David in verse four begins to make a transition. This transitional verse in essence connects the two halves of this passage together.

As David reflects on the majesty of God's name, his glory being established in the heavens, his glory being shown through weakness, and his majestic power that fills all creation, he takes all of that in.

[19 : 00] Then he says, wait a minute. What is man? That you are mindful of him. That you think about him.

That you're concerned about what concerns him. And the son of man, that you care for him.

Almighty God, who David describes in anthropomorphic terms in verse three, is so big that his mere fingers creates the universe.

This same big majestic God touches us every day. He covers us, protects us, provides for us, cares for us, and loves us so much that this same God sent his son to die for us.

That God thinks about us. That God cares for us. David speaks of being mindful of man and then uses poetic repetition to more strongly emphasize the point by saying the son of man.

More emphatically representing all of humanity. But since we're talking about the son of man, I can't help but take a quick moment to glance ahead at how this is ultimately fulfilled in Christ Jesus, the son of man.

[20 : 23] Daniel had a vision about the son of man who had dominion and glory and a kingdom, and his dominion would be an everlasting dominion. Jesus himself in the gospels said, for the son of man came to seek and to save the lost.

And that the son of man came not to be served, but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many. In Acts, as Stephen was being stoned, he looked up into heaven and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened and the son of man standing at the right hand of God.

Praise God for the son of man. Quickly back to the text. As big a deal as God's majesty that fills the heavens and the earth, that is only surpassed by what God does next.

He gives us glory. Verses 5 through 8 says, Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.

You have given him dominion over the works of your hands. There's that anthropomorphic reference again. You have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen and all beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the sea.

[21 : 54] So, so wait, wait. God creates everything, including man, then takes man and puts him over everything he's created.

What an incredible God. That blows my mind. Here, the writer clearly gives humanity surprising place in God's cosmic order.

Using the creation narrative of Genesis chapter 1, God elevates weak humans made out of dust and dirt to the majestic task of being his image to rule over all creation.

How incredible that God would take that which was lower and elevated with a glory and a dignity above all that was created. This is why, this is why, this is, this is why when self-doubt creeps in, you have to remember who you are.

This is why when someone tries to tell you you're not good enough or smart enough or talented enough or gifted enough, you have to remember who you are.

[23 : 11] I am created in God's image and crowned with glory and honor. As James Boyce explains it, this is an effective way of identifying man with God and of saying that he has been made in God's image, reflecting God's glory in a way other parts of creation cannot.

Now, a word of warning. Notice I said God would take man and give glory.

Which is why it's so important that we established in verse 1 exactly who we were talking about. Be careful about trying to get your own glory.

Stolen glory. Stolen glory. Fake glory. Glory from man. That usually doesn't work out too well. Ask the seven sons of Seba.

John chapter 5 verse 44 says, How can you believe when you receive glory from one another? And do not seek the glory that comes from the only God.

[24 : 19] To get glory, you have to be connected to the one with the glory to give the glory. I'll say it again. To get glory, you have to be connected to the one with the glory to give the glory.

The source of glory. God himself. Practically, what do I mean? You can't just go to Pastor Helms Bank, walk up to the teller, asked to make a withdrawal from his bank account.

Teller's going to ask you some questions first. First, we're going to have to determine if you're an authorized signer on this account. If that doesn't work, and before they call the police, they're going to ask you if you have some other instrument, like a check made out to you.

That check has Pastor Dave's name stamped on it and his signature saying that you're authorized to make a withdrawal from this account.

If not, there's a special place and crown of prison waiting for you. But how glorious it is to be an instrument of Christ with Christ's name stamped on us.

[25 : 39] Praise God. Praise God. Praise God. Therein lies the assurance of the crown of glory and honor that we are plugged into the source of all glory and honor.

Praise his holy name. Can I just pull over to the side of the road real quick? As great as this is, as great as man's God-given glory described in this text, Paul tells us in Romans that there is yet another glory that is to be revealed to us.

One day when mortal puts on immortality. Jesus. And as Spurgeon puts it, the saints are no longer lower than even the angels for they that have been crowned with glory and honor, created in God's image now above the angels will sing a song that even the angels can't sing.

I've been redeemed. I've been redeemed. How in the world does this happen? How in the world does all of this come together?

How does this culminate? Well, I'm glad you asked. God gave us the answer. God gave us the answer.

[27 : 22] Where in verses six to eight, Psalm eight is quoted and applied directly to Jesus. And then in verse nine, it all comes together.

But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus crowned with glory and honor.

Sound familiar? Suffering because of the suffering of death so that by the grace of God, he might taste death for everyone.

The son of man made a little lower than the angels now crowned with glory, standing with the father by reason of death so that you and I didn't have to pay the debt we rightfully owed.

What an incredible God. Then Psalm eight closes. As incredibly.

[28 : 28] And powerfully. And powerfully. And powerfully. As it begins. But this time. Can you hear it? It closes with all the grandeur of the climactic conclusion of a great anthem.

Can you hear the sound? Oh, Lord. Our Lord. Our Lord. How majestic is your name in all the earth. How great is our God. Let's pray together. Father, we can't begin to describe how glorious you are. Words fail us to come up with the proper words to even say about your magnificence, your majesty. God, let us never forget who you are. Never let us forget what you've done for us. Never let us become so common even in our worship that we think we know everything already.

[29 : 40] But we rest, hope, rely in you and the finished work at the cross and what you have already done for us.

We love you. Seal this word in our heart. And God, we won't ask you for anything. Today, we just focus on how great you are.

In Jesus' name, amen.