

Worship like a child

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Preacher: Dave Bott

[0:00] Psalm 8 is our reading this morning. Psalm 8.

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 babes, 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 honour. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands.

[1:27] You have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen and also the beasts of the field, 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. Amen. Amen. Well, good morning, everyone.

If you're visiting with us this morning, my name's David. I'm one of the pastors here. It's great to have you here this morning. Well, having just given thanks for and prayed for these little human beings, if next Sunday we got everyone to bring in their pet puppy and we did the same thing, we got them on stage and we thanked God for our pet puppies and prayed for them, would you find that appropriate?

We love our puppies, right? We name our puppies. We give them names. We dress them, or some people do at least. We send them to puppy school. We order puppy chinos at the cafe.

We get pet insurance. We let them sleep in our bed and cuddle them. Some even call them their children. And yet, intuitively, I'm guessing all of us would think having a puppy Thanksgiving and prayer service service is out of place.

[3:14] And anyone who took it seriously, I don't know how to be politically correct and finish that sentence. But only human beings can ask the sort of questions we find in Psalm 8 and contemplate the universe like Psalm 8, what we've heard read.

What is my place in this universe? Human beings, we all ask that question. There's something very different to human beings than puppies.

What is my life about? What is a human life about? Where do I find value and purpose? Asking those questions and trying to find our value and purpose in this great universe, can I suggest is what a human being does.

We can't help it. Can I suggest that's worship? Now, I know I'm introducing a religious term there, but it's not just when we gather like this that we worship.

Worship is not a religious thing only. It's a human thing. We can't help it. We all do it. Because if you look in this universe and go, what is important?

[4:40] What am I going to base my life on? What am I going to fill my mind and heart with? What gives me purpose and value? You're worshipping that thing, whatever it is.

It's not a religious thing only. It's a human thing to worship. Here's a non-Christian who says that very thing.

David Wallace at a graduation speech at a university said, there's no such thing as not worshipping. Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship.

If you worship money and things, then you'll never have enough. Never feel you have enough. He kept saying, worship your body and beauty, and you'll always feel ugly.

And when time and age start showing, you will die a million deaths before they finally grieve you. You worship power. You'll end up feeling weak and afraid.

[5:51] And you'll need ever more power over others to numb you to your own fear. If you worship your intellect, being seen as smart, you'll end up feeling stupid, a fraud, always on the verge of being found out.

That was his conclusion. He's saying, we all worship. That's just a human thing. What's important in life?

Why am I important? We all do it. The only choice we get is what we look to, what we worship, what we centre our lives on.

In Psalm 8, we find a human being contemplating the universe, and we find him overwhelmed at someone great, and he's overwhelmed at his place in this incredible universe.

My father-in-law, Clay, I know anyone who comes to this church knows who he is, but for those visiting, he's stuck stars on Sam and Rory's bedroom ceiling, and it's the constellations that we would see from our vantage point here in Australia.

[7:10] And he's gone to great effort to get the precise ratios of the distance. Anyone who knows Clay knows why. He's ordered it so beautifully on the kid's ceiling.

My dad, Gary, always loves to go back to the country sky in Townworth because his telescope is there. He wants to be in the cold night air just staring up at the sky.

He gets up in crazy hours in the middle of the night to go take pictures of Aurora Borealis. What makes these grown men act like children?

Obsessed with the night? What's going on? Well, they're in good company. King David, who wrote this psalm, this song, is doing the exact same thing.

He's looking at the stars going, you have set your glory above the heavens. He's just looking at this universe and he's overwhelmed.

[8:21] The light from the sun takes only eight minutes to get to earth, but the nearest star in the southern cross, nearest star to us, takes 90 years.

Now, the vastness of the universe, you cannot fit in your head. No one can. It's too mind-boggling. There's billions of stars and galaxies behind billions of stars and galaxies. Now, if the universe was made just for our home and our dwelling as human beings, it's a bit excessive.

It's a bit... Couldn't you just make the solar system and that's... Even then, probably didn't even need that. But, if the universe was made so that with David, we can be like children and just look up at the stars and go, wow, God, creator, the grandeur overwhelms me.

Then the universe is a pretty good size for us to look up and see just how amazing God is. you are the greatest.

[9:36] Majestic is your name. The work of your fingers. It's not his arm as if it took a lot of strength.

He created it all with his fingers. It's just... He's that powerful. He's like an artist with care. He's declaring from the depths of his heart, when I look at this universe, it is impossible to add to your greatness, God.

When we sing, we are not adding to God's greatness. We can't add anything. We're enjoying. We're just enjoying his greatness.

That's what we're doing. Your glory is above the heavens. Your greatness is above the heavens. And then verse 2, it seems a bit odd.

Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength or praise because of your enemies. What is that doing there? I think what David is saying is, okay, it's impossible to add to God's greatness, but it's also impossible for you and me to take away from God's greatness.

[11:07] Enemies, many people, in the name of science, make unscientific spiritual claims, spiritual claims, trying to remove God from this world, from our minds, from society.

Others, with their words, try and redefine God as this impersonal, I don't know, force, like in Star Wars. You've just got to connect in and just, you don't have to listen to God's words.

Others try and make themselves the master of their life and sing with Frank Sinatra, I did it my way. But then there's religious people who, false religion, not true religion, but false religion, who come to church, but in their heart, they're using God to get X, whatever X is.

I will pray to you to get X, I will go to church to get whatever it is, health, the benefit of my children even. Whatever X is, is your real God, if you're using God to some other end.

[12:30] false religion, tells God, this is what you should be like.

You should be doing this in the world. You should be doing this in my life. False religion claims to believe in God and goes, no, this part of my life is mine.

Don't touch it, God. When you look at this universe, you don't have a, you don't ask the God of the universe to come in and be your advisor in life.

You don't come and say, hey, can you counsel me in this situation? God's not your personal assistant. When you look at the universe, we are made for him.

All these attempts, there's non-religious attempts, there's religious attempts to try and rob God of his place in the universe and in our hearts.

[13:42] Now, what's God going to do about that? How is he going to restore his honour? Is he going to send angels?

Is he going to send armies? Nope. He's happy with children. He is going to silence his enemies with what we heard this morning, the children singing, my God is so big, so strong and so mighty.

There's nothing my God cannot do. That's true. God uses the weak. Those little children are one day going to be proven to be right.

They're in the position of strength. They know what's going on in the universe. With ease, God created the universe. With ease, he's going to silence his enemies.

He's happy with children. Praising him. That's all he needs. It's impossible to add to God's greatness. It is impossible to take away from his greatness.

[15:00] And David, contemplating the universe, asks a question I think we all ask in verses 3 to 4. When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you have set in place, what is mankind, what is man that you're mindful of him and the son of man that you care for him.

Only human beings ask this question. What is my place in this vast universe? And it's a scary question.

Does the universe care? Now those who want to find their meaning without reference to God, here's the kind of conclusion you need to draw.

Here's Stephen Jay Gould. He's an evolutionary biologist. We're here simply because one odd group of fish had a peculiar anatomy that just happened to be able to transform itself into legs for terrestrial preachers.

We're here just because comets struck the earth and wiped out dinosaurs and gave mammals a chance. We're here just for those reasons. We yearn for a higher answer but none exists. Now this explanation, though superficially troubling, if not terrifying, is ultimately liberating.

[16:25] We have to construct any meaning ourselves. Any sense of human dignity, any sense of human rights, they're just feelings that it helped our ancestors to evolve.

It's not actually real. Today you'll go into a psychology session and the problems in your life is because of low self-worth and then you'll go to a science class and say, well, you're actually nothing special.

You're just evolved fish and when the universe runs out, no one will remember anything that you do. There's a play by Samuel Beckett called *Breath* and it lasts for 35 seconds and you go in and it's dark and the lights slowly come on as you hear whoosh and the lights dim as you hear whoosh and that's the end of the play.

That's life. If there's no God, what's my place in this universe? Well, we're surrounded by the culture that's saying you don't have a place in the universe.

Your universe doesn't care about you. Now, even if you believe in God, it's a frightening question. If we start to get our head around who God is, his greatness, why would he care about little me?

[18:16] I'm so finite and fragile and limited before this unlimited God. I'm here today and gone tomorrow before this everlasting God. Does he care about me?

What's our place in this universe? And there's two amazing answers that Psalm 8 gives us. The first is we are created to rule God's world as his representatives.

David uses two names for God in this psalm. O Lord, our Lord. The first one, Sovereign Lord. He's all-powerful.

We've already covered that. But then he's saying Yahweh, the personal name of God. He's saying our Lord. He's speaking to this God.

He's not this distant being. God has created us to know him. Personal relationship. And then David recalls God's original design in Genesis chapter 1 of our purpose as human beings which launches

him into even more worship of God.

[19 : 38] If we just hear the verbs, you have crowned him. You have crowned mankind with glory and honour. You have given him dominion, rule.

God's entrusted the work of his hands to you and me. you have put all things under his feet. Now these terms are usually reserved for God.

Glory, honour, dominion, crown. He's talking about human beings. Why has God created us like him to represent him, to rule the world and show his goodness, his patience, his justice, his forgiveness, his care in all we do, in all our interactions.

He's put us here to represent God. God. We're here to know this God and enjoy him and we're here to represent him in all we say and do.

Even changing a nappy, you can represent, you're representing God. It's a beautiful picture. The God of the universe cares.

[21 : 04] He's crowned us with glory and honour. Now, this sounds good in theory, but is it our daily experience?

Why is there such beauty in the world but also bombs? Do we see people treating each other as being crowned with glory and honour?

Do the words coming out of my mouth and your mouth to other people treat human beings with such dignity? We were made to control the world under God and yet I can barely control myself.

The man writing this, he failed big time. He did some awful things to human beings crowned in glory and honour.

It's not our daily experience. So, by all means, if you're at the beach overlooking a sunset, use psalm, pray psalm, sing psalm.

[22 : 32] mate, it's fitting for that because how else are you going to describe what you're seeing? It's a beautiful word to praise God. But a bigger answer that psalm 8 gives us is what God has done to restore us to glory and honour.

our creator doesn't just look down and know us, he's come down as one of us.

God had promised in the Bible another king like David who would save and put this world right. He would save us. God Jesus when he walked on earth he came into the capital city, David's capital city and he announced himself as the promised saviour, as the promised king.

There was a parade like whoever wins the world cup I'm guessing there's going to be a great parade. This parade it would be more ecstatic. They were looking forward to this saviour for thousands of years.

There was a parade and the children got caught up in the praise and just praising Jesus and the enemies of Jesus were like do you hear what they're saying? They're praising you.

[23 : 56] They should be praising God. That's blasphemy. Tell those kids to be quiet. And Jesus quotes Psalm 8 verse 2.

Haven't you read out of the mouths of babies and infants? In other words, I'm the God of Psalm 8. It was my fingers that made the heavens. These little children are absolutely right to praise me. And just days later these enemies put him on a cross to silence him.

Now their plan would have worked except for one thing. Whose hands these were that they were crucifying? Hands that touched the blind and they saw for the very first time.

Hands that took a dead 12 year old cold limp hand by the hand and raised her back to life and gave her back to her parents.

[25 : 14] Jesus' majesty is above the heavens. He showed himself as our creator. And so he rose to life on the third day.

All authority in heaven and on earth is under Jesus' feet. Our creator came down and did that for us. God so all human beings, all of us ask the question, what is my place in the universe? You can only find an answer to that in Jesus. He didn't just look down from heaven, he came down.

Even while we were putting our lives on everything except for him, even while we were using power to live for ourselves rather than represent him, even while we were mistreating the dignity of human beings, he came down.

And those hands, those fingers, crucified for us, to rescue us, to restore us back to himself, back to the dignity to be crowned with glory and honour.

[26 : 32] We have lost every right for our creator to care about us and yet he did that. Does our creator, is he mindful of you and me?

Well, that's how much you were in his mind, that he came down and died for you. psalm 8 leaves us with a choice.

All human beings worship. We're all singing and living for something, trying to find our purpose in life somewhere. You can't help it, we can't help it.

Our only choice is where are you going to find your purpose? Whose song are you going to sing? You can join the chorus of those who keep telling us there is no meaning in life, there is no God, who try and rob our creator of his greatness, who try and rob human beings of our purpose in the world, who try and rob themselves of the peace and wonder of knowing this God, who try and use God rather than being overwhelmed by his love and his greatness.

You can join that chorus or you can join the chorus of children and just be weak, dependent, and just receive everything as a gift from Jesus.

[28:24] who has come and done everything to restore our place. He says when he comes to fix this world, it's going to be his children are going to rule. He's done all that for us.

So whose song are you going to sing? To try and put my little kids to sleep at night, I always reach for the children's song.

Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so. Little ones, sorry, I don't know why it's getting too big.

Little ones to him belong, they are weak, but he is strong. Jesus loves me, he who died, heaven's gate, to open wide, he will wash away my sin, let his little children come in.

So it's up to you, what song are you going to sing? Will you pray with me? Let's pray. Father, I'm deeply aware my words can't capture your greatness of in creation or what you've done to save us, but your words can.

[29:56] I just pray for each one of us, you would press on our hearts just the wonder of who you are and that you care enough that you came down to rescue us, that you love us that much.

Fill us with that wonder so that we may know you and live for you and treat others with the respect that you call for.

I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.