

God is paying attention to you

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[0 : 0 0] Psalm 8. There are a couple of readings this morning. But I think we will look at the others as we go through the message.

So for this morning, if you'd like to turn simply to Psalm 8 and we'll read it. Do any of you here, just before we read, remember the sword drill?

They do it at the walk club. You remember the sword in sheath, swords drawn? And then you say the Bible chapter and verse in charge, and it's the first one to find it in the page, gets to stand on the seat.

Did you ever stand on the seat? Yes? No? We used to do it in the Church of England, but they had pews, and the back of the pew was not very high.

So if you stood up too quickly, you were in danger of going back over the back of them. And they were not soft seats like you're sat on.

[1 : 1 8] In fact, you don't have to go too far back in this church before you had those long, hard wooden pews, right? And now you, by God's grace, he's given you comfy chairs.

Psalm 8. This is, can I just say as we read, an absolute, they're all beautiful psalms, but this is truly wonderful. Psalm 8. Now hear God's word.

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 and infants you have established strength.

Because of your foes you 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.

[2 : 3 1] 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. If you're able to find your way again, please to Psalm 8.

Now I recognize with me not preaching in a while, you might think it may be a little bit strange to get back into the way we handle this text.

The reason for this is that I've not chosen the text arbitrary manner and just I need something to bring to the church after a long period of perhaps not following through a series or a book or something.

But this here in particular will do us as a congregation tremendous good. It'll do you as an individual tremendous good. I want to encourage you this morning as we sort of come to Psalm 8 to understand the difference between reading and reading for meaning.

[4 : 1 8] The main difference when it comes to reading God's word is that we don't just want to do a word recognition. You know, where we are able to recognize what each word says, we're able to recognize that if several words are put together with a dot at the end, that makes a sentence.

And we've made our way quite happily through the psalm and we've read it. But reading properly understood is to come away with a meaning to understand what it is saying to us.

And so I really wouldn't want you to not get the meaning of Psalm 8. My main address this morning as we go through is that God pays attention to you.

I want you to know as you sit here this morning that if you feel that perhaps others are ignoring you or ignoring your views or ignoring your opinions or just ignoring you as a person, that God pays attention to you.

This morning you have God's attention, not only this morning but this day and tomorrow and every day you have God's attention. There is nothing that you're going to be able to say, do, think, go, feel without God being attentive to every single part of your life.

[5 : 42] You know, that should encourage you this morning. That should really encourage you this morning that you have God's attention. In other Psalms, it will say things like that when I sit down, God knows when I sit down.

When I stand up, God knows even when I stand up. That even before I say the words openly, God knows the very words that I'm going to say even before that I have said them.

In other words, believers understand that anything that they do never escapes God's attention. And sometimes we might use that to frighten teenagers to not do certain things while they're out of their company.

Remember God's watching. Remember God knows everything. And that's a good tactic. That's a good reminder. Children need to remember, as do adults, remember you're alone, but you're not alone.

Okay, God is here. And therefore everything you think, not just what you can do visibly, but even what you think, which nobody else can see, God can hear.

[6 : 54] And it's not a bad thing to put those type of reality checks into children, because it's truth. It's not a frightener. It's not a tactic to get them to behave.

It is actually the truth. And that's what it means to live according to the truth. In Proverbs 5, it says this, that man's ways are before the eyes of the Lord, and he ponders all of his paths.

That's slightly deeper. God is saying, not only do I pay attention, but I have the ability to be able to direct the next step that you take.

I can decide what direction your life will go in by bringing things into your life or by keeping things from them, by giving you abilities and opportunities, or by removing abilities and opportunities.

And this is one of the ways that God keeps us on the right path. Obadiah Sedgwick once said that it is true that no good thing does God withhold from those who love him.

[8 : 01] That's true that there is no good thing that God withholds from those who love him. But not every good thing is good for me. Okay, not every good thing is good for me.

Sometimes Christians are not able to handle certain blessings because it will lead them away from God. The history of God's people is of a people who were blessed tremendously, but who were led away from God by those blessings.

They enjoyed the blessings greater than the God who had blessed them. And that there is ever the danger when God blesses, that you have to be able to handle them first.

So God instructs us, God delivers us, he changes the directions of our lives by deciding to do many other things around us and also by working within our heart.

And the reason for this is because God's blessings are always found along his paths. God's blessings are always found in his place. And so what follows from this are a few questions that need answering.

[9 : 11] In other words, you can't sit here this morning and let them go unanswered. You have to answer them. Here's the first question. Where are you going to receive your glory and honor from?

You are made for glory and honor. You are made to be made much of, to be given glory and honor, but where are you going to get that from?

The next question is, whose attention are you really looking for? We all look for attention, but whose attention are you really looking for?

Or rather, whose should you really be looking for? And then another one, which is slightly more complicated, but you'll get the point hopefully, and that is, what words are you looking to hear?

Not who you're looking to hear from, but what words are you looking to hear? You know, sometimes, a person can be so vulnerable that they're even willing to hear the words, I love you, even if the person saying it doesn't mean it.

[10 : 23] They're so desperate to hear those words that they're willing to hear them even under false pretenses. You can just read the scriptures. You can see it time and time again.

That focus on words, not the person who's saying them, not even if they're genuine, but just on the power of those words, being able to convince us to feel a certain way.

So where are you going to get your glory and honor from? Whose attention are you really looking for? And what words are you wanting to hear? Here's a summary of Psalm 8, and you'll understand

why they are the questions that come out of this psalm.

Psalms 8 begins by David reflecting on the fact that the earth alone is not big enough to contain the perfections of God. That everything that God is, that every glorious attribute that God has, that the earth alone is not enough to be able to show that off.

That the earth just itself is not big enough to contain all the perfections of God. You need the heavens also. You need the sun, the moon, the stars. You need the galaxies.

[11 : 35] Now we're getting close to being able to see the majestic glory of God. In other words, the universe is conveying the beauty of God, and this earth alone is not big enough to do that.

We need more. We need to be able to see much more. We want to be able to see the character of God, and we can see the character of God in the good things that he has made, but we have to look even above the earth into the heavens, much further than just down here on the ground.

The other thing that becomes apparent as he makes his way through this psalm is that he recognized that if God is that majestic, then simply giving thanks is not enough.

Simply to say thank you is not a proper response for who has given you all these things.

It doesn't really measure the greatness of who you're giving thanks to. It doesn't do justice to what God has given you and the blessings that you are able to receive.

[12 : 42] In other words, David is saying that more needs to be considered. I need to look at the babes. I need to look at the sun, the moon, and the stars. I need to look at myself and understand what type of response I am to give to you.

Out of the mouths of babes, you have established your strength. Verse two, he says, the moon and the stars have been set in place by you. Verse three, David considers everything that God has created.

He even considers that he is a creation. And then he says in verse four, what is it? What is man that you are mindful of him? In other words, out of everything that's created in this world, why are you paying attention to me?

God has created the sun, moon, and stars. And David says, I look at them and am amazed. And then I realize that you are looking at me.

I'm looking at the moon and going, wow. I'm looking at the sun and going, amazing. I'm looking at the stars and just being memorized by just how beautiful that they are.

[13 : 53] I look at landscapes and seascapes and go, that is just incredible. And as I'm saying this to God, God is saying, I'm looking at you. You're looking at everything else, thinking that's beautiful.

And God's looking at you. God's paying attention to you. Psalm 8 is David coming to understand that the earth alone cannot contain the perfections of God.

And you're trying to find them out. But God, at the same time, is looking at you. He cares for you. He focuses on you.

Then he says, verses 5 through to 8, look at what God has given you. He's given you dominion. He's given you the right to have the authority over certain things on earth. Now, of course, in a world full of sin, that doesn't always happen in that way.

But that's what you are made for. You are made for this privileged position within the whole of creation. You have a privileged position in the whole of creation.

[15 : 03] More privileged than the moon in the sky, the sun in the sky, the stars. Okay, more privileged than anything else because you have been made in the image of God. God looks at you while you're looking at everything else.

What is man that you are mindful of him? Well, man is made in the image of God. You have a tremendously privileged position in the whole of creation.

God pays attention to you. What does all this mean? Well, David recognizes then that it follows, it must follow, that if I hold this privileged position in the all of creation, then that must be reflected in the way that I now live.

I must live in a way that reflects my privileged position. I can't live in a way where I don't live up to my privileges. I can't live in a way where I don't live into those blessings.

I really ought to live knowing that God pays attention to everything that I am. And I really ought to live reflecting the truth that I have this privileged position simply because God has given it to me.

[16 : 18] So how do I live in the light of that knowledge? What do I now do? Am I to reflect the glorious position that God has given me? Yeah, absolutely.

Well, how do I do that? Well, I do it by recognizing that God pays attention. I do it by recognizing that my glory and honor is to be given to me by God and that I'm not to find it anywhere else in creation.

I'm not to look for glory elsewhere other than God. I'm not to look for honor elsewhere other than God. And men, in the fellowship this morning, you are meant for glory.

You are meant for honor. God makes men and women differently. Women, you are made with the beauty that you have because God has made you that way.

You have the privileged position that you have because God has given it to you. And sometimes we don't want to hear these things simply because we just can't face that we're far short of what we are in God's eyes.

[17 : 32] I can remember seeing a film once where a young girl who was on benefits and she was told by a man who didn't want anything from her and she had a little girl.

He was simply trying to do right by her and he says, you know, I love you. I want to do... And she says, don't tell me that. And I spent ages watching that film, that one line, trying to figure out why would she say that?

Why would anyone want to turn away being loved? I came to the conclusion in the light of God's word that I think some people turn away love because they have fallen short of what they know they ought to be.

And when a person falls short of what they know that they ought to be, then they can't be told that that's what they are. They can't be told, right? They just can't receive that kind of love and affection because they're so far short of what they're meant to be.

And God is... David is saying, you know, what is man that you're mindful of him? God is paying attention. This is where you get your glory and honor from.

[18 : 40] It is given to you by God. It is a gift to you. Nobody else in the world may recognize you. God recognizes you. No one else in the world may pay attention, but God pays attention.

Your glory and your honor is given to you by him. And you shouldn't look for it elsewhere because the moment you begin to look for it elsewhere, you lose it.

You lose the blessing that you have been given. I always think of the temptation of Eve in the garden when Satan says to her, eat this and you'll be like God. Well, God has already told Eve that she is like him.

I made you in my image. But what the devil knows is by getting Eve to chase after something she already has, but from somewhere else, she loses the very blessing.

I want to say that again. By chasing after the very thing that you already have in God, glory and honor, from somewhere else, you lose the glory and honor that God has given you.

[19 : 46] That was the tactic of the devil and it's been the tactic within sin ever since. God gives it to you.

Why look for it anywhere else? Why look for anybody else's attention? Whose attention are you actually looking for? It's tempting, isn't it, to look for some people's attention more than others.

Is it wrong for a husband to look for the attention of his wife? No. Is it wrong for a wife to look for the attention of her husband? No, of course not. Is it wrong for the children to look for the attention of their mother?

No. Or a father? I never had a father. Well, I obviously had a father, but he was not around. And so I looked for attention from one person, but, you know, is that wrong?

No. Of course it's not wrong. We all look for attention, but God is thinking, whose attention are you really looking for? When you have mine, who's he looking for?

[20 : 56] Sometimes people are tempted to look for the pastor's attention. Don't do that. Don't do that. Look for God's attention. Who am I? I'm not better than you.

Look to God. You have his attention. And look to hear what his words say. Because they'll be much better than anybody else's.

They'll also be truthful. So these are questions that need addressing. Whose glory am I looking for? Or where am I looking to receive that glory and honor?

Whose attention am I looking for? What words am I wanting to hear? And these really ought to be taken seriously because they will help a Christian parent of how to raise their children.

To remind their children, look, it's right to seek my attention and to have my attention, but God is always paying attention. Words I always find fascinating.

[21 : 57] I've been around the block enough. I understand how women in relationships can go astray. I also understand how men in relationships can go astray.

I know how sometimes women may go astray slightly easier by listening to certain words, but he just started speaking to me in a way that my husband never did.

It wasn't who was saying it. It was rather what was being said. The power of persuasive words doesn't matter who it came from. Suddenly I was beginning to hear the things that I wanted to hear and I was led astray.

A man receiving perhaps, you know, visual attention by someone else. You know, we're grownups. We understand that these are serious issues and must be dealt with biblically.

This is the heart of these issues, of whose attention I'm looking for and whose words, what words am I wanting to hear. Men and women can go astray because of matters of attention, because matters of words.

[23 : 02] Children also can go astray if they don't receive the right kind of attention. And it's God's attention that they ought to be encouraged to look for more than anything else.

But it's not what they look like, but it's who they are in God. Sometimes we want to keep things hidden, but we cannot keep anything hidden from God.

And this is, of course, the very issue at the heart of it. Because God expects us to come clean before him. The call here is not to simply live a moral life, though that follows, but rather to live the life that God has given you, the position that God has placed you in.

It's not a call simply just to be a good person. It's a call to be a godly person, a righteous person, to live in the way consistent with the glory and honor that God gives to you, the position that God has given to you.

So spend a few moments and consider what it means for you to have God's attention this morning. I'm standing here, you're sat there, I'm trying to get you to pay attention to God's word.

[24 : 18] At the same time, God is paying strict attention to you. Nothing escapes him. He knows where your mind is right now, what you're thinking about, whether you're listening hard on the word of God, or you're thinking about what you're going to do after this.

That matters to God. This is why God pays attention to you. Because he wants to pay attention to where your mind is, where your heart is, where you are all the time.

And sometimes, even when we know that God pays attention to us, we still continue to live in a way that doesn't reflect that worthiness, that position. And the reason we do, I think, is very, very simple. And that is because God won't tell anyone. Right? I can think what I think because no one else will know, and I know God won't say anything. I can live in a way that pleases me, and I know that God won't tell anyone.

I know God knows, but because I know God won't tell anyone, I can, there's no need to be embarrassed because I'm more embarrassed about people finding out that I am God.

[25 : 32] God, the fear of knowing that God pays attention to you should be enough to give you that kind of motivation.

But the love of God paying attention to you should be the motivation for you to live worthy of the position that he has given to you.

So this morning, where will you get your glory and honor from? God has created you for glory. He has created you for honor.

He's created you to live in a worthy position that you have been given. He's created you to receive blessing, much blessing. But the underlying issue is, of course, is how we handle our sin and how that sin can cause us to look for glory and honor elsewhere.

How it can cause us to look for someone else's attention rather than God's. How it can cause us to look for other people's words rather than God's word. Mankind is meant for glory.

[26 : 42] God says so. Meant for honor. God made us that way. God wants us to come and share in him. Remember the whole point of the creation story, at least one of the points, is that God is in need of nothing.

And if God is in need of nothing, then what does he want with me? Well, that's the point. He doesn't need you. He wants you. And you sat here this morning, just like me, would much rather be wanted than needed.

You'd much rather sit here knowing that you are wanted than you're needed. But you're wanted by God. And sometimes we want to be wanted by others. In fact, the very basic definition between a

boy and a girl, according to Ephesians and Proverbs and Psalms as well, is that men want and girls want to be wanted.

Okay? Men want and girls want to be wanted. And part of the parent's responsibility is to make sure that the girl wants a godly man and the man, the boy, grows up to want a woman in the right way. Okay? Girls want to be wanted. Okay? It's a generalization, but I'm allowed to generalize because the Bible generalizes. Okay? I'm just saying what it says.

[28 : 04] So that whole idea of being wanted is a key biblical issue also. This is why David can say as he considers all of this how majestic is the name of God in all the earth.

But then he draws his conclusion or rather his central point in verse 4 that what is man that you are mindful of him? How is it that God being so great pays attention to me?

How is it that God who creates the whole universe pays attention to me? Isn't God too great to pay attention? But what David draws our conclusion to is this. No, it is because God is great that he pays attention.

It is because God is so great that he pays attention to you. His greatness doesn't mean that he stops paying attention like people of the world. You know, sometimes people can get slightly too important where you are no longer important.

Sometimes they can get a privileged position where the position you had and their affections is no longer there. It's as if the greater they get the less important you are.

[29 : 13] Not with God. His greatness is the reason why he pays attention to you. The greatness of God is the reason why you have God's attention all the time.

And because of that David says I'm to live a life worthy of the position that God has given to me. I'm to live a life worthy of the glory and honor that God has given to me.

I'm to live a life worthy of the fact that God is paying attention to me all the time. That God gives me his word to get me to do the things that I don't want to do.

He knows my heart. He knows that I can wake up in the morning and not want to be like Jesus and tells me his words to tell me to be like Jesus.

So what are the implications then in the applications of this? Well firstly it is because God is great that he pays attention to you. He is not like the people of the world who become great and then who pay less attention to you.

[30 : 19] The other issue here is that as you're raising a child remind them that it's God's attention that matters, no one else's. But before you remind them remind yourself.

because children will imitate their parents. And we can't convince our children to recognize that God's attention matters more than anybody else's unless we believe in our heart that God's attention matters more than anybody else's.

We can't convince them only to look for God's attention if you're not convinced to look for it yourself.

To be reminded why God's attention is the only attention that matters, that it's the right kind of attention because God is wanting the very best for you.

What words are you wanting to hear? What words are you wanting to be spoken to you? It doesn't matter who's it from, it might, but sometimes it's words that we want to hear that can get us into trouble.

That we want to hear certain words such as I am listening to you, such as I do love you, such as you do matter, your thoughts do count.

[31 : 42] God is saying I pay attention, I take you into consideration, your desires of your heart, whose words are you looking to hear?

What words are you looking to hear? David says listen to God's. words of flattery, while we love them, are incredibly dangerous.

In Psalm 36 we read that a man can flatter himself so is that he doesn't discover his own sin. In other words, if I can say the right kind of words to me, some kind of positive affirmation, that I can convince myself that I'm something that I'm not and so not discover what I am really like.

There's a big craze at the moment amongst teenagers, slightly older, into the 20s, called fake it till you make it. Fake it till you make it.

It's causing tremendous debt amongst young people because they're going out hiring sport cars and hiring houses and then posting videos from within those houses and those sports cars believing that they have made it, giving the impression to everybody else they have made it.

[33 : 20] And they're faking it in order to get enough followers to cream the crop and to cream likes and money from advertising and everything else until they finally make it.

God doesn't want you to fake it till you make it. You've already made it. He's made it in you because you are his. Don't flatter yourself.

There was once a book that says you ought to say positive affirmations to yourself in the mirror. I think I've said to you this before. I actually gave it a go just for fun. So I opened up the book, looked in the mirror and said you're wonderful.

people. You're great. You're amazing. You're fantastic. And my wife came down the stairs and says who do you think you're kidding? Flattery works if you live on your own perhaps.

But not when you know God pays attention. You don't need it. You have the attention of God. So here's the exhortation as we close.

[34 : 32] Being led by the word of God means that you know what the results will be. That is so important. If you have a child this morning in the Bible class, your children are learning that this morning.

That what your children are learning, that you ought not to live life experimentally. Not experientially, experimentally. Life is not an experiment.

The definition of an experiment is doing something not knowing what the results will be. Life is not an experiment. Life is given to you by God and he gives you his word so that you know what the results will be.

That's really important to follow the word of God. And it's really important for you to know that this morning. Christians are forever tempted to begin arbitrary experiments in their Christian life.

Well, I'll try a bit of this, I'll try a bit of that, perhaps that will make a difference. Your life is not an experiment. It's not to be played around with. But God gives us his word so that we would know what the results would be beforehand.

[35 : 47] So that we would know where we are going. What the outcome will be. you are meant to realize and recognize the privileges that you have been given, that you are blessed by God.

And you don't need anything else. We are not made to seek glory and honor from anywhere else. We are meant to receive what God has given us.

And to seek it from somewhere else is not to recognize what God has given or rather to recognize what God has given and turn our back on it and look for lesser things elsewhere.

Sin causes us to do this but we do it with our responsibility also. The call to live worthy of the position that God has given you is a call to recognize that God is paying attention to you all the time. It is a call to recognize that because God is great, you matter. It is because of the greatness of God that God pays attention to you.

[36 : 50] And therefore that means that we are to live a close and clean walk with God himself. This psalm is a hymn of praise.

It's a song to be sung but it's also words that will shape our life. There are words to be repeated by the reader and to be lived also by the reader.

That we are to pay attention to the things in the same way that David pays attention. attention.

Notice then that as David pays attention to himself, he pays greater attention to God.

What is man that you are mindful of him? As he pays attention to man, to himself, he pays attention to the fact that God is paying attention to him.

As he thinks about himself, he's not thinking about himself. He's thinking about what God is thinking about him. Properly understood. David then draws their attention beyond the heavens, to the stars, to the moon, to everything that God has set in its place so that you would understand the privileged position that God has given to you.

[37 : 56] Everything else in this world has its place but look at the privileged position that God has given to you. And why do you have that position? Because you alone were made in the image of God.

Knowing then that you are the image of God on earth, perhaps not reflecting who he is truthfully. None of us do. Perfectly. But that's who you are.

And so with that in mind, and with God's attention on you, go out this morning and live who you really are. Amen.