



The sheep were finally tucked away for the night, resting safely in the security of the sheep pen. On a warm night like this, preparing a fire wasn't essential but necessary to lift spirits and cook dinner. As he prepared his meal, the shepherd, David, the newly anointed King of Israel continued to guard his sheep with careful attention. With a shepherd staff in one hand David cooked his food in the other as the black of night swept over the rugged hills of Palestine, blanketing everything with darkness and silence. For miles the only thing that could be heard was the crackling of the fire and the bleating of the sheep. It was a peaceful night. After supper, as David began to rest from his long day, he lays down, resting his head on his folded hands behind him taking in the moon and stars in their stunning display of light. David's heart is overwhelmed as he soaks in the awesomeness and greatness of his Creator. Quickly grabbing his small harp and some parchment, David sings a beautiful song to the Lord and writes down every word for our enjoyment too. As he gazed at the starry night, here's what he sang:

Lord, our Lord,  
how majestic is your name in all the earth!  
You have set your glory  
in the heavens.  
Through the praise of children and infants  
you have established a stronghold against your  
enemies,  
to silence the foe and the avenger.  
When I consider your heavens,  
the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars,  
which you have set in place,  
what is mankind that you are mindful of them,  
human beings that you care for them?  
You have made them a little lower than the angels  
and crowned them with glory and honor.  
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 swim the paths of the seas.  
Lord, our Lord,

### how majestic is your name in all the earth! (Psalm 8)

David puts down his harp and with a sense of peace falls quietly asleep.

I want you to join with me in an experiment. Just for a moment let's pretend that you and I are God. Imagine you have God's heart and his perspective on the universe and humanity. Think about yourself from God's point of view. As God, when you look at yourself, your life, and all that you are responsible for, what do you see? Psalm 8 will teach us that our idea of God will shape our idea of ourselves. If your idea of God is limited to a God of wrath and judgment for your failures and mistakes, then how you see yourself will be oppressive and limiting. However, if your image of God is big, if you see him as a loving creator who wants the very best for your life, then how you see yourself will be hopeful and healthy.

So far in our study of the Psalms we've seen several lament Psalms, Psalms of disorientation. They've been a little discouraging and intense. Psalm 8 is very different. It's a Psalm of orientation. David steps back and praises God for his majesty, which was a Latin word meaning greatness. No matter what we are going through, if we can do the same as David, if we can enlarge our vision for God, what we find is not that we become small and insignificant. No, when we understand God's greatness, our vision for ourselves grows as well. To help enlarge our vision of God, David offers four examples of God's majesty, God's greatness, four ways God displays his majesty that will have an impact on how we view ourselves.

### God's Greatness is on Display in Children

Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger (v. 2).

I love how *The Message* translation puts it: "*Nursing infants gurgle choruses about you; toddlers shout the songs that drown out enemy talk, and silence atheist babble.*"

This is a little surprising. Is David really saying that God's greatness can be expressed by children and infants? Does David really mean that our enemies are silenced by the babbling and praise of children? Yes, that's exactly what he means. The image is surprising because a child, especially a nursing infant, which is the image here, completely relies on their parents for absolutely everything—shelter, food, loving care. There is no one more

helpless and dependent on someone else than a baby. There are two points David is making with this audacious claim. First, God's greatness can be expressed by children. Second, we are encouraged to develop a childlike faith.

Have you spent much time with young children or babies? As a father, I have been blown away at how my children have grasped the greatness of God at a young age. I've seen my 9-year-old son share his faith with a friend in the backseat of our car while we were driving to a Giants game. I've had the joy of listening to my 5-year-old daughter sing praise songs to the Lord after we turn out the lights in her room and put her to bed. Even my 15-month-old son knows that at dinner time we clasp our hands and thank God for the meal and he does the same. Jesus understood this too and quotes from Psalm 8. Matthew tells us, *"But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple courts, 'Hosanna to the Son of David,' they were indignant. 'Do you hear what these children are saying?'" they asked him. "Yes," replied Jesus, "have you never read, 'From the lips of children and infants you, Lord, have called forth your praise?'"* (Matthew 21:15-16).

The priests and scribes expected Jesus to be offended by these little brats praising him. Instead, Jesus reminds them all that children can understand truth about God. They are able to see God's greatness. They saw Jesus healing the sick and giving sight to the blind and they thanked God. It was the children, not the experts in religion, who saw the power of God and gave thanks to Jesus. Have you ever noticed how kids can have an uncanny sense of who God is. They are not afraid to worship Jesus and love him for who he is. God takes the most small, weak, and helpless thing we can think of—a baby—to remind us of his greatness and power.

There's another aspect to verse 2—we are encouraged to develop a childlike faith. Like a child we are absolutely reliant on our Father to care for us in every way imaginable. We must learn to entrust our lives to someone bigger and more powerful than ourselves. We are no more able to live our lives for God than children are able to avoid danger or care for themselves. David is reminding us to develop childlike faith and we do that by simply being with Jesus. We come to Jesus, by his grace, and spend time with him. Childlike faith is not a call to try harder. It's exactly the opposite. It's a call to come to Jesus as a child, completely dependent on him for everything. It's sitting at his feet in awe and wonder of who he is and what he can do. It often means humbling ourselves and confessing our sin of self-reliance and pride. Does God still amaze you? Do you ever sit in wonder at his nature and attributes? Like a child, are you blown away at his goodness and grace? Ask the Lord to give you a childlike faith this morning. And, by the way, the next time you hear a baby getting fussy in church and get a little annoyed, you can now say, praise God, she's just worshipping Jesus!

## God's Greatness is on Display in the Heavens

**Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens... When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place... (verses 1 & 3).**

David turns his attention from babies to the universe. In order to get an appreciation for God's majesty and greatness, all David had to do is look up at a night sky and take in the moon and stars, all of which God created by his fingers. Usually, the Scriptures talk about God's hands. Here David mentions only God's fingers. The image is of a sculptor carefully creating the universe out of nothing using only his divine digits. Maybe David had Genesis 1, the account of creation on his mind. I'm not sure, but he's reflecting on the awesomeness of God as Creator. He's considering the heavens. He's asking, How big is God? David answers, just look at the moon and stars at night. According to Psalm 8 and Psalm 19, the primary purpose of the universe is to show off the majesty, greatness, glory, magnificence, creativity, and power of God.

We know so much more today about the universe than David did. The universe is so big, astronomers use the phrase, "the known universe," because we don't know just how big it is. We live in a subdivision of the Milky Way Galaxy and the Milky Way Galaxy is only a small part of the entire universe. In order to get around the Milky Way Galaxy, astronomers use a measurement called light years. Light travels 186,000 miles/sec. A beam of light can travel around the earth seven times every second. Professor David Block, who was elected a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society of London at age 19, theorized that if we could count the billions of stars in just our galaxy, one per second, it would take 2,500 years to count them all. If our solar system were the size of a quarter, the Milky Way Galaxy would be the size of the North American continent! Stephen Hawking, in his book, *A Brief History of Time* said, "We now know that our galaxy is only one of some hundred thousand million that can be seen using modern telescopes, each galaxy itself containing some hundred thousand million stars."

By faith you can choose to believe God created all this by his Word and his fingers or, by faith as well, you can believe that nothing created everything by accident. David's response was to worship. JI Packer in his book, *I Want to Be A Christian*, writing about the creation account in Genesis said, "You have seen the sea? The sky? Sun, moon, and stars? You have watched the birds and the fish? You have observed the landscape, the vegetation, the animals, the insects, all the big things and little things together? You have marveled at the wonderful complexity of human beings, with all their powers and skills...Fantastic, isn't it? Well now, meet the one who is behind it all!" As if to say: now that you have enjoyed these works of art, you must shake hands

with the artist; since you were thrilled by the music, we will introduce you to the composer."

Some of you have yet to meet the composer because your idea of God is too small. David continues to enlarge your vision of God by giving us a third example of God's greatness—you.

### **God's Greatness is on Display in Humanity**

**What is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor. 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 swim the paths of the seas (verses 4–8).**

David poses a question, "What is man? Who are we? Why do we exist?" These questions have been asked by philosophers, sages, and the religious for centuries. David answers the question throughout these verses. He first uses two very precise Hebrew words for man. Mankind (*enosh*) is a generic term for man that describes his frail and weak existence. Human Beings (*adam*) has to do with man being created in God's image. It's a noble word that describes men and woman as mighty sons and daughters of God. What does God think of human beings? He is mindful of them and cares for them. Even though we may feel tiny and insignificant, the reality is that God is mindful of us and he cares for us. Did you know God is thinking about you? Do you realize that you are on God's mind all the time? If that is not enough, he also cares for you. He's concerned for your well being. The same God who created the universe with his fingers is thinking about how to best care for you.

David doesn't stop there. He then tells us we've been created just a little lower than angels. The original word for angels is *elohim*, which is a name for God. In other words, God created us just a little lower than God. Let that sink in. On a scale from 1 to 10, 1 being an animal and 10 being God, we are an 8 or 9! God then crowned us with glory and honor. This means God has given us significance and honor above everything else he has created. Glory and honor that are reserved for the king have been placed on our heads as a crown. There's more. As the pinnacle of God's creation, we are given the responsibility to be rulers and caretakers over his creation. Caring for the environment and wildlife are not just reserved for zealot environmentalists. As followers of Christ, created in his image, we are called to be stewards of God's creation. As we see God's greatness, as we see ourselves created in the image of God, we see more of our dignity and worth. Our idea of God shapes our idea of ourselves.

Psalm 8 is in many ways a commentary on what it means to be created in God's image. But, what does that mean? It means to be created in God's likeness. In the ancient world a king would

put statues of himself all over his empire. They represented his image and his rule. These statues were not the king, but they reflected his image. Man is like God, he is not God. Unfortunately many people teach you are God, but that is not what the Bible teaches at all. We reflect God's image and his likeness. We are his representatives on earth.

To be created in God's image also means both male and female are made equally in God's image. Both men and women reflect God's character in their lives. Men and women are equally important to God and equally valuable to him. The New Testament teaches for example that spiritual gifts are given to both men and women. We are equal, but the Bible teaches we are given different roles. Men and women compliment each other in many distinct ways. God created us so that he could love us and we could love him back. That's what it means to be created in his image. The last way God displays his majesty that should have an impact on how we view ourselves is found in the perfect man—Jesus Christ.

### **God's Greatness is on Display in Christ**

If God created us in his image, if we are the crown jewel of all creation, if we are meant to become more like God, then why does the world and our own lives seem so jacked up? All we have to do is look around us and we see just how far we fall short of our job description. Instead of seeing children as a blessing from the Lord, we've killed millions of them through abortion. Instead of carefully running our world, we are ruining it. Instead of protecting wildlife, we are poaching rare animals. Natural disasters seem to be much more common. Disease, cancer, and death are running rampant. We can't even buy a bag of salad without worrying about E. coli!

Sadly, we've all turned our back on God. The original image has been tarnished, polluted, stripped of its majesty and dignity by the Fall. Adam and Eve had absolute freedom in the Garden of Eden to enjoy everything God created. They too were created in the image of God. They had perfect fellowship with God and one another. All seemed well, all seemed good, all seemed right until the Devil tempted Adam and Eve to eat from the forbidden tree. Once they disobeyed God, they immediately realized they were naked and felt ashamed. They ran and hid because their innocence had been lost; they had become spiritually dead in an instant and alienated from each other and from God. Shame, guilt, fear and sin entered humanity. And we've been struggling with the same for centuries. Thankfully, God promised a new Adam, a chosen "seed." Many years later, God would enter our world in the flesh in the person of Jesus Christ.

Quoting from Psalm 8, the writer of Hebrews answers the problem of the Fall, "*But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he*

*might taste death for everyone*" (Hebrews 2:9). Because of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God crowned Jesus with the glory and honor he had intended for man in the beginning. Jesus, as the second Adam, is man as he was intended to be. Psalm 8 not only looks back on all God has created, but it looks forward to the day Jesus will return to this earth and make all things right again. On that glorious day sin, Satan and death will finally be destroyed. He'll make all things new.

When you look at yourself, your life, and all that you are responsible for, what do you see? Do you see Jesus? Do you see the One who lived a perfect life, who died in your place for your sins and who now lives in you? The Bible says that in Christ we are new creations. We have been given dignity, significance and

purpose. It doesn't matter what the world says of us or how we feel about ourselves. We are God's beloved children in whom he is well pleased.

Your idea of God will shape your idea of yourselves. Are your thoughts about God big or small? Are your thoughts about yourself accurate and healthy? If your God is big and you see yourself as someone greatly loved by God, with David you can sing the last verse of this passage, "***Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!***"

*This manuscript represents the bulk of what was preached at CPC. For further detail, please refer to the audio recording of this sermon.*

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