

7/7/19 - Psalm 8 - "The Majesty of God"

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[0 : 0 0] verse 1 and 2. And then in verse 3 and 4, we will have the comparison of this big God to small man. And then lastly, in verse 5 through 9, we actually see the significance of man. It's interesting because in the middle section, it talks about the insignificance of man, but then David closes and actually describes what sort of significance we have as man. And as we begin this psalm, think about this today as we read through this. What is the common theme of the world today? What is the message of the culture around us? As you watch TV and you watch movies and you read books and you read things on the internet, what is the common theme among all of those things?

It's that man is great, that man is amazing, and that man is the hero. Think about movies that you would go and watch. You always want the good guy to win at the end. You want that person to be the hero. We as humans, we like being told that we are great, don't we? It makes us feel good. We certainly would if we were to take inventory of the skills and the various abilities that we have. We would consider those to be amazing. We would consider those to be very good things. And who doesn't like to be the hero, right? Who wouldn't like to have a pat on the back and say, job well done? The world certainly wants us to know that we are the star, that we are the focus. And then taking an even more drastic turn, browse through the bestsellers list, the New York Times list. And most commonly, what's the most popular topic that is sold in bookstores today? Self-help. How to become a better you.

How to improve your life. How to do better. Our culture is obsessed with pretty much ourselves, right? The focus is always, how can you be better? And we've actually even seen this creep into the church, because what is the church telling people today? The similar message, right? That you are great.

That man is amazing. That man is the hero. And it's important to remember, as this culture pushes in around us, and they are telling us to, quote-unquote, live our best life now or become a better you, that it is not about us, and it is about God. And that's exactly how David begins Psalm 8. Because the first subject in this psalm is not man and how amazing and great we are, but the first subject is God.

Look at what he says here. He says, O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is his name. As David begins, he paints this wonderful picture of the majesty of God. He's not trying to steal the show. He knows he is second. He knows that God is first. And any success in the Christian life, if you would use that term success, begins with that foundational truth, recognizing that we are second and God is first.

[3 : 0 6] God's glory is the aim of our lives, not our own glory. David certainly knew that, and any chance that he had to demonstrate this throughout the book of Psalms, he did that. Now, what's interesting here in verse 1, take a look at your Bible with me, because it probably does this. If you notice the first word Lord is in capitalized, does everybody's Bible have that? And then look at the second one.

The second Lord is not capitalized. Why is that? Was that a typo? Did he turn the caps lock off as he was typing away in Microsoft Office? What David is doing here is he's using two different names for God.

The first use of Lord, the all-cap Lord, is the covenant name for God that we would see throughout Scripture, translated from the Hebrew word Yahweh. That is the covenant name of the Lord. The second use of the term Lord is Adonai. Now, out of respect and not wanting to take the name of the Lord in vain, the Jews would often refuse to even speak this name. In their prayers and in their sermons, they would most often use the name Adonai in place of Yahweh. Adonai simply means master or Lord.

It was a name for God that signified his sovereign power and man's humble submission to him. David didn't have to wonder what sort of name to call God. He knew his name. This was not just a cute way of David beginning his prayer as he begins and he ends this psalm, because verse 9, he does the same thing. He quotes the same verse again, O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. He then moves on to the first praise of God, and it's the majesty of his name. God's name is powerful. God's name is excellent. God's name has authority. That's what David has in mind here as he says, how majestic is your name in all of the earth.

God's name makes people tremble, right? It causes uproar. It causes dissension even sometimes, because the name is so powerful. There's so much authority behind the name of God.

[5 : 28] David moves on to further his discussion by saying, you have set your glory above the heavens. God's glory cannot be contained. His glory is not just here on earth, and it's not even just in the heavens. It says it's above the heavens. For God to set his glory above the heavens, it means that his glory is so much more excellent and larger and grander than even the excellencies that we can even see that represent him. It's beyond our comprehension. Psalm 19.1 says, the heavens declare the glory of God. They shout God's glory loudly. They describe that God is of infinite worth, that he is worthy of our praise. He is worthy of our obedience. He is just simply worthy. In reference to the glory of God, Charles Spurgeon says this, he says, there is no place where God is not. The miracles of his power await us on all sides. Travel the silent valleys where rocks enclose you on either side, rising like heaven's battlements until you can see but a strip of blue sky. You may be the only traveler who has passed through that glen. The birds are frightened and the moss may tremble beneath the first step of a human foot. Yet God is there in a thousand wonders, upholding the rocky barriers, filling the flowers with perfume, and refreshing the lonely pines with his breath. Descend to the lowest depths of the ocean where the water sleeps undisturbed, and the sand is motionless and unbroken quiet. The glory of the Lord is there, revealing its excellence in the silent palace of the sea. Borrow the wings of the morning and fly to the farthest parts of the sea. God is there too. Fly to the highest heaven, and God is praised in everlasting song. Dive to the deepest hell, and God is justified in terrible vengeance. Everywhere and in every place,

God dwells and is manifestly at work. There is no place that you can look and not recognize the glory of God. He is there. Verse 2 is a very simple summary of what David is saying here. We will summarize it as this. God will use the weak to defeat the strong. He uses the simple to destroy the wise. Now this verse, as you are studying and reading through it, it seems out of place. It's, Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. You have set your glory above the heavens. That all sounds great.

Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established your strength because of your foes to still the enemy and the avenger. It seems odd. It seems out of place, right? And most commentators that have written about Psalm chapter 8 kind of agree. They think it's just a really weird setting for this statement. But let's look at the New Testament use of this verse to help our understanding. If you would turn to Matthew chapter 21. And we will start in verse 12. Matthew chapter 21, starting in verse 12 and then down to 17.

And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple. And he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. He said to them, it is written, my house shall be called a house of prayer, but you make it a den of robbers. And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple and he healed them. But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did and the children crying out in the temple, he said, Hosanna to the son of David, they were indignant. And they said to him, do you hear what these are saying? The children. And Jesus said to them, yes. Have you not read, here we go, out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise. And leaving them, he went out of the city to Bethany and lodged there. Jesus is telling the religious leaders of the day that God had prepared that specific praise out of their mouths. And those religious leaders would have finished the sentence to still the enemy and the avenger. They would have known that Jesus was saying that the children were there to put them to shame. Just another way that we see God being glorified in the world. God using the weak,

[10 : 02] God using the lowly, God using the unwise, right? Not many of you were wise according to worldly standards. Not many of you were noble, right? But God chose what is foolish in the world. God chose what is weak. Next we see a comparison of a big God to a small man. And this is my favorite part of this psalm, of Psalm chapter 8. I spent most of my studies here, and even in our

discussions leading up to this sermon, we talked at length about the words contained in these verses. But this phrase continually jumped out every time that I read it. What is man? Now David shows how big God is by demonstrating how small we are as man. Throughout my studies, this word kept coming up to describe this section, insignificant.

One commentator wrote, it is at this point of the psalm that David begins to show us our meaning for our lives by actually showing us our insignificance. Now, again, that's opposite of what the culture might want to tell you. In order for you to feel significant, you need to think more highly of yourself, right? You need to be better at whatever you're doing. And it's not necessarily a bad thing to be a better person. But if that's our focus, if we're trying to exalt ourselves, right, we're missing what's going on here. It is at this point of the psalm that David begins to show us meaning for our lives by actually showing us our insignificance. If you're anything like me, that hits right here, because I like to think more highly of myself. I think higher than I ought to at times. And so when I read something like this that, Brad, you're actually insignificant, I wrestle with a fact like that. And what happens when we read something like this, we instantly think of what? But yeah, I do this, and I do this, and I'm good at this, right? But David says, think the opposite. Think about how insignificant you are, and that God has given you those things. Now, follow for a moment, because this is tough. This is something that is lost in our day, and this is what we talked about on Monday. So I can picture David in complete awe in these couple of verses here. He's looking up towards the night sky. There's no lights anywhere. It is just heaven, and the stars, and the moon. He's just gazing upon this beauty, a sky that just never seems to end, right? And he has just moved to awe, and just to pure wonder of this amazing creation. David had no distractions. He's just simply in awe of what God has done. Now, again, this is lost in our day, because to do this very thing, what David is doing here is hard, because go outside tonight, look up into the sky, and you probably won't get this good of a picture. But if you leave the city, and you go out into the country, right? You leave the lights, and you look up. You get a small little picture of what David is talking about. I'm going to tell a fun story. So when Christine and I were first dating, there was a meteor shower, and well, meteor shower. And so I went to Crestview High School. If you know where that is, that's country.

We had a tractor day. People drove their tractors to school, and yeah, that's how country we were. I did not do that. I'm not sure if you guys know this about me, but I am not a country guy.

I don't like getting dirty, nor do I like doing any sort of manual labor. So I was the outcast. I also played golf, and I was a computer nerd. Lots of things going on that made me different. But anyways, so we were dating, and there was a meteor shower. And so I said to her, I was like, let's go out to my high school, because it's out in the field, right? There's no lights, and let's go sit out there, and we'll be able to see the sky, and we'll be able to, you know, we saw how many meteors? Zero. We saw nothing. But when we were out there, for the first time, you actually got to see how big God is, because the lights were gone.

[14:06] There was no distractions out there. It was quieter, right? We were out in the country. And for just a small little moment, we saw what David is talking about here.

We saw that when you look at the heavens, the work of God's fingers, you could be gripped by the greatness of God, because nothing else compares with this to David.

This is his focus. I think we, me especially, I think we've lost this wonder of God. Because when's the last time we did something like this?

When was the last time we truly were in awe of God's creation? I mean, think about it. We see these things, and we think, oh yeah, big deal. Those are the stars.

That's the moon. Yeah. We should go about our day. But David is sitting underneath this same very sky that we are, and he looks up with pure wonder, and he says, what is his response towards this?

[15:09] He says, boy, I'm sure glad I'm the centerpiece of this universe, and it's all about me. He does not say that. What does he say? What is man? That's his response.

He looks up, and he sees how big the night sky is, the heavens, and the moon, and the stars. And David says, why even bother with me? Why even bother with man?

We think, and we live, and we labor as if this life has something to do with us. We love to be the hero of all of our stories.

Instagram is designed to show you as the hero of all of your stories. Nobody puts their failures on Instagram. That's how they make their money, right? They make their money by people's heroic moments.

Nobody wants to see failures on Instagram, right? We love to be the center of attention. We love to have praise from people, right? We love to think that the world revolves around us.

[16:13] Now, think about this for a moment. I'll take some flack for this. It's all right. So, the 4th of July was Thursday, okay? Fireworks. I can't stand fireworks, all right?

I mean, I just don't get it. Like, we shoot stuff up, it explodes, it's colorful, and it makes loud noise, right? I mean, I just don't get it. It's just not my thing. If it is your thing, more power to you.

But first of all, my dogs do not like fireworks. Like, I just don't get it. And I also don't like that, like, fireworks are technically illegal, right? You have to, like, sign waivers and stuff like that. You have to, like, say, like, well, I'm agreeing not to do this.

But for some reason, we just let it go on for the entire week. Like, last night at, like, 11.30, people were shooting off fireworks in our neighborhood. Like, 11.30, it's Saturday night, go to bed.

Like, why are you, like, dogs don't like them. They go off for days, leading up to it, after it. Again, they shoot them off late.

[17:08] I want to go to bed. But we just, we think that, like, we're always, like, think about the draw that fireworks displays have. I mean, traffic is just horrible.

People come from miles and miles away to see fireworks. We look up, ooh, wow, you know, that's great. Everyone tries to outdo one another, your neighbors. Who has the bigger fireworks display, right?

I spent \$6,000. I spent, you know, who doesn't like to try to outdo one another with your fireworks display? We are so in awe of that. Now, inevitably, when it storms later today, because that's what it does now.

It just rains and thunderstorms consistently. Go outside and watch the thunderstorm and watch the lightning. Listen to the thunder. It's almost as if God is saying, like, you like those little fireworks, huh?

Watch this. And then, boom, you know, you've had that thunder that just rattles your entire house. God's saying, oh, I'll show you guys, right? You're in awe of those fireworks, and yet I'm able to do something like this, and you just think, that's nothing.

[18:17] But, church, we are so small in comparison to God. Look at the language that David uses here in verse 3. He says, the work of God's fingers caused the heavens.

The heavens are the work of God's fingers. Take a look at your little fingers for a moment, okay? How small they are in comparison to the rest of your body. And that's the imagery that God uses, or that David uses to describe how God made the heavens.

With just little fingers. Just these little fingers, right? Think about when you grab a pen off your desk. How much effort did that take? Not much. Or how about even this?

Turning the page of your Bible. Probably even less effort. But that's what David has in mind here when he's talking about God's creation. That's how big God is. That even creating the heavens was a small task.

It was the work of his fingers. Also, he says about the moon and the stars that God set them in place. God put them in their specific place. Like, that's where they're supposed to be.

[19:21] He didn't just throw them out and say, all right, well, that looks good. He was involved in every single little detail. Again, like, go look outside tonight.

Like, the stars and the moon, God set those there. He put them in their exact spot. God is just so big. And we are just so small.

God, just, I mean, forgive us for thinking too highly of ourselves. But really, though, that's a good place to arrive at. Think about that for a moment. Because once we grasp that, once we start to realize how small we are, and that as much as I'd like it to, the universe does not, in fact, revolve around me, that's when we can start truly living for Christ.

Because think about the more centered you are on your own life, how less joy-filled you are as a follower of Christ. If you are trying to deny self, and if you are trying to live a life that is worthy of the gospel, you can't be focused on yourself.

Those two things are in opposition to each other. But again, once you grasp that, that's when we start living for Christ. The truth is found in the answer to David's question.

[20:37] What is man that you are mindful of him? Nothing. What is the son of man that you care for him? Nothing. We are nothing, right? We are dust, and to dust we shall return.

And by that, what I mean is, we have done nothing to make ourselves lovable. And I'm painting a picture that we'll come back to here in a moment. There is nothing that we have done to make ourselves being worthy of care and esteem and redemption.

However, even though we are nothing and have done nothing, this is where the turn happens in verse 5. Yet, okay, 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 field, the birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the sea.

It's interesting here because God chose to honor us above all other creations. David first describes the significance of man by saying that he has made us a little lower than the heavenly beings.

[21 : 55] Now, we're going to move over to Hebrews here in one second, but I want you to notice something. I want you to notice what David says in this verse and what he doesn't say. Again, he says that we have been made a little lower than the heavenly beings.

What he does not say is that we have been made a little higher than the animals. Now, why is that important? Because I think David wants our attention up, not down, right?

To think of our insignificance, not to think of our significance. The second part here is that we have been crowned with glory and honor. Now, this goes all the way back to creation.

This is Genesis 1. We were created in the image of God. This sets us apart. This is what makes us different than everything else on this earth. But it also gives us this unique opportunity, doesn't it? Because we, as image bearers of God, we are able to reflect that very image of God to the world around us. Other parts of creation can't do this. But we can because we were created in the image of God.

[23 : 00] Now, this leads us to our third point from David about the significance of man. Flip to Genesis 1, 28. I'll read it real quick if you don't make it there. But again, like I said, we go back all the way to Genesis 1.

Actually, I'll read 27 and 28.

Genesis 1, 27 says, Think about that.

God created. We were just in awe and wonder of the heavens. Now, God created this world and he gave it to us. He said, here, you have dominion and authority over this world.

He entrusted his very special creation to man. God did not do this with the tiger, with a lion, with a shark.

[24 : 20] Wouldn't that be weird if a shark, right? He did it with mankind. We have been created to have dominion over all sheep and oxen and beasts of the field.

We are over the birds and over the fish and all living things. This is part of what it means to be created in his image. God has given us this job and it's of extreme importance.

It is about reflecting the glory and honor that has been bestowed upon us as being created in God's image. We reflect this back to the world, right?

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ. God literally making his appeal through us. Now, we live under his sovereign rule. We submit and we reflect and how has man done with that?

How did Adam and Eve do with that, right? How are we, how am I doing with that? You know how we do with that? We don't do very good with it. We are not good at reflecting the image of God back to creation.

[25 : 25] We, we, honestly, we failed at it. And this is where, this is where we turn. This is, this is the big point that we lead up to. Look at Hebrews chapter 2.

We'll read verse 5 through 10. Hebrews chapter 2, verse 5. For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking.

It has been testified somewhere. What is man that you are mindful of him, or the son of man that you care for him? You made him for a little while lower than the angels. You have crowned him with glory and honor, putting everything in subjection under his feet.

And in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom, all things exist in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering. Now, that's Psalm 8, very clearly.

[26 : 54] But what happened when the author of Hebrews quotes it? The focus has changed to Jesus, okay? He's now the subject of that. Do you want to know what the greatest example of man's insignificance, but also the greatest proof of God's love for man and regard for man is?

And it's in Hebrews chapter 2. It's Jesus himself. Because God sent Jesus in the form of a man. Not of an angel, but a man.

And what did Jesus do? He did what we never could or never would do. He lived the perfect life. Philippians 2 says he became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

John MacArthur says, By his incarnation, substitutionary sacrifice, and victory over sin and death, he has fulfilled man's original purpose. As the second Adam, he was for a short time lower than the angels.

Now he has glory and honor, and all things are subject to him. And that's a pretty beautiful picture of what happens. I mean, we could even play that out for a long time.

[28 : 15] But what does it say after? He ascended to the right hand of the Father, and then what does he do? He sat down. And as the great high priest, and if you've studied in the book of Hebrews, why that's significant, the comparison of Christ as our great high priest, and then it says that he sat down, why that's so important, is because the priest of the Levitical day had no option to do that.

They did not even have seats for the priest to sit down. And why was that? It's because his work was never done. He would make an atoning sacrifice for sin, and then somebody else would sin, and he'd have to get back up and do it all over again, and then he remembered, oh, I'm sinful too, so I've got to make a sacrifice for myself, and the cycle would just continue over and over and over again.

But when Christ came, what? He said, it is finished. And he sat down. And why did he do it? Again, in Hebrews chapter 2 and verse 9, So that by the grace of God, he might taste death for everyone. So, church, if you believe in Christ, if you are a follower of Christ, and you believe in the finished work of him, the death of Jesus is applied to your account.

We have been imputed with the righteousness of Christ. We've been clothed with righteousness. Jesus has tasted death for us so that we don't have to. If you're an unbeliever, and you're confused by all of these words, and you think, well, what does this have to do with me?

[29 : 45] What's my response to that, then, if I'm an unbeliever? Well, I think you begin by realizing your insignificance in order to save yourself, right? How many times have we had a conversation with someone, and they say, you know, if we bring up Christ, or we bring up heaven, or, you know, where do you think you're going to go when you die?

What's one of the most common answers? Well, I'm a good guy, right? God's going to let me in, you know? I'm not that bad. I haven't murdered anybody. But realizing your insignificance, and realizing that without the work of Christ applied to your account, we are lost, we are sinful, and man is destined for eternity apart from him.

Realizing your insignificance. So what's our response to Psalm 8, then, as we close? How do we apply this to our lives? I think first, very clearly, we return to the awe and wonder that we had with God at first.

If we are honest with ourselves, we may have brief moments of awe towards God. Very brief. But it probably has changed over time. At least in my studies, I was reflecting upon this.

And personally, my awe is often directed towards things of the world. If you know me, I love gadgets and technology and electronics and phones and laptops. That's my thing, right?

[31 : 06] I love it. I'm just always in awe of that stuff. Do you guys remember when Amazon released the news that they were going to start delivering items in one day?

Like you could order something at like 10 p.m. and it would be there the next afternoon. I told everybody about that. Like I would just bring it up to new people. Like, hey, my name is Brad. Did you guys see that Amazon now delivers one day?

Right? When they had those little drones that they were testing overseas that like they had like these like Independence Day style warehouses of like drone fleets for Amazon and they would fly out and drop a packet.

Like that's amazing. Right? I was blown away by that. Caught my attention. But then I was thinking like when's the last time that God did that?

Like we were talking about this on Monday and we become so, it's just like the world around us is so big and it's so amazing and yet we just go about it like, oh, that's nothing.

[32 : 05] So first, return to that awe and wonder. So how do we do that then? So the second point then is we need to approach the Bible for what it truly is, the very words of God.

Because think about it. If the Bible is true and if you are a follower of Christ, you believe that it is true, then this is huge. Okay? This is something. This is not just a book of literature.

This is the very words of God. Okay? Think about it. We talked about how amazing the heavens are, how amazing the moon is, and God had no effort in creating any of this.

He just placed them there. That's amazing. But think about how much more amazing it is that God gave us this book about him. That he cares so much for us that he gave us this book.

Through this book, our awe and our wonder grows each time we encounter it. That's how you refresh your awe and wonder towards God.

[33 : 06] Then lastly, probably the most difficult, at least for me, remember that it's about God and it's not about us.

The more that we understand that, the more that we shift our focus from ourselves to this big God that we serve, the more joy that we have in this life as being a follower of Christ.

Christ. Let's pray. God, thank you for this book.

Thank you for the words that are on the pages that bring encouragement to us, that comfort us and strengthen us.

but most importantly, point to Jesus and to how glorious he is and how majestic he is. As we leave today and as we are pushed in by the culture around us that says, be a better you, it's all about you, make yourself happy, buy things, do this, do that, help us to remember that it is not about us but it is about Christ and his finished work on the cross.

[34 : 29] Thank you for this time of worship. God, we love and praise you in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.