



MATT BLACK, Sun, September 9, 2018
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8 | PSALM 8

GOD'S MAJESTY IN THINGS BIG & SMALL

Drawing near to God when you feel so small

Outline

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The Chief End of Man

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Announcements

1. Welcome visitors!
2. We are not hosting a Ladies' retreat this year at our church, but we are invited to the True Woman's Conference with **Nancy Leigh DeMoss Wolgemuth** live stream at Fellowship Church of Mokena. For more details see my wife, Jill.
3. LIFE Groups today! Grab a **Life Group** brochure for times and locations.

Introduction

Open your Bible if you will to **Psalm 8**. The title of our study this morning is: "God's Majesty in Things Big and Small."

James Stockdale: Who am I?

Have you ever felt so small, insignificant, sometimes even aimless? Even for the Christian, you can sometimes feel without purpose if your focus is off. What do you do on those days when you feel off track or rudderless, without a destination or a purpose? I think we all feel that way sometimes.

Admiral James Stockdale is well known for being the Vice-Presidential Candidate for a third party with Ross Perot in 1992. His opening words to the Vice-Presidential debate were, "Who am I, and why am I here?"

The Chief End of Man

In the Psalm 8, we find a young shepherd boy named David who knows his purpose. He looks up in the sky and ponders his own purpose and existence. "What is man that you are mindful of him?" (8:4). His answer looks forward to our ultimate purpose in Christ. Have you ever seriously considered that question: Who am I? Why am I here? David knows who he is and why he's on this earth. He exists to lift up the majesty and beauty of God.

That purpose at its core is found in the Westminster catechism, question 1 – What is the chief end of man? To glorify God and to enjoy him forever. That purpose is stated in Psalm 8 as well: live for the glory and majesty of God and enjoy him!

Scripture Reading

Let's stand and read our passage today, Psalm 8,

To the choirmaster: according to The Gittith. A Psalm of David.

O LORD, our Lord,
 how majestic is your name in all the earth!
 You have set your glory above the heavens.
² Out of the mouth of babies and infants,
 you have established strength because of your foes,
 to still the enemy and the avenger.

³ When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
 the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,

- ⁴ what is man that you are mindful of him,
and the son of man that you care for him?
- ⁵ Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings
and crowned him with glory and honor.
- ⁶ You have given him dominion over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under his feet,
- ⁷ all sheep and oxen,
and also the beasts of the field,
- ⁸ the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea,
whatever passes along the paths of the seas.
- ⁹ O LORD, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

This is God's Word.

Possible Time of Writing of the Psalm

There's nothing in the text itself that explicitly tells us when in David's life this psalm was written, but some of the best commentators believe he wrote it while he was still a youth, possibly even while he was just a shepherd tending his family's herds. That's when he had the most opportunity to gaze at the heavens and meditate.

The psalm also makes no reference to the troubles David often wrote about later in life. It seems to pour forth from a heart undarkened by the memory of sins, unhurried by the opposition of enemies, untroubled by the matters of state that consume a king's mind. So this may well have been a psalm that David wrote as a young boy or a teenager. We know that he was a skilled musician and harpist from the days of his youth. So this psalm could have been written while David was working at night, watching the sky while he tended sheep as an adolescent.¹

David likely wrote this when he was a shepherd boy. He gazes at God's universe, under the stars, and he basks in the beauty of God's name. He sees God's beauty in creation and then in incarnation.

Main Points

1. God's beauty is displayed in **big things** (8:1)
2. God's beauty is displayed in **little things** (8:2-4)
3. God's beauty is displayed in **Jesus** (8:5-9)

1. GOD'S BEAUTY IS DISPLAYED IN **BIG THINGS** (8:1)

A JOYFUL SONG

David looks up at the heavens and he realizes: no one and nothing is more beautiful than God. He is so overtaken by God's beauty and glory that he sings a song.

¹ Phil Johnson. "The Glory of the Son of Man." Sermon. (Sun Valley, CA: Grace Community Church, 2015). Preached 1/18/15.

To the choirmaster: according to The **Gittith**. A Psalm of David.

What is a “**gittith**”? It is a harvest song. Gittith means “winepress” and is probably referring to a joyful tune people sing at harvest. Can I remind you that no matter what you are going through, you are called to “**rejoice in the Lord always**” as Paul says, “**and again I say, rejoice**” (Phil 4:4). No matter what is going on in your life, I want to show you how you can rejoice in the Lord today. Whatever was going on in David's life as a shepherd boy (and he had his trials with lions and bears), he was able to rejoice when he thought of the great name of God and considered God's creation.

GOD'S GLORIOUS NAME

As David looks at the night sky, he addresses the God of the universe in a prayer song:

O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens (8:1).

The two words for lord (**O LORD, our Lord**) are not the same in Hebrew. The first one, **LORD**, with all caps, is a translation of the name Yahweh—not a generic name for God, but the personal name of Israel's God built on the statement in Exodus 3:14, “**I am who I am**.” God named himself Yahweh, that is, the absolutely existing one—the one who simply is, who did not come into being, and does not go out of being, and never changes in his being, because he is absolute being. He depends on nothing for his being and all else depends on him.

The second Lord is **Adonai**: the Master or Lord of all. Because of who God is, he is the sovereign Master of all things. The sooner you acknowledge that and live in a way submitted to his lordship, the happier you will be.

God's Name is His Person

And to speak of his name is to speak of this person – God is to be personally enjoyed through his creation. God's beauty fills the heavens and the earth.

The Beauty of God's Name

As I said before, no one and nothing is more beautiful than God.

O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens (8:1).

To say that God's name is majestic or magnificent is to say that it is **better than anything else in all the earth** and that it is exalted higher than anything above the highest heavens. It is to be desired. David says in **Psalm 63:3**, “**Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you**.” God is so amazing: he's better than anything this life has to offer.

God's Beauty Displayed in Creation

God's glory and beauty are seen in creation: both in earth and in the heavens.

O LORD, our Lord, **how majestic is your name** in all the **earth!** You have set your glory above the **heavens** (8:1).

The glory and majesty of God's person and character fills the earth and heavens. His signature is on every piece of DNA and on every star and planet. Seek to know the one who is so rich and interesting and good and kind that he made all these things. The Bible repeatedly calls us to "seek the Lord... seek his presence continually" (**1 Chron 16:11**). Life is so busy! Stop seeking this world and what this world has to offer. Look up and see how majestic is his name in all the earth. See how his glory fills the heavens.

As vast as the heavens themselves are, God's glory is greater still: *above* the heavens. Implicit in that statement is an acknowledgment that God's glory is too great for David to express. When you look up in the sky, God meant for you to worship, to see the glory of who he is. Yet the majority of the human race looks up at the sky and do not worship God. How can such unbelief exist with God's great signature all around us in the sky? Do you see the details of his glory? He put them there according to Paul in Romans 1.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. ¹⁹ For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. ²⁰ For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse (Rom 1:18-20).

God's name is excellent in all the earth; his glory exceeds the furthest reaches of heaven. So God both *fills* and *surpasses* all his creation. If you could go to the farthest reaches of the universe, you would find that God's glory extends even beyond that. On the other hand, if you examine the most infinitesimal particles of this earth, you find that God's glory fills it all. There's an inexpressible sense of wonder in what David is saying here.²

Application

The point of looking out at God's creation is to make you see the vastness of God's beauty. He does amazing things doesn't he?

- I've never seen the **northern lights** in person, but wow, even photos and videos are breathtaking.
- The **deepest oceans** and all their creatures is made by him.
- Have you ever seen the **sun rise**? Do you know how many laws of science have to come together for that?
- Every **tree** is a piece of art work. Every **animal** is so complex with creativity greater than any Vincent van Gogh or Picasso.
- Have you ever considered the **human eye** or the **human hand**?
- The creation of God in heaven and earth is endless!

² Ibid.

God made the **earth** and **skies** as his **calling card**. You want to see the signature of God? Look up and you will see how great our God is! God has made himself known in the big things to draw you near to him. He wants to show you how big he is! His beauty fills the earth. His glory surpasses the skies.

What are you doing to get to know him to the point where you praise him like David? What did David do? As a young shepherd boy, he did two things: **meditated** on God's Word and he **mused** on God's creation. Take time to see God revealed in Scripture. Read the Bible. Then get outside: admire God's creation!

2. GOD'S BEAUTY IS DISPLAYED IN LITTLE THINGS (8:2-4)

SEEN IN LITTLE ONES (8:2)

Sometimes we feel so insignificant. We are insignificant. "What is man that you are mindful of him?" – David asks in verse 4. But before he asks that question he gives an example of how God is most glorified in his use of insignificant things.

In verse 1, David's talking about the unfathomable majesty of God. His thoughts about that majesty began when he was pondering the furthest reaches of the stars. But when he gives a concrete example of how God makes his glory most clearly known, he says,

Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger (8:2).

God's foes think on a large scale. Nation states and world domination. But God loves to use the most insignificant beings to do his work. This happened in this triumphal entry. The great leaders of Israel were scandalized by the praise of Jesus. Jesus quietly points out that Psalm 8 was on full display at the triumphal entry. Babies and children were crying out save us! Hosanna to the king of Israel, oh son of David. The little one's got it. God *can* use the mouths of babes and sucklings to silence his enemies. That literally occurred during the ministry of Christ, just after he turned over the tables of the money-changers. Matthew 21:14-16 says:

When the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying out in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant, 16 and they said to him, "Do you hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes; have you never read, [*quoting directly from Psalm 8:2*]

"Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies
you have prepared praise?" (Mt 21:14-16; cf Psa 8:2)

Those little children recognized Jesus because of their insignificance which led to their humility. It's always the insignificant little ones that will spoil Satan's kingdom.

SEEN IN LITTLE DAVID

We see God's beauty displayed in little David as he writes this Psalm. This strategy of ordaining praise from the weak and lowly is epitomized in David himself. He killed Goliath when he was still an adolescent. He wrote psalms, perhaps even this one, while

he was technically still in his childhood. And here he has put his finger on a truth that epitomizes the dominant character of all true faith. What God wants from us is sincere, childlike, trusting praise.³ God's beauty is displayed in little, insignificant things. It's displayed in the praise of little children. It's displayed in the praise of that little shepherd boy David.

SEEN IN LITTLE INSIGNIFICANT MANKIND (8:3-4)

Why would God use little, insignificant man to display his greatest glory?

³ When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,
⁴ what is man that you are mindful of him,
and the son of man that you care for him? (8:3-4).

Compared to the LORD, the moon and the stars are puny. They are his handiwork. They fit in the palm of his hand. And then you think of mankind. We are so small! Yet, God uses man to display his greatest glory! That is an amazing thought, but it is exactly how God delights to work. And that's a theme that runs throughout Scripture. God uses insignificant things to make his glory known. Listen to 1 Corinthians 1 –

For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸ God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, ²⁹ so that no human being might boast in the presence of God (1 Cor 1:26-29).

The Vastness of the Universe

Let's consider the vastness of the heavens for just a moment. What are we seeing when we look into the heavens? The closest star to our galaxy is *Alpha Centauri*. It is actually a star-system made of three stars. It is 4.28 light years away from earth. That's more miles than you can possibly imagine, but it means if you go out tonight and find Alpha Centauri in the sky, what you'll actually be looking at is light that left that star system about August of 2014. If Alpha Centauri blew up tonight, we would not see it happen until the year 2022. And that's the *closest* star you can see. Most of them are billions and billions of miles further away than that. The radius of the **observable universe** is estimated to be about *46.5 billion light-years* and its diameter. In fact, the furthest star that is visible from earth is about 15-thousand million light years away. That is an unimaginable distance.

But beyond what you can see are more **galaxies**. And as the Hubble telescope keeps reminding us, some of the lights that appear like stars to us are whole galaxies of hundreds of thousands of stars. One point of light in our sky might be a galaxy larger than the Milky Way.

³ Ibid.

So, how small is the earth? Well, to put it in perspective, if our **sun** were the size of a **baseball**, the comparative size of the **earth** would be not much bigger than a **poppy seed**.

In fact, our sun pretty small for a star. The universe beyond our solar system is incredibly large, inexpressibly large. Words fail. If the universe were the size of earth, our whole galaxy would be less than a grain of sand on a beach somewhere, **insignificant**.

The Smallness of Man

Listen to verse 4:

What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?
(8:4).

Compared to the vast universe, **man** is so small on the earth. We are so tiny in the universe. The unbelieving mind considers the size of the universe and concludes that no God could possibly be big enough and powerful enough to create and govern all that. The unbelieving mind looks at man and says: he has no purpose.

But David had the opposite perspective. He understood that the very existence of such a vast, well-ordered universe argues for an infinite Designer. As he was pondering the vastness of the universe, it prompted him to marvel at the greatness of the God who created it. And God says, his beauty and majesty are especially displayed in the crown of his creation: man. He made you so small so you would not glory in his presence.

Do you ever feel insignificant? It's because you are. That's the reason God uses you. In the expanse of all these glorious stars and planets, a universe so immense that compared to just one galaxy, our whole earth is like a small fraction of a subatomic particle. And on that tiny planet in such a vast array of stars, here is man. To call him tiny or insignificant doesn't do justice to the reality of how small we are in the scope of all creation. If our entire solar system were the size of the whole earth, and if you could examine it through the equivalent of an electron microscope, you would not even be able to see this tiny creature.

The Greatness of God's Love

Sometimes we get down and distracted, and we can't feel God's love. Theologically, the Bible expresses that "God is love." David cannot comprehend why God would love man when he is so small. Listen again to verse 4:

What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?
(8:4).

Simply put, David asks, why would God love man? Why would he love me? I'm so small, so sinful, so unworthy. That's a great question. But the truth is: God loves you. His love for sinners is not based on your works or record or worthiness. It's based on his grace. He loves you as a free gift (Eph 2:8-9).

3. GOD'S BEAUTY IS DISPLAYED IN **JESUS** (8:5-9)

GOD'S BEAUTY TARNISHED IN ADAM (8:5-8)

When you consider the question, “what is man,” you get the answer here in verses 5-8. Man is the **highest creature in God's material world**. He's more important than the vast expanse and glory and beauty in the universe. We read about the rank of God's creation. Man is made “a little lower than the heavenly beings.” What heavenly beings? The Hebrew word is *elohim*. The word often refers to God and sometimes it is referring to the angels. Here it could mean either, but the New Testament quoting the Septuagint, translates it *angels*. So we have to go with angels.

⁵ Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings
and crowned him with glory and honor (8:5).

God made man in his image. God **crowned** man **with glory and honor**, giving him rule over the whole earth. Adam named all the animals and living creatures. That showed that he was king and ruler over them.

When God created man, he blessed him and said, “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth” (Gen 1:28). David has this in mind in verses 5–8. God gave his image bearers the right to rule and have dominion over all things. David is thinking of God's perfect creation before the fall in Genesis 1 when he says:

⁶ You have given him dominion over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under his feet,
⁷ all sheep and oxen,
and also the beasts of the field,
⁸ the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea,
whatever passes along the paths of the seas (8:6-8)

In Psalm 8, we don't see mankind in its present state of sin. David was looking back to the original creation, when everything was “very good” (Gen 1:31).

But we know what happened. Things did not remain this way. We read that everything was “very good”, but then sin entered the world and destroyed the holy fellowship Adam had with God.

God gave Adam a wife. But Adam didn't protect his wife. He allowed the serpent to beguile Eve. Adam, who was crowned with glory and honor had now tarnished that crown. He not only tarnished the image of God in mankind, but that fall into sin also **drastically altered** the state of creation.

Sin introduced death, and disease, and for humanity it meant toil and sweat rather than automatic dominion over all. It's ironic and tragic when you think about it, that man was designed to rule over all creation, but in our state of sin, we can be brought low by the tiniest microorganisms, which cause all kinds of disease and disability.⁴

⁴ Ibid.

GOD'S BEAUTY RESTORED IN CHRIST (8:5-8)

Enter our Lord Jesus Christ. You say, "I don't see Christ in this passage." You may not, but the apostles of the New Testament sure did. These verses are quoted in numerous places to refer to Jesus. The author of Hebrews literally sees Jesus in this passage.

For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. ⁶ It has been testified somewhere,

"What is man, that you are mindful of him,
or the son of man, that you care for him?"

⁷ You made him for a little while lower than the angels;
you have crowned him with glory and honor,

⁸ putting everything in subjection under his feet."

Now 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. ⁹ 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 (Heb 2:5-9).

The First Adam

If you read this passage without reference to the New Testament, following all the conventions of sound hermeneutics, you'd probably conclude that David is referring to Adam.

The Second Adam

But the New Testament sheds some inspired light on the passage, and we discover that this is a **Messianic psalm**. The one who is crowned with glory and honor and given dominion over all things is not Adam. Adam was given that dominion, but he **forfeited** it when he **sinned**. The real subject of this psalm is the Second Adam, Jesus Christ, in whom dominion, glory and honor are restored-and elevated to new heights.

In other words, Psalm 8 needs a savior. It needs one who would take the punishment for what we deserved. In grace, God sent Jesus Christ to redeem us and by raising Him from the dead, bestowed on him "the name that is above every name" (**Phil 2:5-11**). Now, his name is the most **majestic** in all the earth. He is crowned with the honor and glory of our rightful king.

Glory and Honor Restored in Christ

Now in Christ, we are "heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ" (Rom 8:17). The glory and honor of mankind is restored for all who are in Christ. We are now reigning with Christ and "seated in the heavenly places" (Eph 2:6).

HOW MAJESTIC IS THE NAME OF JESUS (8:9)

How majestic is our king Jesus Christ! The grace of God in Christ should launch our hearts into worship. Are you moved by the grace of God? Does it stagger you that Jesus

took what you deserved? What can we say to this? We end where we started! Look at the name of Jesus.

O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! (8:9)

The glorious Name of Jesus is crowned with glory and honor. What should we do with this message?

APPLICATIONS

Let me leave you with four hard-hitting applications.

1 – Focus

We serve a big God. Look up! Go big or go home! Distractions will kill your spiritual life. Some of you are walking around like crazy people – you think you have to move heaven and earth. Don't you know you have a big God? You don't have time for your wife – you don't have time for your family – because you're trying to move heaven and earth to provide for them. Listen God is big. Do what he says you should do in your home and in your marriage and with your children. Be all there. Be there for them. Don't squander your life for a job or money. Let God be God. Moms – don't be so caught up in the exhaustion of motherhood that you miss the great big God loves you.

2 – Unbelief

Where ever there is fear, depression, anxiety, pride, sinful anger, there's unbelief – you are missing God's love. Perfect love cancels out fear. When you understand God's perfect love you cannot have fear, depression, pride. It cancels out all sin.

3 – Contentment

Sometimes when we are not connected with God and we don't see this great big god that satisfies us, we can try to fill the hole with material things. Let me ask you - are you living within your means? There are things that God wants to give through you but you can't do it. There are gospel causes and people that God wants you to help – but you're not willing to live within your means. Do whatever it takes to live within your means. God will bless you mightily.

4 – Praise

You know what you don't see here in this song? All of David's problems and trials. Did he have trials? Yes! He had bear sized problems and lion sized problems. But we have is praise. And out of praise comes humility and joy. Indeed, how majestic, how uplifted, how praiseworthy is the Name above all names! How majestic is the Name of Jesus in all the earth!

Conclusion

On April 30, 2013, Robert Galbraith released his crime novel, Cuckoo's Calling. It barely sold 500 copies in the first few months. Many store owners considered pulling the

book from their shelves. But the news on July 14 changed all of that. Galbraith, it was announced, was not the true author. J. K. Rowling actually wrote and published the book pseudonymously. From there, sales skyrocketed. It quickly rose to the top of multiple best-seller lists. The mere mention of Rowling's name changed everything. The name of Jesus should impact Christians this way. The mention of Jesus should launch our hearts into worship. His name is majestic in all the earth. He is the king we worship, trust, and treasure.