

How Majestic!

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[0 : 00] Psalm 8 again is the one we'll be looking at this morning.

If you don't have a Bible, there are Bibles in the pews that you can use. If you don't own a Bible, please take that Bible home with you today as a gift from our church to you.

That is God's Word, and it's God's Word for you. And we want you to read it and to know it and to be blessed by it. If you would stand with me this morning as we honor the Word of God again reading Psalm 8.

To the choir master, according to the Githith, 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. Out of the mouth of babies and infants you have established strength because of your foes to still the enemy and the avenger.

[1 : 11] 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.

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 all the beasts of the field, the birds of the heaven 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! May God add a blessing to the reading of his word. Would you please be seated?

Psalm 8 begins and ends with the same statement. O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

This is a literary device called an inclusio. Inclusio is a Latin term meaning confinement or enclosure.

[2 : 20] And so an inclusio informs readers of the main idea the author wants to communicate. Everything enclosed within the inclusio supports the main idea or the theme.

And the theme of Psalm 8 is the majesty of God's name in all the earth. What comes to your mind when you hear the word majestic?

Think about it for a moment. What comes to your mind when you hear the word majestic? Maybe a king or a queen with a diamond crown sitting on a golden throne.

Maybe the Rocky Mountains, the Grand Canyon, the ocean, or some other awe-inspiring land formation that was not made with human hands.

Perhaps you thought of something beyond this earth, like the moon and the sun and the stars or the planets in our solar systems. Maybe you thought even beyond that.

[3 : 32] Imagining the images that we see from super-powered telescopes displaying the Milky Way galaxy and the billions and billions and billions of galaxies beyond ours that stretch across the immeasurable universe God has created.

Will all of those things push us in the right direction of what Psalm 8 reveals about the majesty of God?

The Hebrew word majestic in the ESV is *adir*. That word is used in the Old Testament in a few ways.

First, it's used to describe the majesty of God's power over creation. In Psalm 93, 4, *adir* expresses God's mightiness.

Mightier than the thunders of many waters, mightier than the waves of the sea, the Lord on high is mighty. His might is majestic. *Adir* is also used in the Old Testament to denote the excellency of those who trust in God.

[4 : 44] In Psalm 16, 3, it says, As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones. They are the majestic ones in whom is all my delight.

Adir is also used to describe objects that inspire awe and terror. Psalm 22, 12, Many bulls encompass me, strong, majestic bulls of Bashan surround me.

In Psalm 8, David compiles all of this imagery. He uses people, places, and things in praise of God, showing how through them, God reveals his majesty.

He reveals who he is and what he's done. And so the main idea for this morning's sermon is that God reveals his majesty and who he is.

And what he's done. God reveals his majesty and who he is and what he's done. Before looking at the people, places, and things God uses to reveal his majesty, it's important that we first think more deeply about a couple of things David communicates in his inclusion, in this opening statement and closing statement.

[6 : 06] First, the object that David attributes majesty to is God's name. The two words translated as Lord in our English Bibles are not the same two words in Hebrew.

The first Lord in Hebrew is Yahweh. The Jews so feared using God's name in vain, they wouldn't say it out loud. God didn't command them to do that.

It was something that they decided to do on their own. And so whenever someone read Scripture, in the name of God, Yahweh appeared, the Jews would substitute the word Adonai.

Adonai, which means Lord. Now in my Bible, the first Lord is in all capital letters, and the second one isn't. That's a cue that that all capital L-O-R-D is a stand-in for Yahweh, the name of God, the name God chose to reveal himself to his people.

What's more or what's most important for us, I should say, to understand at this point is what the name of God, Yahweh, means. In Exodus chapter 3, God commands Moses to go back to Egypt to deliver his people from slavery.

[7 : 34] Moses is hesitant. He doesn't think the people of Israel will believe that he is God's man, God's agent, to set them free. And so he asks God a question.

Exodus 3, 13 through 15. Moses said to God, if I come to the people of Israel and say to them, the God of your fathers has sent me to you, and they ask me, what is his name, what shall I say to them?

God said to Moses, I am who I am. And he said, say to the people of Israel, I am has sent me to you.

God also said to Moses, say this to the people of Israel, the Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob has sent me to you. This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.

I am. I am who I am. That is what the name Yahweh means. It's a reflection of God's being.

[8 : 41] It signifies God's self-existence and eternity. God has always been. God will always be. Theologians refer to that truth as God's aseity.

Aseity comes from the Latin phrase, which means from oneself. God wants us to know that he is the uncreated creator.

He has no beginning. He has no end. He is not dependent on anyone or anything outside of himself for life. In fact, he is the source of life.

He doesn't need anything outside of himself to sustain his existence. He is the one who sustains all that exists. He is eternal. He is complete.

He is self-sufficient. He is unchanging. He will be that way forever. He's been that way forever.

Reflecting on this, James 1.17 says, Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

[9 : 56] All of God's attributes, his love, his sovereign power, his wisdom, his holiness, etc., are eternal and they're unchanging.

God exists eternally as Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Jesus, being God in the flesh, claimed the name I am for himself.

In John 8, 58, Jesus said to them, to his enemies, to those who opposed him, Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.

Jesus also said, I am the bread of life in John 6.35. He said, I am the light of the world in John 8.12. He said, I am the door in John 10.7.

He said, I am the resurrection and the life in John 11.25. He said, I am the way, the truth, and the life in John 14.6. And finally, in John 15.1, he said, I am the true vine.

[11:00] Jesus is the eternal word of God who became flesh and dwelt among us, the one in whom Paul testifies in Colossians 1.16-17, for by him all things, speaking of Jesus, all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, all things were created through him and for him, and he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

God's name captures his aseity and assures us that he is the self-existent source of existence. All things depend on him for life. He alone decides what to do, and nothing can ever thwart his purposes.

God cannot be overpowered. God cannot cease to exist. He answers to nobody. His purposes will stand. His promises will come to pass.

This is critical for us to understand because it informs our worship of God. It helps us understand how truly majestic his name is, and that inspires our worship.

[12:21] As we ascribe to him praises worthy of his greatness, worthy of his great name, that's what David is doing in Psalm 8.

He's praising the Lord for who he is and for what he's done. This leads me to the second thing we need to think deeply about in this inclusio.

It's the words, our Lord. The first Lord reveals who God is. The second Lord describes who he is in relation to us.

He is ruler, master, king. He is supreme authority over heaven and earth. You could translate this verse as, O Yahweh, our king, how majestic is your name in all the earth.

God is not some distant deity. He is an active ruler. He is engaged with his creation, which reveals him as its creator.

[13:26] The majesty of his name is reflected in who he is, Yahweh, and what he's done as Lord over all. In verses 2 through 8, David praises God for what he's done to reveal how majestic his name is, which reveals who he is.

He does that by making three contrasts. And each contrast discloses how God reveals his majesty by using weak things, weak people, to accomplish his great work.

The first contrast is in verse 2. God reveals his majesty in the triumph of the weak over the strong. God reveals his majesty in the triumph of the weak over the strong.

And the first contrast here is really between weak children and enemies who appear strong or who think they are strong. Enemies of God. Between those who know they're totally dependent on others for life and those who think they are self-sufficient and believe they're free to think and do whatever they want without need or consequence.

Most women during David's time nursed their children until the age of two or three years old. So the Hebrew word translated as babies and infants covers a broader age than is captured in our English translations.

[14:53] We get to experience in our church how God reveals his majesty through the little children who are a part of our church. On Palm Sunday when our nursery kiddos march up and down and through our pews waving palm branches.

In December when our kids are stuffed into costumes as they reenact the birth of Jesus Christ on this platform.

In the summer during the week of VBS as they memorize scripture as they ask their questions about God about the Bible and especially especially when they dance and when they sing. in praise of the truth of who Jesus is. Praise God for children in the church. Amen?

Praise God for children in the church. There is something so innocent so pure so good so heartwarming to us when we see little children praising the name of God with their mouths.

[16:14] Matthew 21 records the triumph the victory God won through the lips of little children during Jesus' earthly ministry. Matthew 21 14-17 says and the blind and the lame came to him Jesus 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 Hosanna to the son of David they were indignant and they said to him do you hear what these are saying?

And Jesus said to them yes have you never read? And he's quoting this psalm out of the mouths of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise.

and leaving them he went out to the city to Bethany and he lodged there. Those children recognized Jesus as the Messiah who brought God's salvation.

The chief priests and the scribes were horrified they were scandalized that Jesus wouldn't shut them up that Jesus wouldn't make them stop singing about him and shouting these praises to him they were outraged they said do you hear what these these they can't even call them kids these silly things do you see what these insignificant creatures do you hear what they're saying about you?

They should know better and Jesus said yeah I hear them they've recognized the truth they're doing what they were created to do they are fulfilling what scripture says there's a rebuke in here from Jesus it's as if he's saying you say you know the scriptures but you don't truly believe them because you should be doing what these kids are doing right now Psalm 8 was being fulfilled before their eyes but they couldn't give Jesus the praise that he was due this psalm was further fulfilled because the praise of these children shut the mouths of Jesus enemies those who thought they were strong were silenced by those who were weak God continues to use the weak to shame those who think they are strong 1 Corinthians 1 26 through 31 says for consider your calling brothers speaking to [18:56] Christians not many of you were wise according to worldly standards not many were powerful not many were of noble birth but God chose God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong God chose what is low and despised in the world even things that are not to bring to nothing things that are so that no human being might boast in the presence of God and because of him you are in Jesus Christ who became to us wisdom from God righteousness and sanctification and redemption so that as it is written let the one who boasts boast in the Lord the wisdom of God is foolishness to the world it's foolishness to those who have denied God who think that creation just happened on its own who place their faith in the irrational thought that something can come from nothing and that chaos produces order the cross to them is foolishness because they can't imagine a divine being lowering himself to endure such a shameful treatment in death it's foolishness to those who trust in themselves and their own good works for salvation but God chooses what appears to be foolish in the world to reveal just how mighty and how majestic he is read the passage that came before the one that I just read to you in 1 Corinthians chapter 1 verses 18-25 for the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing but to those of us who are being saved it is the power of God for it is written

I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart where is the one who is wise where is the scribe where is the debater of this age has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world for since in the wisdom of God the world did not know God through wisdom it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe for Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom but we preach Christ crucified a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles but to those who are called both Jews and Greeks Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God for the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men those whom God has been gracious to save know that their life their eternal life their salvation it's all of God's doing we have nothing in ourselves to boast in his majesty is revealed in the triumph of the weak over the strong that is what

God's children boast about it's a truth we teach to our children as we rock them to sleep at night as we lay them down for bed as we sing to them the song Jesus loves me Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so now this part little ones to him belong they are weak but he is strong there are deep theological truth in that simple short song and one of them that we sing to our children that we praise God for is his majesty and his triumph using the weak to overcome the strong now the second contrast God reveals his majesty in the significance he gives to the insignificant he reveals his majesty in the significance he gives to the insignificant David expands his view from people to places in verse 3 from the occupants of the earth to the stars above he says when I look at your heavens when I look up into the sky the work of your fingers the moon and the stars which you have set in place

David isn't a physicist or an astronomer he doesn't need scientific evidence to prove what is apparent to his senses the moon the stars have been set in place and God is the one who has put them there they are the work of his fingers I like how he phrases that think of all the work it takes for people to build a building it takes more than fingers doesn't it it takes arms and legs and backs and heads and hands and feet and machines David pictures God using his fingers kind of like a

grandmother knitting a scarf while she's simultaneously talking on the phone I guess she'd have it up on her shoulder and watching TV her hands just know what to do she's not even really thinking about what she's doing she's not breaking a sweat God knit the universe together with ease he designed it in ways that make it clear that only a being a vastly superior intelligence intelligence and ability could make what we see in the sky above

Psalms 19:1 says the heavens declare the glory of God and the sky above proclaims his handiwork day to day pours out speech and night to night reveals knowledge physicists have discovered that our universe is hard coded it's hard coded with laws to govern it it is fine tuned it is arranged in the only way that it possibly could be for any life to exist at all all this design all of this fine tuning indicates a universe created with purpose by an intelligent being the probabilities involved with the fine tuning of the universe aren't comparable to winning the lottery or being struck by lightning I could give you the numbers but I hate math and so what helps me picture just what the odds of this are of just this all happening randomly I like I like the stories that I've heard and I've heard one story somebody putting the math equation into just a fundamental way that we can understand what are the probabilities of just all things happening just spontaneously and this was a physicist who shared this illustration he said imagine the state of Texas this is a large state and say that that state is covered the entire state is covered with half dollars and they're piled up three feet

[25 : 42] I'm six foot one so imagine half of me covered in half dollars across the entire state of Texas he said one of those half dollars on one side of it is painted red and it's somewhere amongst all of these silver dollars now imagine somebody in a helicopter being parachuted down into this sea of half dollars blindfolded and they have one chance to pick up that half dollar with half of it painted red what are the probabilities of that happening well they're not very good are they and that's what he compared to just the probability probability of what we see just happening by chance it's improbable because God has created it all when I look at pictures of the universe pictures taken with the

James Webb telescope it fills me both with awe and terror they terrify me you want to scare me show me a picture of the universe it freaks me out just to think of how huge it is how vast it is how mysterious it is when I was a kid in church an older man in my church family showed me the Milky Way galaxy it pulled it out of a magazine and he showed it to me and amongst this huge expanse of glowing lights there was an arrow pointing to a little round speck that was barely visible on the paper and he told me Michael that's earth the God who created all of this and he pointed to the paper and the God who created all of this and he just kind of pointed to everything around us created you and he pointed at me that was a short powerful lesson one I haven't forgotten obviously David looks up and he he sees the expanse in the sky filled with innumerable stars and what he thinks is who am I verse four what is man that you are mindful of them and the son of man that you care for him there were several words in the Hebrew language David could have used for man in verse four but he chose the word enosh a word that emphasizes humanity's frailty and mortality our weakness he emphasizes our mortality by pairing it with the phrase son of man to emphasize the fact that our lives are not our own that we don't create ourselves that we are not self-existent like God is Jesus applied the name son of man to himself to emphasize his humanity on the earth his lowering himself to a position of a servant taking on mortal flesh to be pierced for our transgressions to be crushed for our iniquities this is who

God is this is what God has done and in knowing who God is and what he has done we humbly acknowledge our insignificance and our unworthiness yet he who is most worthy in love came to die to save us and rose again to give us eternal life as small as we are as little as we are as insignificant as we feel God gives us significance he gives us purpose beyond compare in Luke 12 Jesus teaches his disciples not to fear people who oppose God but to fear the God whom those people oppose and in teaching that principle he reminds them of the significance God has placed on them Luke 12:4 through 7 I tell you my friends do not fear those who kill the body and after that have nothing more they can do but I will warn you whom to fear fear him who after he has killed has authority to cast into hell guess I tell you fear him are not five sparrows sold for two pennies and not one of them is forgotten before God why even the hairs of your head are all numbered fear not you are of more value than many sparrows

I think this is awesome God knows the exact number of galaxies and all the billions of stars contained within them he also knows the exact number of hair on your head for some of you that would be easier to count than others but he knows the exact number the point being he cares you

have to really care about someone to know how many strands of hair is on their head don't you he cares about things he cares about the things that he's made he cares about the people who are created in his image and he gives those people significance and he gives greatest significance to those whom he calls by name to reign eternally over his creation with Jesus

[31 : 45] Christ the son of man the Lord and Savior and so now the third contrast God reveals his majesty in subjecting creation to his subjects who live in subjection to him it's a lot of subjection God reveals his majesty in subjecting creation to his subjects who live in subjection to him and reflecting more on the significance God has given to the insignificant David marvels at the dignity that God has given human beings whom he has created in his image again verses five through eight he says yet you have crowned 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 the fish of the sea whatever passes along the paths of the sea human beings if you hadn't noticed are different than any other created being in this world

God created Adam and he positioned him to rule over the earth and to rule over all the other beings God created on the earth he created Adam to serve as his representative all things were subject to the authority of Adam and his wife Eve who were subject to God's authority Satan tempted Eve and Adam to rebel against that design to be their own authority to be their own God to rule in his place and as a result of that terrible choice all of creation was plunged under the curse of sin human beings still bear God's image but we all suffer under the curse of sin we are all born physically alive but spiritually dead sin causes us to lose the sense of the dignity

God has given us in fact some people give animals more dignity than they do their fellow man and while humans are still superior to other creatures and exercise dominion over the earth sin has ruined the paradise and the peace that once existed on the earth between human beings and between human beings and other creatures and human beings and creatures and the God who created them all you don't believe me I don't suggest you do this but go to the Topeka Zoo and walk into the lion's cage and say hey I I want you lions to know that I have dominion over you I have authority over you God's given that to me so behave sit shake that's not going to work because all of creation has been cursed by sin it's not the way that God intended it to be and while these verses speak of the worth and the value of human life and human life has value they ultimately point to a better representative that we need to restore the peace that was lost as a result of sin

I'm going to read some long passages of scripture to you God's word is better than anything that I would have to say about this 1 Corinthians 15 20 through 28 but in fact Christ has been raised from the dead the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep for as by a man came death and by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead for as in Adam all die so also in Christ shall all be made alive but each in his own order Christ the first fruits then at his coming those who belong to Christ then comes the end when he delivers the kingdom to God the father after destroying every rule and every authority and power for he must reign until he has put all enemies under his feet the last enemy to be destroyed is death for God has put all things in subjection under his feet and he's quoting Psalm 8 but when it says all things are put in subjection it is plain that he is expected who put all things in subjection under him when all things are subjected to him then the son himself will also be subjected to him who puts all things in subjection under him that

God may be all in all Hebrews 2 5 through 10 for it was not the angels! that God subjected! He's talking about Psalm 8 you have made him and he's talking about Jesus a little lower than the angels you have crowned him with glory and honor 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 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 through the weakness of the cross and emptying himself of the glories of heaven in a manger in the insignificant town of

[37 : 32] Bethlehem to poor insignificant parents in dying a criminal's death in rising again Jesus Christ the son of man the son of God has most revealed the majesty of God's name he lowered himself to raise us up with him Ephesians 2 1 through 7 Paul's talking again to Christians to the church here and you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked following the

course of this world following the prince of the power of the air the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind that's bad news but here's the good news but

God being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead in our trespasses made us alive together with Christ by grace you have been saved and raised us up with him!

seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness towards us sinners who were dead in our trespasses and sins and without hope he's given us this grace this kindness towards us in Christ Jesus and friends we should read that and we should think what are you kidding me God you did that for me that's the future I have to look forward to and in a sense that's what we do when we praise God we're marveling at how majestic he is what I can't believe what you've done but I know that it's true who am

I that I would receive such grace who am I that would be raised to such heights who am I that I would be treated with such significance and love who am I oh Lord that you would do this for a sinner like me and that inspires!

praise true praise of God and his mercy to save sinners we praise him for who he is and we praise him for what he's done so what do we do according to what we've heard in God's word I think it's just basically this praise the Lord for who he is and what he's done believer you praise the Lord for who he is and what he's done every second of your life praise obedience to the Lord and how you declare the truth of who Jesus is and how you're unashamed to do that and how you do it courageously how you speak the truth in love how you bring the gospel into your home and how you bring it into your workplace and your neighborhood and you declare Jesus Christ is Lord of all and I follow him and I believe him because I know who he is I know what he's done and I want you to know who he is and

[41 : 13] I want you to know what he's done and if you're an unbeliever here this morning you've heard the good news of who Jesus is and what Jesus has done repent of your sins there's no hope in this world for you outside of faith in Jesus Christ there's no hope for you outside of him who is the way the truth and the life you have sinned against God who has always been and who will always be and who is holy holy forever and who is just and who will punish sin turn to faith in Jesus Christ understand that on the cross he took the punishment of your sin for you and he rose again on the third day as proof that it is finished that by faith in him we have eternal life we have peace with

God we have a hope that never ends we have a hope that endures all things because we know that we reign with him and we will live with him in peace!

in paradise forever! O Lord our Lord how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Let's pray! Heavenly Father we thank you for this majestic truth that we've just gone over in Psalm 8 declaring who you are declaring what you have done Lord it's undeniable as we look at the work of your hands we see that these are things that we could never do they point to the reality of your existence and your self existence Lord we look in scripture and we look around us the lives of the weak whom you've saved and how you've transformed them how you've redeemed them and how they've lived their life in obedience to you and we see the goodness of the fruit that that produces and that's a miracle

Lord that only you can do and so God I pray that we would reflect more on the reasons that we have to praise you and that we would give you the praise that you're worthy of not just when we're in church but when we're in our homes when we're at school or when we're at work or when we're in our neighborhood Lord that your words would just flow from our mouths that your truth would inspire our praise and our desire to share share the good news with others in desperate need of hearing it so Lord we pray that you would embolden us that we would be courageous that we would not be ashamed of the gospel that we would not be ashamed Lord to speak about you and to praise you in public ways in our hopes that more and more would know Jesus and the salvation that only he can bring in Jesus name we pray amen