

*Our Majestic God*  
Text: Psalm 8:1-9  
Series: Psalms [#11]  
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Theme: **God's Display Of His Majesty Calls For Glorifying Him.**

## **Introduction.**

This morning we have sung and read about God's great majesty. The chorus *How Majestic Is Your Name*, taken from our Psalm for the day, Psalm 8. We read Psalm 29 that pictures God's majesty as it proclaims

"The voice of the LORD is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD is over many waters. The voice of the LORD is powerful, the voice of the LORD is majestic. The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars; yes, the LORD breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon." (3-5)

We sang Isaac Watts' hymn *I Sing The Mighty Power Of God* with verse 3's "There's not a plant or flower below but makes Thy glories known."

Psalm 8 is a grand and beautiful Psalm. It is not difficult to spot the theme. King David gives it to us twice, in the opening and closing verses, "O LORD, our Lord, How majestic is Your name in all the earth!" (1a, 9). This brief Psalm covers a great deal of territory as it touches on earth, the heavens, infants and toddlers, God's enemies, the nature and role of people, and animals. This declaration of *Our Majestic God* also clearly states how we should respond. The complete message is that *God's display of His majesty calls for glorifying Him*. And that is what I want you to see and think about with me today. Let's start with...

## **The Great Display Of God's Majesty.**

First there are a couple of things we need to note. Verses 1 and 9 open with "O LORD, our Lord." This is not just a repetition of words for effect. Notice the first *lord* is in capital letters (LORD) while only the first letter is capitalized in the second *lord*. There are two different words here. The first is the personal name for God, *Yahweh*. It is the *I am that I am* name of God, picturing His eternal, self-existent nature (cf. Exodus 3:14). The second is a general term referring to someone who is above you. It is a statement of respect and submission. So King David here is singing "O Eternal God, our Lord."

Then we should pause for a moment on the phrase "How *majestic* is *Your name*." To say that God's name is majestic is not to say that His name has a certain, noble ring to it. Rather, majestic refers to all that His name stands for, to all God's character and what He does. And so we need to think about the word *majestic*. This word has the ideas of being above, over, superior, more powerful than and so, even intimidating and impressive. It is translated in the Old Testament as *nobles* and *leaders*, that is those who are superior to or over others;<sup>1</sup>

as *powerful* nations;<sup>2</sup> as *stately* or *glorious* trees;<sup>3</sup> as *mighty* ships and waters.<sup>4</sup> Mt. Robson is the highest peak in the Canadian Rockies at 3,944 meters. It has a towering, impressive *majesty*. As King David sings that God's name is majestic in all the earth, he is declaring that God's perfect character and actions are powerfully and impressively visible throughout all the earth.

Yes, God's majesty is displayed in all the earth. There is not a place on this planet where God's majesty is not on display. There are places which we like and others we don't, places that are dazzling and others that are desolate, but everywhere we can go, God's majesty is on display. You see, this is not something that is subjective. It is objective. It doesn't depend on my tastes or what I think or feel about the places and things on earth.

It is grounded in the fact that God is the Creator. He placed His imprint on this earth He created. That imprint remains and shines through, even though sin has affected both us and the earth. God, the *Lord* over all His creation, is still actively, vitally involved. As Psalm 107 tells us, He changes rivers and springs into dry wildernesses and dry wildernesses into pools and springs (33, 35). He changes a fruitful land into a salt waste because of people's sin and also changes wildernesses into fruitful fields (34, 36-37).

Then too, God's majesty in all the earth is part of His revelation of Himself to every person in every age. Remember the apostle Paul's statement that God's wrath is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness because God *has* revealed Himself. Paul wrote in Romans 1,

“that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.” (19-20)

The end of Psalm 96 speaks of Christ coming to reign. At that time the call will go out, “... let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all it contains; let the field exult, and all that is in it. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy. (11-12). Again, along the same line, Psalm 98 declares, “Let the sea roar and all it contains, the world and those who dwell in it. Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy” (7-8). While this is future and poetic, it pictures the ongoing testimony to God from His creation. God's majesty is displayed in all the earth.

God's majesty is also displayed above the heavens. Verse 1 tells us God has displayed His splendor above the heavens. The word *displayed* means to put or set in place, to assign, to publish, declare, or to display. God chose to fix His majesty in and above the heavens. Psalm 19, which we looked at a few weeks ago, speaks of this constant display.

“The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.” (1-2)

It is frequently suggested that God used David's experiences as a boy out in the fields with the family's sheep and looking up at the stars at night to give us this image.

When we look into the sky on a clear night and see the stars, we see a display of God's splendor. To think all that is out there, as well as here, came as a result of time plus chance defies reason. It is not only the beauty of the universe, but also the order and balance that is stunning. In 1686 Isaac Newton wrote,

“The six primary planets are revolving about the sun in circles concentric with the sun, and with motions directed towards the same parts, and almost in the same plane. Ten moons are revolving about the earth, Jupiter, and Saturn, in circles concentric with them, with the same direction of motion, and nearly in the planes of the orbits of those planets; — but it is not to be conceived that mere mechanical causes could give birth to so many regular motions, since the comets range over all parts of the heavens in very eccentric orbits... This most beautiful system of the sun, planets, and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being.”<sup>5</sup>

Albert Einstein wrote that one should expect the world would be orderly only to the extent people bring about order, but in fact there is a high degree of order we would not expect. He wrote, “This is the *miracle* that is strengthened more and more with the development of our knowledge.”<sup>6</sup>

Look to the skies and see God's majesty! As Isaiah 40:26 invites,

“Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created these stars, the One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power, not one of them is missing.”

There is a great display of God's majesty in the earth and above the heavens, but there is an even greater and unique display of His majesty in people, in us. Look down to verse 3.

“When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained; what is man that You take thought of him, and the son of man that You care for him?” (3-4)

We know much more about what is up or out there, about the universe, than King David did. But there is still more than we can wrap our minds around. Some think the entire universe, all that exists, may be at least 156 billion light years wide. *How wide is that?* Light travels at 9.46 billion kilometers in a year. So, simply multiply 9.46 billion times 156 billion and you have the answer!

Since that number is too large to be meaningful, let's change from time and distance to time and money. If you start spending \$1,000 a day today you would, of course, spend \$365,000 over the next year. Spending at that rate it would take over 2,739 years to spend a billion dollars, using the American definition of a billion being a thousand million. As songwriter Stuart Hanblem put it, "How big is God? How big and wide His vast domain? To try and tell, these lips can only start."<sup>7</sup>

All of the heavens are God's creation, the work of His *fingers*. This expression tells us that God was directly involved in creation, that He cared for the smallest details, and that creating the heavens, as one writer puts it, was "but child's play... spun off the tips of his fingers, without even breaking a sweat!"<sup>8</sup>

In light of this, we can understand the king's question, "God, who and what am I, who and what are we in comparison?" In Psalm 144 he asked the same question,

"O LORD, what is man, that You take knowledge of him? Or the son of man, that You think of him? Man is like a mere breath; his days are like a passing shadow." (3-4)

Another writer tells us,

"In contrast to God, the heavens are tiny, pushed and prodded into shape by the divine digits; but in contrast to the heavens, which seem so vast in the human perception, it is mankind that is tiny."<sup>9</sup>

Who and what are we in comparison?

God created us in His image or likeness. In a broad sense this means that God gave us some qualities that are intrinsic to His own being, His own nature. He has, as verse 5 states, made us a little lower than God and crowned us with some of His own glory and majesty. People are unlike anything else God created. Most notably, we have the God-created ability to know, to love, fellowship with and obey Him; and we are everlasting beings, that is, once life has begun it will continue forever.

And then, as verse 4 tells us, God thinks of and cares for us. We are so small and passing in our time on earth in comparison to the heavens, yet God keeps us in His mind, He seeks us out and takes care of us. And, we know the central action and demonstration of His love for us. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

God's majesty is displayed greatly in all the earth and heavens and uniquely in people. So, what does that mean? To borrow from Francis Schaeffer, "*How should we then live?*" Now that we have received the gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus, in the words of Chuck Colson, "*How now shall we live?*"

## The Great Response To God's Majesty.

God's display of His great majesty calls for a great response. It calls us to glorify Him. Part of the response called for in this Psalm is that God silences His enemies in a unique way that runs contrary to what we think and would do. Look back up to verse 2.

“From the mouth of infants and nursing babes You have established strength because of Your adversaries, to make the enemy and the revengeful cease.”

This is a beautiful but also not instantly clear statement. The first thing to clear up is that if you are reading in the NIV, it doesn't speak of “strength” but of “praise.” The term David used means might or strength. Over half of its 93 uses in the Old Testament are translated *strength*. For example, Psalm 28:7, “The LORD is my *strength* and my shield...” The NIV interprets this verse to mean that the sounds or *praise* of young children (of toddlers and nursing infants) quiets God's enemies.

God often uses weakness to defeat, to silence His enemies. The apostle Paul states the principle in 1 Corinthians 1,

“God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, so that no man may boast before God.” (27-29)

Turn to Matthew 21 to see an example which helps us. The first eleven verses record Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. He went to the temple, drove out the merchants and money changers, and healed the blind and lame. Young children, who may have been part of the crowds cheering Jesus as He entered the city, now repeated what the masses had been shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David.”

The chief priests and scribes saw all of this and were indignant because they understood the crowds and children were proclaiming that Jesus was the Messiah. So they said to Him, “Don't you hear, don't you understand what they are saying? Why aren't you correcting them?” Jesus answered, verse 16, with words based on Psalm 8:2 from the Greek version in use at the time. “Yes [Yes, I hear and understand]; have you never read, ‘Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies You have prepared praise for Yourself?’”

The chief priests and scribes had no answer. God used the words of little children to silence His enemies. God displays His great majesty and brings about the great response of silencing His enemies through weak people and things, even through little children.

Moving on to people who have seen, understood and responded to God's majesty by receiving Christ as Savior, our great response is to be to praise God. King David opens and closes this Psalm with a shout of praise, “O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in

all the earth!” This is a theme that runs through the Psalms. David’s testimony of praising God opens Psalm 145.

“I will extol You, my God, O King, and I will bless Your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless You, and I will praise Your name forever and ever. Great is the LORD, and highly to be praised, and His greatness is unsearchable.” (1-3)

A reverberating call to praise closes the book of Psalms.

Praise the LORD!  
Praise God in His sanctuary;  
Praise Him in His mighty expanse.  
Praise Him for His mighty deeds;  
Praise Him according to His excellent greatness.  
Praise Him with trumpet sound;  
Praise Him with harp and lyre.  
Praise Him with timbrel and dancing;  
Praise Him with stringed instruments and pipe.  
Praise Him with loud cymbals;  
Praise Him with resounding cymbals.  
Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.  
Praise the LORD!

The writer of Hebrews tells us “Through Him [Christ] then, *let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name*” (13:15). You see, for the believer praise is, in the words of Ron Allen, “a matter of life and breath.”<sup>10</sup> If we have seen the great majesty of God, experienced it and Him in Christ, we cannot help but praise Him. Praise is essential to a vital, dynamic, growing relationship with God. While we all experience bad things and go through life in a minor key at times, we all can and need to be people of praise in all times.

Finally, part of the great response to God’s great display of His majesty is for us to serve Him. Drop down to verse 6.

“You make him to rule 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 through the paths of the seas.” (6-8)

Before commenting on these verses, let’s go back to Genesis 1. Verse 27,

“God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and

over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’” (27-28)

God designed and placed serving Him at the core of our nature and purpose. In the final analysis, serving God is part of our worship and praise. One of the terms for worship has the basic idea of service.

While sin has marred the image of God in us, the earth and our rule over the works of God’s hands, this responsibility, this response to God’s great majesty and love remains ours today. We are to care for, be stewards of God over this planet. One does not have to get into political or other views to realize that as a whole we haven’t been doing as well as we should be in this, and also that we as Christians are not always leading the call and action to responsible and good stewardship of caring for our world.

Psalm 103 also ties service and worship together. Verse 19,

“The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, and His sovereignty rules over all. Bless the LORD, you His angels, mighty in strength, who perform His word, obeying the voice of His word! Bless the LORD, all you His hosts, you who serve Him, doing His will. Bless the LORD, all you works of His, in all places of His dominion; Bless the LORD, O my soul!” (19-22)

## **Conclusion.**

*God’s display of His majesty calls for glorifying Him.* How have you been doing lately in glorifying God through praise and service? Pastor’s have a few advantages when it comes to sermons. Yes, before someone whispers or shouts it out, we don’t have to listen to them! But, on a more serious note, we have the opportunity to be prepared, to have worked through some of the questions and implications before Sunday morning. Many pastors, including myself, often find God arranging events in our lives so we have the opportunity to face and follow the truths we are preparing to preach.

Last Sunday we thought about *Life In A Minor Key* from Psalms 42 and 43. During the week leading up to last Sunday several things came up that disappointed me and caused me concern. I felt the pull to life in a minor key. None of this was life shattering nor long lasting, but part of the timing of it was God reminding me, challenging me to make sure that I would practice what I was about to preach. At the end of this week, while thinking on our great response of praise and service, of glorifying God for His majesty, an irritant or two popped up that offered the temptation to grumble or complain rather than praise.

We, you and I, sometimes do better at praising and serving, at glorifying God than at other times. So again, how have you been doing lately in glorifying God through praise and service? When I think of experiencing God’s great love and grace through Jesus and how I can praise and serve Him, He reminds me that one of the most basic and essential acts is sharing the gospel, the good news of Christ with others. I am not always as proactive as I

can and should be. When that is the case, I am not glorifying God as I could and should. Perhaps you have times like that as well.

As we spend time with God in the next quiet moments, let us thank Him that He has created us in His image, displayed His great majesty so we and all can see it, that by His grace He rescued, transformed and made us His own forever when we placed our faith in Christ. Let us also examine our response to Him, confessing and turning from anything that keeps us from thanking, praising and serving Him as we should. Let us renew our commitment to glorify Him in all that we do.

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<sup>1</sup> Judges 5:13; Jeremiah 30:21.

<sup>2</sup> Ezekiel 32:18.

<sup>3</sup> Ezekiel 17:23; Zechariah 11:2.

<sup>4</sup> Isaiah 33:21; Exodus 15:10; Psalm 93:4.

<sup>5</sup> Isaac Newton. *Sir Isaac Newton's Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy and His System of the World*. The 1686 work translated by Andrew Motte in 1729. Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, LLC, 2003, pages 543-544.

<sup>6</sup> Albert Einstein. *Albert Einstein, Letters to Maurice Solovine*. San Diego: Philosophical Library, 1987, pages 114-115.

<sup>7</sup> Stuart Hamblen. *How Big Is God?* © Hamblen Music Company, 1959.

<sup>8</sup> Gerald H. Wilson. *Psalms, Volume 1*. The NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zonderban, 2002, page 203.

<sup>9</sup> Peter C. Craige. *Psalms 1-50*. Word Biblical Commentary. Waco, Tex.: Word, 1983, page 108.

<sup>10</sup> Ronald Barclay Allen. *Praise! A Matter Of Life And Breath*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1980, page 58.

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