

Ascending to the throne of France at age four to rule for the next seventy-two years, Louis XIV enjoyed the longest reign in modern European history. Intoxicated with his own power, this self-consumed emperor called himself the "Great Monarch" and declared, "I am the State!" But in 1715, King Louis XIV, like all other rulers, abdicated his throne to death.

His funeral, just as he had prescribed, was nothing short of spectacular as the great cathedral was packed with mourners to pay final tribute to their king in his solid gold coffin. To dramatize the deceased ruler's greatness, a solitary candle burned above his jewel-laden casket. Thousands waited in hushed silence, gazing at the solitary flame.

At the appointed time the funeral service began. Bishop Massillon, who presided over the state funeral, stood to address the mourners, which included the assembled clergy of France. When the bishop rose, he did something that stunned the nation. Bending down from the pulpit, he extinguished the lone candle that represented the greatness of Louis XIV. The people gasped. Then from the darkness echoed four gripping words, "*Only God is great!*"

1. That would be a fitting title for this psalm. Only God is great!

- A. It is a Psalm that both humbles man but then comforts him
It humbles man by showing the greatness of God
It comforts man by reminding us this great God is good
- B. Why I wanted to teach this – we will get back to Ephesians next week
 - 1). Last week – I wanted to teach on thanksgiving – computer – data – car
 - 2). This week – I still felt like I should not go back to Ephesians YET
 - a). This Psalm attracted me because of that first line
Ps 8:1 (ESV) O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! *You have set your glory above the heavens.*
1a). I pray at night looking out of my office window – Google sky
I can see the moon and Jupiter – to the right Arcturus – 211 trillion miles away!
I think “Lord you said your hand spans this universe!” – That inspires worship!
2a). Today I wanted to spend my time looking at the greatness of God

Ps 8 (ESV) 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!

1. Outline: 3 Point – very simple

- A. The Greatness of God
- B. The insignificance of man
- C. The Goodness of God to man

I. THE GREATNESS OF GOD

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

1. David addresses God using two different words translated as “Lord”

- A. First “O Lord” – all caps is the name of God – we think it is “Yahweh”
First Lord – translated all caps “LORD” is the name of God we think it’s “Yahweh”
 - 1). I say think because the Jew considered God’s name to be so holy – they never wrote it out
They didn’t want sinful man with sinful lips to be pronouncing it
 - a). So they wrote His name YHWH (called the tetragrammaton) – unpronounceable
 - 2). So whenever you see LORD in all caps – it is that holy name of God that is to be revered
 - a). That name that expresses the greatness of God – that speaks of His attributes – *all He is*

- B. Second Lord – Capital “L” small “o r d” – is Adonai = Master or ruler
- 1). It emphasizes God’s sovereign authority over us – and what our response to him should be
- Point:** “O Yahweh our master – our ruler”

Ps 8:1 (ESV) O LORD, our Lord, *how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

1. Majesty is the radiant, revealed splendor of who God is

- A. Where do we see this majesty? Everywhere!
- 1). God’s excellence is revealed in every corner of the earth
 - 2). His creation is constantly preaching a sermon declaring how great He is

Transition: David points out 4 areas where we see God’s greatness

- A. The earth and the sky He created, then in the dignity and dominion He has given man

Four Areas David Sees This Excellence

1. His greatness is seen in the earth He created

Ps 8:1 (ESV) O LORD, our Lord, *how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

- A. We live in a God drenched creation – His fingerprints are everywhere if we only have eyes to see them
- 1). I pray in the morning looking out at our fig tree – it’s an aviary – filled with birds!
 - 2). I finish my day praying looking out at the moon – planets and stars
 - 3). Gardenias bloom and you smell their fragrance – God’s cologne
 - 4). Sun rises and sunsets

Thought: God’s creation shouts out his glory – we are so blinded to it – the Biblical authors noticed

- A. The thunder roared and they wrote about God thundering from heaven
- B. The earth quaked and it was God’s power moving it
- C. Scripture says “Trees clap their hands for God” – What! Then I heard it – wind blowing leaves slapping
- 1). The wind God sent – causing the leaves he created to clap – his creation responding to him

William Cowper’s poem “Hope:”

Nature, employ’d in her allotted place,
Is handmaid to the purposes of grace.

Transition: His greatness and majesty are seen in the earth

- A. Every blade of grass – the fruit growing on trees – Dolphins – and what? Golden Retrievers

2. His greatness is seen in the heavens He created

Ps 8:1 (ESV) You have set your glory above the heavens.

Psa 19:1-4 (NIV) The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. (2) Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. (3) There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. (4) Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun,

- A. How loudly the heavens shout out the glory of their creator
- 1). In an ever increasing volume – as Hubble sends back more and more deep space photos
 - a). Scientists have estimated there are up to 200 billion galaxies in the universe
Our galaxy the “Milky way” – a baby – 2 billion stars and 100,000 light years across
 - 1a). A light year is how far light travels in a year = almost 6 trillion miles
 - 2a). So the milky way is 6 trillion times 100,000 – my calculator just said “E”
 - b). The Hercules galaxy is 1.5 million light years across
- B. The observable universe is estimated to be a diameter of 92 billion light years

Now consider this verse: Isa 40:12 (NIV) Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, *or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens?*

- 1). Remember that next time you look up – learn to measure your problems by that truth
 - a). They seem big to you they are miniscule to him – He is able
 - b). I’m always amazed at how he arranges things – works things out – again and again

Thought: With all that immensity in mind – did you notice how David inspired by the Spirit puts this **Ps 8:1 (ESV)** You have set your glory *above* the heavens.

- A. His glory is greater than the heavens – the heavens fall short of declaring how great He really is
 - 1). They are a magnificent showcase but a mere whisper of His majesty
- B. One day we will be with Him and gaze upon His blazing glory in all of its majesty
 - 1). A glory so great it is enough to thrill us for all of eternity – it will never grow old
 - 2). A glory so great that I think it will take all of eternity to fully comprehend it
 - a). As we continually see new layers – understand new dimensions

Transition: His greatness is seen in the earth and heavens

3. His greatness is seen in how he uses weak instruments for mighty deeds

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

- A. David says God can take the weakest things – a baby and defeat his foes – how easy it is for God
- B. This is the way it’s always been – God gets glory by using weak vessels to do mighty things
 - 1). Gideon’s army – 300 men route the Midianite forces of 135,000
 - 2). Little David defeats the giant Goliath
 - 3). Jonathan and his armor bearer send the Philistine army running

- a). Why because these men were mighty? No! Because the God they trusted in is!

J. Hudson Taylor: All God's giants have been weak men who did great things for God because they reckoned on God being with them.

- 1a). They looked away from themselves – their strength – talents – abilities
They focused on him who has no weakness – him who is able

- C. God chooses weak men and women like us

1 Cor 1:26-29 (NIV) Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. (27) But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. (28) He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things--and the things that are not--to nullify the things that are, **(WHY?)** (29) *so that no one may boast before him.*

- 1). It has to be this way – if it wasn’t we’d all ruin the church – boasting about what we did
- 2). We’d all make heaven a horrible place – “You think that is good. Let me tell you what I did.”
 - a). But this way heaven will be filled with continuous praise – He used me! What grace!

- D. So God chooses and uses weak people – But there’s a problem – we don’t know we’re weak
Therefore God must do what is necessary to convince us - He can’t really use us until we see this

- 1). Paul the Apostle – so gifted naturally – a genius – Trained under THE rabbi – Gamaliel
- 2). But as gifted as he was – if he relied on that - he would never accomplish God’s purposes

Jn 15:5 (ESV) ...for apart from me you can do nothing.

- 3). So God did what He had to do to weaken Paul – so he’d learn to depend upon Him instead
 - a). God allowed a messenger of Satan to torment him! What! Doesn’t sound loving! It is

2 Cor 12:8-10 (NIV) Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. (9) But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for *my power is made perfect in weakness.*" **(Paul’s response. He saw it as great mercy)** Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. (10) That is why, for Christ's

sake, I *delight* in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. *For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

Listen to what he said earlier. Same thing: 2 Cor 1:8-9 (NIV) We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. (9) Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. **(Why did this happen?)** *But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.*

1a). God took him beyond his ability to endure not to be mean

It was to force him to rely upon God

Please listen: It is a great mercy when God sends anything that forces our eyes off self and onto Him

A. He is just moving you to a place of real power – real effectiveness – real victory - real life!

1). And for those He is able to do that with – they become powerful! Mighty weapons in His hands!

Transition: So God’s greatness is seen in the earth and heavens He created – in His ability to use the weakest of vessels to do great things – one more

4. **Seen in how easily He created and sustains the heavens**

Ps 8:3 (ESV) When I look at your heavens, *the work of your fingers*, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,

A. David knew from His Bible that God had created the stars above

I love how David puts it here (inspired by the Spirit) – how easy it was for God

1). The heavens are the work of your *“Fingers”* NOT your hands

2). The Bible speaks of God’s arm, it speaks of His hand and His fingers

a). There is far less power in a finger than an arm

b). To create those billions of galaxies God only needed a finger – light work!!!

B. Set in place = sovereign sustaining power – holding every star in its proper orbit

Thought: The universe as amazing as it is falls short of exhibiting all of His glory

The universe as immense as it is didn’t even tax His power when He created it – took a finger!

A. His hand spans it – holding it as easy as we would hold a baseball

Transition: As David sits and contemplates all this a question arises in his mind

II. **THE INSIGNIFICANCE OF MAN**

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

1. **In light of the greatness of God seen in the immensity of His universe**

A. David feels very insignificant – very small

He asks “What is man that you even think of him at all? Why would you even care? Why would someone as great as you ever waste His time on someone as trivial as me?”

B. David chooses a word to point out how weak, frail man is “Son of man” = *“Ben Adam” Son of Adam*

1). Descendants of Adam - made from the dust of the ground

2). Jesus uses this title in the NT but David is not referring to Him here

a). He is thinking about weak man descended from Adam contrasted with Almighty God

Transition: So David says God why would you even care about man – the sons of Adam – me?

A. But he continues on in amazement and answers his own question “But you do! You're good to man.”

B. We could talk about a lot of ways God has been so good to us

1). From the beauty of the world He’s placed us in – the taste of food

2). I was saved in 78 – have watched His faithfulness – providing – caring

a). My life is a demonstration of personal weakness and a testimony to God’s faithfulness

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- C. But out of the multitude of ways God continually shows His care for man
 - 2). David talks about two: The *dignity* and the *dominion* God has bestowed upon man
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III. THE GOODNESS OF GOD

God Has Bestowed Dignity Upon Mankind

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

1. This verse is used for Jesus Christ in Heb 2:7 – He is the ultimate fulfillment of this

- A. But this Psalm is concentrating on man – sons of Adam not the Son of God

2. God has made them a little lower than the heavenly beings

- A. There's an interesting nuance here – Darwin who pioneered evolution said this about man
“Man is the most efficient animal ever to emerge on earth”
 - 1). IOW man is just a little higher than beasts
- B. God says “No!” Man is just a little lower than the heavenly beings”
 - 1). Darwin made man an animal – God elevated man giving him great dignity

Point: It is speaking of man being created in God's image

- A. It means there are certain characteristics that are like Him – though to a lesser degree – He is perfect
- B. And even though the fall has distorted that image – the marks of God are still impressed upon man
Even after the fall God says: Ge 9:6 (ESV) “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, *for God made man in his own image.*
 - 1). So every individual has value because they're created in image of their creator
 - 2). That's why that little baby in the womb should not have its blood shed – why?
 - a). Because it's not just a more efficient animal like evolution tells us
If it's just an animal - just an accident – then do what you want with it
 - b). But God tells us it is somebody made in His own image – therefore it has worth
- C. What does it mean to be created in God's likeness? Not physical – but things like this
 - 1). We are created with a moral sense of right and wrong – that is like God
 - a). That sets us apart from the animals – though the fall has distorted this – it's still there
 - 2). We are created with a mental likeness to God
 - a). We can reason and think like He does
 - b). We can communicate in complex terms
 - c). We are creative like He is
 - d). We are relational like He is

3. David marvels at this high dignity God has bestowed to lowly man

- A. Made in His image – why? Think of this! So that we can fellowship with Him! Enjoy Him

Q: What is the chief end of man?

A: Man's chief end is to glorify God, *and to enjoy him forever.*

- B. All these things find their ultimate fulfillment in fellowshiping with God
 - 1). God can't fellowship with a dog – it's to unlike Him – can't reason – can't express itself
But man has the capacity to commune with God – to be intimate
 - a). God designed us in such a way to be companions with him!
- C. Think of this - the relationship can become so rich – God refers to you as a friend
See that in Abraham: Jas 2:23 (ESV) and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—*and he was called a friend of God.*
 - 1). That's dignity! May we all draw so close to God that He not only calls us children but His friend!

- 2). **“Friend of God”** – I can’t think of anything greater – what a way to walk on this earth!

God Has Given Man Dominion

Ps 8:6–8 (ESV) 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.

1. This mirrors what God said after the creation of man – Genesis 1

Ge 1:27–28 (ESV) So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. **(There is the first blessing – dignity)** ⁽²⁸⁾ **(Now the second blessing – Dominion)** And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

- A. Man rules over the animals – Genesis 9 “after the flood” God put a fear of man in the animal

- 1). To enable man to have dominion over something as powerful as a horse

2. That dominion extends into other areas

- A. One writer brought up an interesting point – how this God given dominion might look today

David’s day man’s dominion was displayed in his power over animals, power to domesticate and tame them and turn them to his use.

Today man’s dominion is demonstrated in his ability to subjugate the forces of nature. The atom smashers have unleashed and harnessed the energy of the universe. The code breakers have unraveled the mysteries of dna and rna. Psychologists have explored the workings of the human brain. The marks of man’s genius are everywhere despite the fall.

- 1). God is still giving him dominion – still enabling him to conquer – to invent – to create

- a). The scientist in the laboratory coming up with new medicines is God’s common grace

His blessing to mankind – You should thank God every time you take a Tylenol

- 1a). God gave man that ability to mix the proper chemicals etc.

That ability to invent all the tools necessary to do that lab work

- B. God may have given you a greater dominion – more influence in your company

- 1). The Pastor whose ministry has been enlarged – the evangelist who has been effective

- 2). The entrepreneur whose business is growing

- 3). The organizer who is known for that great giftedness and is now in demand

- a). That’s all an enlarged dominion isn’t it?

Thought: Be careful you don’t get proud! That you remember the ability to do that comes from God

1 Co 4:7 (ESV) ...What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

- A. That brilliant mind of yours – who gave you that? To grasp those college classes – earn that degree

- B. That ability to make wealth – your brilliant financial moves – where did that come from

Dt 8:18 (ESV) ...remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth...

- C. Pastors who get compliments on their teaching – should never forget why?

- 1). God gave you the words to say

And if they are effective it is only because the Spirit infused them with His power

AND gave those listening understanding

James sums all this up nicely: Jas 1:17 (ESV) Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights...

- A. Since it comes from Him we should be praying how to use it for Him – serve Him with that giftedness

Transition: So David looks at the greatness of creation and sees a greater God behind it

- A. He sees God’s glory in the earth and the heavens He created

He sees His power in His ability to use weak vessels to do great things

He's amazed at how easy it was for Him to create the immensity of the universe – Finger work

- B. This makes Him feel small and insignificant so he asks – who is man that you'd care about him?
But he answers his own question – You are mindful – You do care about man!

1). So we get this wonderful balance when we think of God – *He is great and He is good*

a). That is fantastic – this great God will use that power for our good

Ro 8:28 (ESV) And we know that for those who love God *all things work together for good*, for those who are called according to his purpose.

b). David points out two ways that goodness is seen – *Dignity* and *Dominion*

CONCLUSION

1. He concludes the Psalm like He began it. What else need be added?

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

ONLY God is great! But God uses that greatness for man's good!

2. Let me finish by asking - Do you know Him?

A. May today be the day you surrender to His love if you've been fighting against Him

1). The day you finally give up – and simply ask Him to do what you can't do for yourself
Save you from your own sins and the guilt they have earned

2). If you'll do that – today God will become your Father rather than your judge
And heaven will become your home rather than hell

a). I pray today will be the day of your salvation