

Argument: David sitting and tending his sheep scans the sky above him and is overwhelmed by the majesty and greatness of God. As he contemplates he thinks of His glory as seen in what he made on earth and the skies above, in the way He does powerful deeds through weak vessels and in how easy it all is. When I look at the heavens, the work of your fingers.

David then ponders the insignificance of man. Why would a God as mighty as this even care? Why would He waste any time at all in even thinking about him. Yet David concludes, He does think of him. He has been so good in so many ways and David points out two. God has given man dignity, creating him in God's own image and God has given man dominion over all things on earth.

STUDY

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 man
 - It humbles man by showing the greatness of God
 - It comforts man by reminding us this great God is good

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 is addressing God here and uses two different words translated Lord

- A. First Lord – translated all caps “LORD” is the name of God we think “Yahweh”
 - 1). I say think because the Jew considered that name so holy – they wouldn't write it out
 - Because 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 ord – is Adonai = Master or ruler
 - 1). It emphasizes God's sovereign authority over us – and what our response to Him should be

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. God's excellence is revealed in every corner of the earth

1). 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 all the time – “Let me see your handiwork in your creation! Don't let me walk through this life blinded to your glory! Don't let me be deafened to the sermon your creation is shouting out about your greatness!”

B. Let me tell you a story – I hesitate – not all that manly – still it touched me

1). Years ago eating in restaurant next to bunch of ladies

One was talking about how much she missed her husband when he was gone on business

a). She said she'd wear his shirt because it smelled like him – cologne

2). That night I took a prayer walk through the neighborhood and passed a gardenia bush in bloom

a). It struck me – that is the cologne of God! These things are here to remind me of Him!

Point: There are so many things we blindly walk past that could be pointing us to Him

A. The cry of every newborn! The beauty of flowers! Trees. Birds soaring in the air

B. Example when thunder roars – Scripture declares it is the Lord thundering from heaven

Scripture says the trees clap their hands for God! What! Then I heard it – wind blowing – leaves slapping

[His greatness is seen in the earth](#)

2. His greatness is seen in the heavens He created

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

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

2). Go look at the Hubble site and see how great God

a). There is a shot there that looks like a star field – 1000's of stars blanketing the photo

1a). Then you read that every one of those bright spots is another galaxy

3). 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?*

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. Then I thought of this - One day I will be with Him and I will gaze upon His blazing glory in all of its majesty
 - 1). A glory so great it is enough to thrill me for all of eternity – never growing 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
- C. Paul said “To die is gain” – Why? Because we go to be with Him!
 - 1). That is why I say the grave has now become our servant to take us into glory! What a future!

Transition: His greatness is seen in the earth and heavens

3. His greatness is seen in His ability to take weak instruments and accomplish 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). David defeats 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 was!
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.
- C. Weak men! This is who God chooses
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 heaven – boasting about what we did
 - a). This way heaven will be a continuous praising of God – 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 how weak we are - so He can use us
 - 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 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
 But he needed to learn to rely on God - we’re so independent that’s not easy

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 in – they become powerful! Mighty weapons in His hands!
- B. What a lesson for us: Who knows what God will do with us as a church if we just learn to depend upon Him and His strength rather than our own.

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!

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 and frail man is “Ben Adam” Son of Adam
 - 1). Descendants of Adam - Man 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

- 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 – Golden Retrievers
 - 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
- 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

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**

A. But this Psalm is concentrating primarily 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 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

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 - an accident - do what you want with it

b). God tells us it is somebody made in His own image – therefore it has worth

B. 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 have the ability to reason and think like He does

b). We have the ability to 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). Because God made man like Him! Designed to be companions with our creator

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 same thing is said of Jesus – but this is not the same thing as Jesus

A. How do I know? It tells me what God has given man to rule over

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- 1). Sheep and oxen, beasts of the field, birds of the heaven and fish of the seas
- B. This is what God said in Genesis 1:23 after the creation of man
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.”
- 1). Man rules over the animals – Genesis 9 “after the flood” God put a fear in them!
- C. 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
- D. 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 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*
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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 is 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