

God's Glory

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Preacher: Matthew Capone

[0:00] Good morning. My name is Matthew Capone, and I'm the pastor here at Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church, and it's my joy to bring God's word to you today.

If you are new or visiting with us, welcome. We're glad that you're here. And we're glad that you're here not because we're trying to fill seats, but because we are following after Jesus together as one community.

And as we follow after Jesus, we've become convinced that there's no one so good that they don't need God's grace, and no one so bad that they can't have it. And it's for that reason that we come every Sunday to look at God's word, because we believe that God has something to say to us.

And that's what we're doing now. If you have been with us, you know that we're in the book of Psalms. And as I told you last Sunday, we will not be in the book of Psalms for the next three years. We're in the book of Psalms through the end of the summer.

And then we're going to start a series on 1 Peter. So don't be afraid, even when you see these early number of Psalms. And if you know, there's 150 Psalms. So fear not. I've given you a lot of different categories to think about the Psalms.

[1:07] One of them is that they're the standard operating procedure for the Christian life. They give us the way to act when we encounter all sorts of situations and circumstances. I've told you that they're poems.

They make complicated things simple. They take things that maybe are hard to understand and they boil them down. I told you recently that they're also a guide to prayer. The Psalms teach us how to pray.

And we've seen all sorts of varieties of Psalms. We've seen Psalms of Lament. Those were some of the first Psalms that we looked at this summer. We looked at an imprecatory Psalm, a Psalm that prays for God's justice in Psalm 5.

We looked most recently, last week, at a penitential Psalm, a Psalm praying for God's grace and His forgiveness. And we're going to come to a new category of Psalm today.

New for the summer. We actually looked at it in December when we looked at the Psalms during Advent. And this is a Psalm of praise. And Psalms of praise introduce another category for us of what the Psalms do.

[2:03] So if you are a parent, one of the things that you want for your child is you want them to love and celebrate certain things. And you want them to grieve and mourn and hate other things.

And one of the things that's most heartbreaking is if you have a child and they love and celebrate things that you grieve. And they grieve things that you celebrate. So what you want to do as you're raising them and nurturing them and training them is you want them to grow in their emotions.

You want them to understand what's good and beautiful in the world. And you want them to love that. And you also want them to understand what's dangerous and terrible in the world. And you want them to grieve and stay away from that. And what the Psalms do for us, besides all these other things that we've looked at, is the Psalms shape our emotions.

The Psalms teach us what it is that God wants us to love and celebrate. And what it is he wants us to grieve and mourn. And that's what happens when we look at a psalm of praise, which is this Psalm 8 before us.

Psalms of praise are ones that talk to us about how it is and why it is that we love and celebrate God and what he's done. Now, praise is a difficult concept, I think, to wrap our heads around.

[3:14] Because it's not a word that I hear used outside of the church very often. And so sometimes it can feel like something that's maybe a little corny or cheesy when people talk about praise. But I'm going to submit to you today that praise is an essential part of being human, number

one.

And second, it's something that we do all the time. So if you're anything like me, anytime you buy something or purchase something, and it used to be when you purchased something online, but now it could even be when you purchase something in person, you're almost certainly going to receive an email.

And this email says, Sing praises to us. It doesn't actually say that. What it does say is, Would you please write us a review? And so every time someone sends you asking you for a review, what they're asking for is your praise.

And if you're like me, most of the time you ignore it because you don't have time to praise people's products online. You have more important things to do. But if it's someone or something that you really care about, someone that you have a personal relationship with, you do.

You want to praise them. So many of you know that I recently bought a house, and my realtor asked for my review. And of course, there was nothing I'd want to do more, right? Because I loved my realtor. And I thought she had done such a fantastic job and helped me in so many ways.

[4 : 27] And so the first thing I did was go and immediately write a song of praise. I wrote a review telling everyone how great my realtor is. And so praise is not something that's just for those inside of the church.

It's not just for Christians. Praise is something that's part of our lives. It's part of what it means to be human. C.S. Lewis, I mentioned this in December. When he first became a Christian, he struggled with praise. But then he came to realize, what we're talking about now, that this is something that's essential.

And he realized that people who do not praise, and he says this, are like people who've never been in love. They're like people who can't hear music. And they're like people who have never read a good book.

In other words, praise is what we do for anything that we care about. And so when God asks for our praise, he's commanding us to do what we would do for anything else. And yet he's much more worthy of our praise.

Now me explaining all of these things to you, and explaining how praise is part of our lives, does not make praise any easier. Praise is still a challenging and difficult concept. If you're like me, you don't necessarily wake up every Sunday morning, and your first thought when your alarm goes off is, I just can't wait until I can begin praising God.

[5 : 47] Now if you are one of those people, I'm glad for you. That's what God wants for all of us, and yet it's not something that's natural. We don't always find ourselves walking around in this world moved by praise for God.

And so that's why God's given us these psalms. All the psalms of praise are answering the question of why God is so great. And they're also helping us understand how it is that we can stir up our hearts that we're filled with love and praise for God.

I've talked a lot recently in previous psalms about having hope and trust and faith and confidence in God. These psalms certainly have that, but they're more about how we have love and celebration of God.

How do we stir up praise for God so we appreciate Him and understand His greatness more than anything else? That's what this psalm is going to present to us. I've talked also in the past, it's been a while, but about the importance of bookends in the Bible.

If you're reading a passage of Scripture and you see the same thing appear at the beginning and the end, Jesus does this in His parables sometimes, this is a way of saying this is the point of this passage. So I'm not going to bury the lead in Psalm 8.

[6 : 58] There's one point, it shows up in verses 1 and verse 9, very beginning and the very end, and it says, O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth. That's the bread to the sandwich of the psalm.

And everything else is going to help us understand why God's name is majestic. This is like, if we come across psalms of praise, because there's many of them, it's like different reviews of the same product.

If you go and look at something online, you might read many reviews, some of them are going to say the same thing over and over, so you understand this is very important about this product. Some of them are going to say different things.

You might have one review that gives you a special insight. Same is true with the psalms of praise. Same is true with Psalm 8. It's going to tell us some of the things we saw in December, and it's going to tell us new things as well. It's going to help us understand why God is worth our praise. And what we can do, even when we don't feel like praising God, to stir up our love and our celebration of Him. And so it's with that question that we come to this psalm, and this psalm is going to answer it.

[8 : 02] It's going to tell us how it is, why it is that we praise God. And so with that introduction, we're going to read Psalm 8. I'm going to read it. You're welcome to follow along in your worship guide.

This is printed near the end of your worship guide. You'll also find it in your Bible. You might be able to find it on your phone. And remember, as we come to this portion of God's Word, that God tells us that His Word is more precious than gold, even the finest gold.

And He tells us that it is sweeter than honey, even honey that comes straight from the honeycomb. And so that is why we come week after week to hear what God has to say.

That's why we're going to start now in verse 1. Verse 3.

Verse 3.

[9 : 31] Verse 9. I invite you to pray with me as we come to this portion of God's Word.

Father in heaven, we thank you again that you have given us your Word. You haven't left us to try to figure out what is good and right and what is evil and bad in this world on our own.

You haven't left us to walk by ourselves, but instead you have given us your Word. You've spoken to us so that we would understand and know.

You're like a good Father who wants to shape us and teach us what to celebrate and also teach us what to grieve. We ask that you would do that now as we look at Psalm 8, that you would help us, that you'd send your Spirit, that we would be able to see and understand and believe everything that you've written for us in your Word.

We ask this not because we deserve it or have earned it, but because Jesus deserves it and has earned it for us. And so we ask it in His name. Amen. I have mentioned before that I had not been ever into the state of Colorado until 2016 and that was just on the way on a road trip out to Utah to see the national parks out there, especially Zion National Park.

[11 : 14] What I have not told you about that trip is that we made a detour on the way back and the detour was to be able to visit the Grand Canyon. We didn't have much time, but everyone on the trip thought we would be making a serious and grave error if we did not at least stop by for a couple hours.

We're within striking distance of the Grand Canyon. We've never seen it. We have to make sure we're there. So we just dropped by for a little bit. We showed up on the south rim and if you've been there, you know you go out and you look across layers and layers of rock and there's many things going on when you look at these layers.

Some people are looking with you. Some people are taking selfies. Some people are on their phones. But as I stood there and I looked out across the expanse of the south rim and I saw layers and layers of rock that went down for miles, there was only one thing that I could think and it's that I felt very, very, very small.

I did not feel like a great or significant person in the world. I didn't feel like I had tremendous influence or power.

Instead, I realized I am a small little ant on the side of this great canyon. That's exactly what the psalmist is telling us in verses 3 and 4.

[12 : 48] Why is God's name so majestic in all the earth? By the way, this word about majestic, this glory that we're told about in verses 1 and 2, this strength, is saying what we've seen before, that God is a great king.

It's easy to have a truncated theology where we just think of God as our redeemer and he certainly is that. God brings salvation.

He redeems us from sin. The psalms also remind us that he is not just our redeemer but our king and our creator. And so as we're looking at how and why we praise the king, the first thing the psalmist does is he looks up at the heavens.

Verse 3, he's not looking at the Grand Canyon. More likely, he's sitting out in a night sky looking up at all the stars that God's created and as he looks at the creation, he's not touched by light pollution

in the way that we are.

All he can do is feel very, very small. Verse 4, what is man that you are mindful of him and the son of man that you care for him?

[13:58] God is the great creator. He is so great and so powerful that he can make things like the Grand Canyon and that is nothing compared to making the constellations and the stars and the universe.

And yet this great God, verse 4, still is mindful and cares for small, little humans. This great God still cares and is mindful for small, little humans.

God's greatness shows us how great his love is. It's one thing for another person in this world to love us and care for us.

That's glorious in and of itself. It's even more amazing that someone so powerful as God would also care for us and love us.

One of the moments of praise that the Psalms hold out over and over again is God's creation. That God uses his world, the world around us that he's made to stir up our love and our appreciation for him.

[15:16] Because it reminds us of two things as it reminds the psalmist here. First, that God is so great. He's so great that he can make the heavens and the earth. And second, he's so loving.

Despite our smallness, God still delights to care for us and provide for us. Despite our smallness, God still delights to care for us and provide for us.

The creator of the universe cares intimately for us. God still does not. God still does not. God still does not. I had a professor in seminary who did what many people do, which is come out to Colorado on vacation.

In fact, when I moved out to Colorado and I started telling people this is where I'm going, I had so many folks tell me, I'm incredibly jealous. That's where I go for vacation. You're going to get to live where I only get to spend a week or two every year.

And so this professor had been out in Colorado in the Rockies over the summer and he came back to St. Louis, hot and muggy and flat. And he said that he and his wife would go out hiking in the mountains.

[16:27] And there came one point as he looked out at the Rockies, he began to cry. And as he began to cry, he thought, the God who made these mountains also knows my name.

The God who made these mountains also knows my name. And he was out at the beauty that we take for granted here. He was moved to tears.

Why is God's name majestic in all the earth? His name is majestic in all the earth because he not only made the mountains, but he also knows our name.

And so if you're struggling, like many of us, if not all of us, to praise God, to be filled with a sense of God's power and his wonder, one of the things God asks us and commands us and tells us to do is to look at his creation.

Let the natural world remind you of God's power and his care. As you drive west and look at the front range, you can remember that the God who made those mountains knows your name.

[17:53] If you're struggling to remember God's greatness and his power and his love, go outside. God's creation for the Christian, God's creation is important for our spiritual lives.

It is spiritual to go out into nature and recognize everything that God has done and made. If you think you are somebody or something, God's creation will quickly put that into perspective for you.

If you think you are big, go to the south rim of the Grand Canyon and then you can feel small.

Memorize Psalm 8.

When you're outside, repeat it to yourself. Repeat it with your family. When you're driving and you look at everything that God's made, remember, 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.

The psalmist here is literally looking at literal stars and it helps him get in touch with reality, what's most true in the world. There's many times in the afternoon, you know, we are about a mile away from Cheyenne Meadows Park and the walk from here to Cheyenne Meadows Park is a walk from the south to the north.

[19:17] And so there are many times in the afternoon where if I need a break I'll walk out of the church and I'll walk to the park and I'll walk back. And now I live in a house that's close to the park

as well and so sometimes I'll do that too.

I'll walk from there to the park and I'll walk back. And I can remember that whatever the reality of my emotions are in that moment and whatever the reality of my circumstances are, whatever's going on that day, I look up in the mountains and I realize that despite the reality of my emotions or my circumstances, the world has not fundamentally changed.

the mountains are still there. God is still in control and He still cares for me and He is still mindful of me.

That is why His name is majestic in all the earth. Now some of you might be thinking I don't need to believe in God to enjoy the creation.

And if you're thinking that you would be correct. There are many people who do not worship God who enjoy His creation. And so you might be thinking why is it that I need to praise God I can enjoy this without Him.

[20 : 41] Well first of all yes you can certainly enjoy someone's work without giving them credit. However it's borderline theft.

There's been a scandal recently with Amazon.com where there have been people putting fake books online, counterfeit books that look exactly like the originals. People order them they read them they enjoy them they get content out of them and no money goes to the author.

The money goes to someone else. Don't give God's money His praise to someone else. Second Jesus tells us in Matthew chapter 5 that the sun rises on the evil and the good and the rain falls on the just and the unjust.

everyone enjoys the goodness of God's creation. However not everyone will enjoy the goodness of God's creation forever. Not everyone will enjoy the goodness of God's creation forever.

But only those who have faith in Christ. Part of what we long for and look forward to in our eternal life life. Some people think that it will be something boring.

[22 : 06] But it in fact will be what C.S. Lewis tells us about in the last battle the last book of the Narnia series. It will be like this earth but even better.

Like this creation but even more glorious. The phrase of the characters used in that book is that they keep going further in and further up. If you think God's creation is glorious now just wait.

If you think God's creation is glorious now just wait. Now we don't just praise God because of his creation because he cares for us.

That's verses three and four. But we also have verses five through eight. We don't just praise God for his glory. We praise God because he's allowed us to participate in it.

The psalmist here is hearkening back to Genesis one and two when God gave mankind all of mankind the job of caring for the earth. He gave everyone a job which was to fill the earth and subdue it.

[23 : 14] He gave real authority to mankind. So when we do our job well the earth flourishes. creation flourishes the world flourishes civilization flourishes.

When we do it poorly civilization and creation suffer. And God holds us accountable for how we do this how well we take care of his creation. Yet this is also a moment of praise for the psalmist.

He praises God because God allows human beings these small tiny people who are nothing in comparison with God and his creation to actually be small kings.

You notice in verse 1 God is majestic and he has glory. Verse 5 This same God has given man glory.

You have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. In other words this great king has allowed mankind to operate as a lesser king as a regent.

[24 : 17] In the ancient world often what always happens is you would have an emperor who was over a great civilization and he would have provinces or areas that would be far far away from where his throne was.

And so he would send a representative sometimes you might call this person a vice regent and this representative would represent the name of the emperor in that place. He would represent the emperor to the people who were under him and he would represent those people who were under him back to the emperor.

The psalmist praises God because God has allowed us as mankind to represent God to this world. When we build and create civilization we are representing God to the creation.

And then he has also allowed us to represent the creation back to him. And so when we praise God we are praising him ourselves we are also praising him on behalf of this entire world.

And the psalmist is moved by the fact that God has made it wonderful and glorious to be human.

He's given us the wonder and the glory of building civilization.

[25 : 32] He's giving us the wonder and the glory that comes from being able to raise children in the next generation. He's given us the wonder and glory of building cities. He's given us the wonder and the glory of creating institutions.

He's given us the wonder and the glory of exploring his world and discovering new things. He's given us the wonder and the glory of taking things that are chaotic and bringing order to them.

The psalmist praises God because God has crowned us, he's crowned humanity with glory and honor. He has made it wonderful and amazing to be human.

And so as the psalmist goes about enjoying his work, everything good that God has made in this world but also everything good that God has given him to do, he realizes that the joy that comes from work, the joy that comes from building and creating things whether it's families or institutions or societies is a joy that God has given.

It's a privilege that we do not deserve. God does not need us to run this world. And so we praise him because he's chosen to give us that responsibility.

[26 : 49] God does not need us to run this world and so we praise him because he's chosen to give us that responsibility. That is why the psalmist can say, O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth.

We praise God because he's glorious. Part of his glory is revealed in his care for us. verses 3 and 4 and the dignity that he gives us.

Verses 5 through 8. His glory is revealed in the care he has for us. Verses 3 and 4 and the dignity he gives us. Verses 5 through 8. Now this psalm, like all the rest of the psalter, continues from God's people in the Old Testament, Israel, to God's people in the New Testament, the church.

I mentioned when we looked at Psalm 1 that it was quoted or alluded to more than any other psalm. Psalm 8 is also high on the list of psalms quoted in the New Testament.

And what the New Testament authors do over and over again is they apply this psalm to Jesus.

And they apply it to Jesus in several ways. First, O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth.

[28 : 05] that name, that praise, also belongs to Jesus. We don't just praise the Father, but we also praise the Son. Second, it's through Jesus that God shows his care for us ultimately and finally and fully.

So we saw in verse 4, God is mindful of us and he cares for us. He's mindful of us and he cares for us. Even before sin entered the world, he was mindful and cared for mankind in Genesis 1, but he showed his kindness and his care how much and how great it was by continuing to care for mankind and be mindful of him even after he failed in the job that God had given him, even after he rebelled.

God's care is revealed for us by the fact that he sent his Son to die for us and pay the penalty for our sins to take the punishment that we deserved so that we could continue to enjoy God and praise his name and live in the world that he created.

And so God's care and his mindfulness is shown most of all in Jesus. Jesus reveals God's care. But Jesus also fulfills and completes and accomplishes the job that God gave us. He didn't just take the penalty for our sins, but he did what we were not supposed to do, what we were supposed to do, but failed in doing.

[29 : 33] We read Hebrews chapter 2 as our New Testament reading. If you were paying attention, you know that that Hebrews chapter 2, it's in your worship guide, directly quotes this psalm.

And it tells us a couple things after it quotes them, quotes it. It says in verse 8, In other words, Psalm 8 is idealistic.

It is not true that the entire world is under subjection to us. We still have verse 2, there are still foes. And there are still things that we cannot control and subdue in this world.

Part of that's because of our own sin and failings. We've chosen to destroy the world that God gave us rather than care for it. Part of it is because of our lack of power and ability.

We are not able, we have not yet subdued every animal in the world. We do not have control over the fish of the sea. And the author of Hebrews tells us then in the next verse, verse 9, okay, so

verse 8, not everything is in subjection to us.

[30 : 44] This is idealistic. Verse 9, But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with what? Glory and honor because of the suffering of death so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

In other words, we don't see everything in Psalm 8 being true right now, but we do see Jesus.

Jesus. We don't see everything in Psalm 8 as being true right now, but we do see Jesus.

And so the hope that is put forward in Psalm 8, the reasons that we praise God are incomplete now, but complete in Christ. In other words, we don't see all things under subjection, but when Jesus comes back in his second coming, we will.

And in his first coming, he has already put all things under subjection. Death has been conquered.

That's part of what we saw in our preparation for worship in 1 Corinthians.

It's been put under his feet. It's the same language that comes from Psalm 8. And so we praise God, we tell him that his name is majestic in all the earth, and we do it because of his care for us.

[32 : 08] His care is shown for the fact that he thinks of us and moves towards us, even though he's the great creator. We also praise him for the dignity that he gives us.

He doesn't need us to be his representatives in this world, and yet he's chosen us to do it. And we can have love and celebration of God because we know all of these things are true.

We know they're true because of Jesus, that he reveals and demonstrates and seals God's care for us. And even as we fail to achieve the dignity that God has set out for us, Jesus achieves it for us.

And so we look to him and hope in him. We love him and we celebrate him. And most of all we say, oh Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth.

Please pray with me. dear Father in heaven, we confess that your name is majestic, that you are worthy of our glory and honor.

[33 : 13] We also confess that we struggle sometimes to have love and praise for you. And so we ask that you would remind us of your care for us, and you remind us of the dignity that you've given us, and that you would use it to stir up love and affection for you as we follow you with faith.

We ask these things not because we have earned them, but because Jesus has glory and honor in the name above all names because he's earned them for us. And so we ask it in his name.

Amen.