

How Majestic is Your Name

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Date: 06 June 2021

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[0 : 0 0] privilege. I think that's right. Correct, Mr. Moderator. Point of personal privilege, I bring greetings to you from one of those upstart little churches. In all seriousness, we are thankful for y'all's ministry here. We have benefited greatly at Westside from the blessing that it has been to share your resources, your buildings, your time, your sessions time. We are thankful for that, and we have benefited from that. I say we because I'm part of that congregation, but I'm also in the army. I'm a chaplain in the army after I was an assistant at Westside, and I want to thank y'all for the sacrificial ministry it is to invest in the lives of people that work across the street, because oftentimes you sow and don't see the reaping of that. But when you see those people years down the road, and maybe some of them will come back here, you'll see the reaping of that, because the gospel will go forth, maybe not here in Colorado Springs, but all around the world, whether that's here in the United States or in Germany or Afghanistan or Iraq or Syria. And for that, you should be thankful and you should be encouraged because the gospel is going forth in places that are very dark in this world. And so I want to thank you for that because I've benefited from people from this congregation in that regard. We're going to turn our attention now to God's word from the Old Testament. If you have your Bibles, you can turn with me to Psalm 8.

Psalm 8 is the text this morning. O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. You have set your glory above the heavens, out of the mouths of babies and infants. You have established strength because of your foes to still the enemy and the avenger. And 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, the son of man that you care for him? Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. And you have given him dominion over the works of your hands. And you have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen and also beasts of the field and the birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the pass of the seas. O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. Amen. Let's pray. Lord, we are thankful this morning that we have the great honor to read your word, to see it and study it. We pray that you might speak now through it.

And we pray these things in Christ's name. Amen. So I'm from North Carolina. So don't take this as an offense if you're from this place, but there's a place in rural Western Virginia, not West Virginia, that sits at the mouth of the Shenandoah Valley, which is a place full of history, Civil War battlefields, majestic beauty of God's creation. But at the mouth, there's this place that for a while, Windows 95 and 98 and Vista and all that had as a screensaver that was preloaded. It's natural bridge, Virginia. And it's a great natural piece of beauty that is a rock bridge. And people, as they traveled to the Shenandoah Valley, would drive through it. But before it was a place of screensaver lore, before it was a state park, it was owned by a family. And they wanted to capitalize on the fact that all of these people went to go visit this place that they saw on their computer screen. So what did they do? They said, I know what we can do. We'll take this and we'll capitalize on it.

And we'll put something here that will draw people in and make them pay money and we'll get rich. So what did they do? They contacted a sculptor that lived down the road named Mark Klein. And they said, hey, we want a diorama as people drive through of all these historic battles that have happened in this place. And so Mark set to work. But what did he give them? He gave them not a drive-through diorama of silver battlefields. He gave them a replica of Stonehenge. Now, why did he do that?

He said, because when I made Stonehenge out of styrofoam, it was a lot cheaper and easier to build than what they wanted. It took the Druids 1,500 years to build Stonehenge, but I did it in 10 days.

[4 : 43] So there's a sense in which when people drive through this road in the Shenandoah Valley, they happen upon Foam Hinge. Foam Hinge is a real representation of Stonehenge. It's exact in its dimensions. It's exact in the way the rocks face or pieces of styrofoam face. Because Mark Klein, took that amount of precision, and he went and actually studied Stonehenge to create this representation of the reality. So there's a certain amount of awe when you go visit it.

How could somebody even build this? There's a sense in which this is actually Stonehenge, the same dimensions, the same positions, exactly the same, except it's not in England.

It's in the Blue Ridge Mountains out in a field. Now it's since been moved, but if you'd like to visit it, somewhere in Northern Virginia. But Foam Hinge is a dim reality of something that's true, something that has glory, something that's real, just like us as humans. We have glory. We don't like to talk about that in the Reformed Church, and that's okay normally, except for when we come to texts like this. Because there's a certain amount of glory that humans have because they're created in the image of God. So this morning, we're going to talk about those two glories. We're going to talk about God's glory, and that our glory is humans because we reflect God's glory. And then it's bookended in this section by praise to God. So if you have your Bibles, turn with me to Psalm 8, because we're going to spend a lot of our time going back to the text this morning. Let's start with that praise. We're going to start, as this text goes, we're going to start with the praise of God, and then it's going to flow to God's glory, our glory, and then come back and tie it all together with praise to God.

If you spend some time in the Psalms, and I know that you guys have had over the last couple years, you're going to start to notice something that happens over and over and over again. A pattern is going to spring up. And one of those ways in which individual Psalms are written, they're written in a way that we can't quite put our fingers on, but we can feel it. And I say that as someone who's generally unemotional. There's something that we can feel in the text, and it's almost more appropriate to sing them as we've just done. There's something that sings songy about them, or maybe even rap them, because they're lyrical. When you think of the Von Trapps and the sound of music, they flow instantly from story time into singing. That's exactly how we should feel with the Psalms, because the way the truth is presented, it goes from God's nature, all these big things about theology, and then it flows naturally into praise about who he is and what he has done. That's exactly what is going on in the

Psalms, and that's exactly what's going on here. If you don't see it in this text, think of something like Psalm 1. There's a certain cadence to it. Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners. It flows. But if you can see it here, and one Old Testament scholar has said, if you're ever going to write a hymn, make sure it looks like Psalm 8, because this is the pinnacle. It is the unsurpassed example of what a hymn should be, because there's praise, there's doctrine, and there's kind of confession about who we truly are and who God has actually made us to be.

[8 : 27] The opening lines of this hymn are praise to God. It starts in verse 1, where it starts with his name. What does it say? His name. Oh Lord, our Lord. But what's in a name? Are names actually that important? Earlier, I was talking with a gentleman, and he's made a remark about my son's name, because my name's Andy, and his name's Amos, and there's a famous radio show that was about our names.

But when we have those names, when we talk about names, what do they mean? Does it mean the radio show, or something different? Names have meanings, though. It's not like in Romeo and Juliet, where they're trying to get past their family names. What's in a name? They don't want all that baggage, just like we don't want to be the radio show. We're something different. But names are really important in Scripture. In fact, names are everything, and God's name is no different. This name here, in the original, is his covenant name, Yahweh. He's saying that, the psalmist is saying, you, Yahweh, your Lord. It's this name, that exact name that's uttered all throughout redemptive history.

It starts in the beginning, even when Israel is disobeying and is sinful. That name is used. That name is what this psalm begins with. That name is the name that's confessed when Israel forgets who they are in the desert, in the Exodus. They forget who he is. It's that name that solidifies the covenant promises of God to David about a king, about a king that would come that David wasn't, and David wanted us to look past him to look past him and see Christ. It's that name that was used. But in that name, there's also so much that comes with it. All these history of promises, all these history of disobedience on God's people's part. But God, in spite of all that, is communicating, even in that name, the kind of love that he has for his people, the love that looks like it never stops, never giving up, even though Israel is disobedient all throughout history. It's never giving up, unbreaking, always and forever. One of those kids' Bibles communicates God's love in those terms. And that is the picture that we have in God's name. But it's not just his name alone that we see in verse one. It's his name, and then there's an utterance. There's a confession of how majestic that name is because of his character. It's a name that is attended to with majesty. It's an acknowledgement that he is Lord.

He rules over all things, which we'll come to in a minute. But that name alone is majestic because of all those promises that were kept in spite of our disobedience, in spite of Israel's disobedience.

It's also ruling. He's Lord. He rules over all things great and small. He rules over all other names, all the other little fake gods that are out there that have no power. It rules over all things, all hopes, dreams, promises, all our failures, all of our sin, that we think they're corners of this earth in which God doesn't rule even in our own hearts. He rules over all of them.

[12 : 13] We should be comforted by that. We should be comforted by that fact, but we should also be challenged by that, that God rules over all those things. He rules over all created beings and beasts and humans. We see that in this text. All of life centers around him because he is the end of all things.

All things are working towards him and his glory. That's what this text is communicating. This psalm starts out with what's important in life. Notice who it doesn't start with.

It doesn't start with me and it doesn't start with you. It starts with God. Because in the midst of all of this, we get consumed in life. The busyness of life, kids, marriage, family, family, those are all good things. Our job, working for God's glory.

But God is the start of all of this. We must be reminded that he is shaping all of our lives around this central fact that God's glory is more important than anything else.

But what are we supposed to do with that as we start summer? As kids are out of school, are we supposed to sit back and relax and think about, hey, I just need to chill and rest until Labor Day comes? I confess like that's how my heart is most of the time in the summer. I'm ready to have some fun. There's nothing wrong with that. But we need to center our lives, even in the summertime, even when kids are out of school, around the fact that God's glory is more important and that all of life, even the summer, starts with God. The second part of verse one represents a shift for us.

[14 : 04] The fact that it's now transitioning from who God is and praise to his name to something different. You have set your glory above the heavens. That's the shift. It's a focus on God's glory exclusively.

It's not just praise. It starts with this otherworldly description of glory. It's like in 1 Kings, speaks in this way about it, that even the highest heavens cannot contain his glory. That's how big it is.

That's how big God's glory is. The psalmist is saying, think of the vastness of the heavens. Even when you're out in the Colorado mountains or the Hindu Kush and you can't see any lights at all, you see the glory of the stars that are unmuted because of the city. His glory is even more vast than that. But what should follow such a grand description of a king? Right? Armies, power, might, all of those things. A royal throne room. We have that picture from other places in scripture with scepters and weird beasts and all that stuff. Stuff that's kind of scary to me, if I'm honest.

All of those things bowing down in obedience to Christ. But what we have here is a much different picture. We have babies and infants. No royal pomp and circumstance. We have something that's different.

Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes to steal the enemy and the avenger. Not so regal looking, especially if you're in the throes of raising children or you've done that before. There's nothing regal about changing infants' diapers.

[15 : 55] There's nothing regal about disciplining kids in the grocery store. That doesn't seem fit for a king. But also, in the midst of this, God is demonstrating a couple truths to us. He's demonstrating that his name alone is so powerful that even out of the mouths of children, those things that are helpless, those babies and infants, that he has power just at his name. He doesn't need armies. He doesn't need displays of conquering nations. But his name in the mouths of children is sufficient. And that has more glory than all those other things. That those things he uses to work through. He uses instruments, secondary means to accomplish his glory. He also demonstrates that in that, his name was sufficient enough to destroy all his enemies. He doesn't need those armies because his nature is vast enough, is strong enough to defeat all those enemies. And his kingship is kind of twofold in that. He subdues these children and infants to himself, and then he protects them in the same way. Protects them from evil.

He protects his children. That's us, not just the babies. If that wasn't enough to demonstrate his power and glory, what else does the text talk about? Talks about his creative power. Read with me in verse three. 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, the son of man that you care for him.

His power in creating the world that we can see and experience through our senses testifies to this same thing. It's not just his nature that we know in his name, but we see it on display in all of the world. And we reflect that as God's vice regents, right? Ruling over our little things, subduing the grass and the weeds that grow in our yard, doing a good job at work. We see that. We mirror that.

This, though, has an echo of something else in scripture. When we read it, we should remind ourselves, we should hear Genesis 1, where we see God is the one that is active. God is the one in his activity that subdues all this, that creates all this. And how does he do it? He does it here through his fingers. Imagine if you were to create a mighty mountain, Pike's Peak behind us, right?

If you were to create all that, you would think you would have to do it with more than just your fingers. The psalmist here is capturing the fact that all of this that's on display, that's majestic, it's inconsequential. It's not even hard for him because he just uses his fingers to create it.

[19:07] That's a big God. It's a big God that's working throughout history. And that's what the psalm is doing. It's showing us as we walk through Israel's history, as we walk through history in the modern day, we're going to some place. It's not all just happenstance. And so when we come to texts like this in the Old Testament, we have to think about how is this getting us to the end? What is this showing us about the central theme of all the Bible? How does it all fit together? So if the answer to that is Christ, and I think it is, how is this pointing to Christ? How is this showing us who Christ truly is? We see in Psalm 2 things like this promised king that David was supposed to be is fulfilled in Christ. But when we come to Psalm 8, it seems a lot about God and his creative powers, his glory, what he's doing in the world. So how does this point us to Christ? There's some texts in the Old Testament that point directly to Christ. And we can see that in its original context. But this does in a small glimmer. But then when Christ applies it to himself, we see that more fully. So turn with me if you have a Bible to Matthew 21. I know you guys are going to be working through the Gospel of Mark, and this is recorded in the Gospel of Mark as well. So Matthew 21, it's a familiar scene in verse 12 through 17. Jesus enters the temple, and he just starts sorting out the riffraff. He starts putting people aside because they're doing things that are evil. I'll pick up in verse 12. Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple. And he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. He said to them, it is written, my house shall be a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of robbers. And the blind and lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, the children crying out in the temple, Hosanna to Son of David. They were indignant. And they said to him, do you hear what these are saying? And Jesus said to them, yes, have you never read out of the mouths of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise? And leaving them, he went out of the city to Bethany and lodged there. Jesus is using Psalm 8 to answer the evil that is lobbied against him from the money changers, from the scribes and Pharisees, from those people who sought to oppose him.

The king that they had longed for, the king they thought he was going to be, was one that rode in with an army and just started schwacking all the Romans, putting them aside, defeating them in battle, but they got something different. They got something that they weren't expecting.

They got a king who spent time with people that were blind and lame, who didn't dismiss the children. They got a king that answered them with Psalm 8. He points them back to verse 2 in Psalm 8. The children were praising the covenant name of God in Psalm 2, or excuse me, in Psalm 8. And Jesus applies those words to himself. So whenever we hear in the modern day that Jesus is just a moral teacher, he responds differently. He says, no, I am God. He's applying that, this confession of who God is and his creative power and his vastness that's beyond the heavens, and he's applying it to himself. He's saying, I am that person. And then on top of that, the children are confessing this, whether they know it or not. Maybe they do. But what is it saying about the scribes and Pharisees, those people that sought to oppose him? It's saying, based in Psalm 8, that they are the foes and enemies of God. They are the ones that are opposing Jesus. They are the ones that are opposing God. Now imagine why that's so hurtful to them, why that's so pointed, why that digs at them. It's because they thought that they had the corner on the market of religious thinking, of religious doing. But Jesus is saying, no, you don't. In fact, you're not even faithful. You're not even neutral. You're actually an enemy of God. You're an enemy of me, and you're an enemy of this God that's in Psalm 8. It's not going to go too well for you.

Jesus is saying that he is God. And the victory that he has in his kingship doesn't look like what they wanted. In fact, his victory looks a lot like defeat. It's death on the cross.

It's a death that anyone could experience redemption. They simply had to put their faith in something other than themselves, not in their own being, but put their faith in Christ's work on the cross. The fact that he shed his blood as God and man for the redemption of sin, their sin, our sin. Just like us today, if we put our faith and hope in God, in Christ, in his work on the cross, then we can participate in the feast of the new heavens and new earth. We enjoy all the splendor on display. If that's not motivating to us, if that's not the center of our being, if that's not something that we see God's glory in, then we have to ask ourselves, what are we doing?

[25 : 31] Are we seeking out other things? Are we seeking out rest? Are we seeking out enjoyment and other things in this world? We need to turn away from those things. Maybe there are even evils in this world. Turn away from them and put our faith and hope and confidence in Christ. That's what this is calling us to. That's what Christ is calling us to in these words.

In Psalm 8, we have a pointing forward to Christ. And Jesus uses these words to point us back to the vastness of who God is, his nature and all that is going on. And we owe him praise because of that glory, because of who he is. His nature and his being require it. And the actions of God for all of Israel, and even in our own lives, testify to that. He could very well give up on us because we've disobeyed him, but he doesn't.

Even in all that, he's loving and kind. And he demands our worship because of who he is.

There's a famous American theologian named Jonathan Edwards. He wrote this. He said, the great end, talking about the purpose of all humanity, is God's work. The purpose of God's works is indeed but one. This one end is most properly and comprehensively called the glory of God.

That our lives as human beings, all things, the end is God's glory. That's the purpose of it all. Our lives should reflect that. But Edwards, he's cheating a little bit. All he's doing is taking the Westminster Shorter Catechism, question one, and he's expounding on it. What is the chief end of man? What is man's main purpose in life? To glorify God and enjoy him in the midst of that.

[27 : 33] Our response to God, to everything that we see on display in scripture and throughout this life, should be his glory. Glory in his name and his nature and his being. Glory because of what he's created and done. Glory in his kingly rule over us in all things. Glory because it's what he is owed.

Our view of that fact alone, of how we view God, affects how we live. It affects the decisions that we make from day to day. It affects what we do with our money, our time. It affects the fact that we get up on a Sunday morning and come here. We need to shape our lives around God's glory. Edwards went on and said this, that a believer is one who loves to attribute to the glory of God what he is and what he has and what he does. The believer delights in attributing, giving the praise of all that he has and all that he is and all that he enjoys to God and acknowledging it comes from him. You should see a theme in that, that our view of ourselves is affected most of all by our view of God. That we can't view ourselves rightly until we view God rightly. So how are we thinking this morning about how God has revealed himself and how that applies to us? Is that affecting what we want in life, what we view as success? Is it affecting our bank account, our time, what we put our hopes and dreams in? Our own name, like our family name. Some of you might have heard that grown up. I sure did. That my name is more important than God's name. That's not true. I want to bring honor to Christ. We should want to bring honor to

Christ, whether it is in parenting, whether it's in finances, whether it's in recreation. But when those things, even rest, even good things that God has ordained, when those things become ultimate things, that they're more important than God himself, then we miss the mark. We've exchanged good things with ultimate things. And when those, that happens, then we've missed the mark. We have to focus on God's glory, specifically as he's revealed himself in the person and work of Christ. Because all of redemptive history is marching to that point, are looking back to that. And we enjoy God's true glory.

No offense to Mr. Edwards, but this is far from an original thought. As we've seen, this is from Psalm 8. It screams out to us that God's glory is the most important thing in the world.

What often happens, though, in our own hearts is we mistake God's glory for our own glory. We've talked about that a little bit. And when we do that, we kind of get in trouble. Look with me at verse 4.

[30 : 42] 4. What is man that you are mindful of him? If we stop there alone, that's a good corrective to how we often think, even when we're Christians. And the son of man that you care for him, yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. Verse 4 represents a shift in this thought.

It's gone from God's glory now to focus on man's glory. It's a framework in which to view ourselves as human beings. But we have to view it in the framework that starts with God's glory. We're not so insignificant that God doesn't care. Yet you're not as important as you think. So cheer up. God is way more important than that. And in verse 4, there's this rhetorical question that why should he even care about man? But he does, is the answer.

He cares because he's made you, because you reflect his own glory. Underlying this question is the sense that God does consider us all more worthy than all that he has created. Look at verse 5. Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. We're crowned with glory and honor because we're made in his image. Out of reverence for God's holy name, the Israelites were really uncomfortable with certain things. And they were uncomfortable with this verse because they were comparing man to God. And they said, there's some translations that might have a little wrinkle in this and say, why we heavenly beings might be angels. So if you have like the NIV or another translation, it might be reflected in that. But they surely thought rightly that God's glory was more important than all of this. And we as humans reflect God's glory. And that's a good thing because it should point our hearts, it should lift our hearts to God. And reminder, in all of this, this is after the fall. This is after the fact that we know we're marked with sin. We still have God's glory.

We still reflect God's glory. We're still pointing to all of that. And the psalmist is still writing this because we've been crowned by another. We've been crowned by God. And part of that is ruling over creation. Look with me at verses six through eight. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands and you've put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, beasts of the field, birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas. All of that, all of God's authority and presence in which he rules over all things. We reflect that as we rule over creation.

And yet, because of sin, we get confused. We think that it's all about us. We think that God, like some cosmic genie, when we come rub the bottle, that God serves at our beck and call. The furthest, that can be the furthest thing from the truth. We serve God. We serve in a capacity in which he is trusted and enabled us to rule over these things. We are not served by God as a butler, but we're also not left to flounder without him. He is active and involved in the universe, not detached and uncaring.

[34 : 17] We are not at the center of the universe, but we also don't rule the universe alone. We rule with an authority that's been granted to us. And our obsession over ourselves kind of muddies the water on this. How should we respond? How should we respond to these great truths? That should bring us joy. That's great. I don't know how many of you guys are meme followers or enjoy memes. You know, those little pictures that people send? I'm not a meme user. My wife is. So occasionally, she'll chuckle at a picture that somebody has sent to represent reality. There's a famous meme. I don't know if it's the first meme, but there is a meme of a cat that had a very angry face. And that cat was tartar sauce of Morristown, Arizona. Now, her owner, Tabitha Bundanson, she invested all of her life in that cat, in this cat with a grumpy frown, like upside down smiley face. The cat, I'm not going to do the face because y'all laugh at me. But she quit her job in order to take care of her cat.

And the cat also, grumpy cat, tartar sauce was her name, also had a brother who had the same genetic defect. But she's world famous for that scowl. And so anytime my wife wants to communicate, or this is, I guess, a couple years now, she wants to communicate. She's angry. She sends me a picture of the cat with an upside down face. To communicate her scowl. As Christians, how do we respond to God's glory? Is our face responding like grumpy cat with a scowl? Do we look at texts like this, and are we so unmoved that we can't remove the scowl from our face? Or should we rejoice? Should we know that, yes, we are sinners, but God's grace is greater than that? That should cause us rejoicing. Should we rejoice in God's creative powers? Absolutely. That should change our physical countenance. We shouldn't be scowling.

Christians should most of all be moved by God's glory, and our subsequent glory of being made in his image. We should rejoice in that more than anyone. That's convicting to me. Whether you're naturally a little more melancholy by disposition, you see those people in life that don't understand these truths, but are joyful. We should, as Christians, be so moved by God's grace and the truths of who God is that we rejoice, that our physical countenance is changed. We must see our identity is not in who we think we are, but who God says we are. Even in my own sin, I know that God's grace is greater, and that is cause for rejoicing. That's cause for praising. That's cause for verse 9, a repetition of this.

Oh Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. Even in that, even in our sin, we can still confess that if we put our faith and trust in Christ. We're returning again to God's covenant name.

In this, we see that his nature of his love, his faithfulness to his people, despite their disobedience. We see this promise of a returning redeemer that we hope for, that's Jesus. Being so fully God that out of the mouths of babes and children, that it's powerful, that we might have everlasting life.

[38 : 17] That's the crowning message that's worthy of praise. That's what we celebrate. Can you confess today, oh Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name?

I pray that we can. Let's pray. Lord, we're thankful for this confession of who you are, that you are majestic, that you are mighty, that your name is above all names on this earth.

We pray that we might confess that. We pray that we might see ourselves rightly as being made in your image. as struggling through sin.

But Father, knowing that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, because of our repentance, our turning away from sin and putting our faith in Christ is greater, and that is cause for rejoicing. Father, we pray that might be true of our hearts.

We pray that might be true in our lives. Lord, we ask that you would bless our time as we turn our attention to your supper, where we remember what Christ has done on our behalf.

[39 : 35] And we pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.