



Central
Peninsula
Church

...to make and mature more followers of Christ

Glory & Honor

Psalm 8

Neal Benson

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series: Songs of Summer

The world around us is marvelous. The smell of flowers, the colors beaming in nature, the spectacular view from a high mountain peak. The earth is an ever changing canvas of color and texture that captivates our senses. *National Geographic* published a list of the top ten most visited National Parks in America; I want to share the top five with you this morning. The most visited National Park is the Great Smokey Mountains with over nine million visitors a year. The next is the Grand Canyon with nearly five million visitors a year; five million people flocking to see a massive hole in the ground. Number three on the list is Yosemite boasting Half Dome, Vernal Falls and much more. Then we have Yellowstone coming in at number 4, home to Old Faithful and wildlife flourishing. Finally we come to number 5, the Rocky Mountains, shooting up 14,440 feet high in the heart of Colorado.

Each year millions of visitors spend hours at their kitchen tables planning out their trips. Families spend hours on the phone to secure lodging, writing out precise grocery lists and calculating how long they can keep driving until their kids need a potty break. Young couples save up their vacation time to head out of state at just the right time to catch the beauty in the right season. Groups of college students save all summer long to pack a small car and venture out into God's creation.

Once they've arrived at the destination of choice the tent is placed in just the right location to capture the best view. Millions of pictures have been and will continue to be taken at these locations; people handing their camera to a complete stranger, hoping to get just the right shot. The picture may be on a Christmas card, a fridge or immediately on Facebook. No matter where the picture ends up, we have to agree there is something captivating about the world around us.

When was the last time you gazed upon nature with such awe that everything around you seemed to fade away? How can we gaze upon the beauty of nature but at the same time be aware of the fallen world around us? Have you stood on a mountain top, overlooking a lush valley or a crystal blue lake, and thought about how God formed the scenery you're gazing upon? Yet at the same time you can be consciously aware that a natural disaster could be right around the corner. What about the awe of sitting in the hospital holding a newborn baby while just down the street women are aborting their unwanted child. The reality

is we live in a fallen world while we long for the finer things of God.

This morning I want to invite you to look at Psalm 8 and let's see how David helps us walk in this tension. As you turn to Psalm 8 let me remind you about our Psalms of Summer series. We're nearing the end of a nine week series where we've been looking at the first nine Psalms. You may have noticed each of the psalms have a title, called a superscription. Often it tells us who wrote the psalm or how it was to be used in worship. Sometimes the superscription will tell us about the occasion the Psalm was written to accompany. Psalm 8 is for the director of music and "according to gittith." No one knows exactly what *gittith* is but it's probably a Hebrew musical term. Psalm 8 is the first psalm in this series that is a true psalm of praise, although it doesn't follow the typical structure of other praise Psalms. Up until now most of the Psalms we've studied have been Psalms of lament so either way it will be nice to stop whining and start praising.

Lord, our Lord,

how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory in the heavens.

Through the praise of children and infants

you have established a stronghold against your enemies,

to silence the foe and the avenger.

When I consider your heavens,

the work of your fingers,

the moon and the stars,

which you have set in place,

what is mankind that you are mindful of them,

human beings that you care for them?

You have made them a little lower than the angels

and crowned them with glory and honor.

You made them rulers over the works of your hands;

you put everything under their feet:

all flocks and herds,

and the animals of the wild,

the birds in the sky,

and the fish in the sea,

all that swim the paths of the seas.

Lord, our Lord,

how majestic is your name in all the earth!

God's Glory Displayed

David starts this Psalm out by praising God for who He is. David writes something we could easily overlook when he says "our Lord," personalizing our relationship with God. Here David personalizes his relationship with God calling God "our Lord" reminding us God wants to be in personal relationship with all of us. After personally calling on God, David begins by praising God for His seen beauty in all the earth. Just like we talked about the beauty in the National Parks, David is praising God for His majestic name. It's tough to grasp because his praise for God goes from tangible to abstract in one stroke of the pen. David begins with the earth, something we can touch and examine to God's glory in the heavens, something less tangible and more abstract. David had a keen eye for noticing God's majesty in the earth and deep sense of God's glory in the heavens.

No matter the proximity of God's creation David knew where the praise belongs. The Apostle Paul reminds us of this in his letter to the Romans. *"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse"* (Romans 1:20). Paul and David were able to articulate the fingerprint of God on creation. These men had an ability to look at the created order and see God's handiwork expressed. They didn't look at trees as trees or mountains as mountains but saw them as an expression of creative power. I bet if they knew the diameter of the earth was 7,918 miles they would have praised him for that also!

David moves from the entirety of the cosmos to the cries of tiny infants silencing the strongholds of our enemy. Honestly it seems like a huge gap to jump from the heavens to infants but that's what David's getting at here; the majesty of God is seen in both! If you're a parent you have probably marveled at the glory of God in your tiny infant. You have probably examined their tiny fingers and been amazed at the majesty of God displayed in your infant. You may remember Jesus actually quoted this Psalm to the Pharisees in the New Testament (Matthew 21:16). We are told children were praising Jesus in the Temple courts; shouting Hosanna and the Pharisees became angry He would accept such praise. At this point Jesus reminds them of Psalm 8:2. Of course this would have been quite a rebuke to the Pharisees because they would have been the enemies of God who are being silenced by the praise of mere infants, or children in this case.

Made in God's Image

We've seen David give some big picture reasons for us to praise God. Now let's look as David describes more reasons for us to praise God. As we study these next verses I need to put some context here. We think David wrote this Psalm later in his life but imagine David gathering the material for this Psalm as a young boy. Imagine David roaming the desert all day with his flock of

sheep. As they graze he grabs his soft leather sling and practices taking leaves off the big oak tree in the valley. Sweating all day in the hot sun he welcomes the cool dusk as he eats his dinner with his sheep surrounding him. As night approaches he fights his sleepy eyes from closing because he knows the show is about to start.

He's laying in the middle of the desert, all alone in the crisp spring air as the black sky begins to sparkle with tiny white stars far above. Thankfully this night there is no moon in sight; it's just the night David has been waiting for. Night after night David lays there, exhausted from tending sheep all day, but thrilled with the glory of creation. He examines the stars as they wander through the night sky and watches as the planets slowly become visible. The majesty of God keeps David awake long into the night as he thinks about how God placed every star in place. David looked forward to those uneventful nights where he lay under the stars contemplating the work of God.

The solidarity of the desert may have been too tough for some of the other shepherd boys but David longed for it; it gave him the opportunity to have conversations with his best friend. One night, while David lay there, he finally had the guts to ask: "God, you created the moon and the stars with your finger, but what is mankind that you are mindful of us, human beings that you care so much for us?" David figured it was a long shot to ask the question out loud, but with the moon lighting up the valley he had to ask his maker the ever important question, the question that shaped his identity.

Although the audible voice of God was never heard, David knew the answer in his heart, but you may not. God spent six days taking what was formless and void, turning it into the spectacular world around us. God took dirt, air, space and matter turning a hostile living environment into a place perfect to sustain life. After finishing His handiwork God looked around and noticed something was missing. It seemed God was finished but in reality, after six days of work, He was just getting started. The angels stood around watching, wondering what would He do next; what could be better than what is already here! The colors were vibrant, the shape breath-taking, the texture glorious, but it wasn't finished. In all the beauty of creation God knew it wasn't complete; something was missing. He knew what was missing. Man was a special order in creation; the only thing made in the very image of the creator: *"So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them"* (Genesis 1:27).

Let's look at that a little more. What does it mean to be created in the image of God? Obviously there is something different about human beings as compared to other mammals. Being created in the image of God means we bear His image. We're not an exact copy but image bearers of God. Theologians use a term called

"the communicable attributes of God." These are the attributes of God that are found in us: love, mercy, rationality and wisdom. This is not to assume we possess all the wisdom of God, but it is an attribute God has given us. This means God is love and we have the capability to love others also! This means God is creative and passed His creative ability onto us.

Now I'm not going to attempt to give an answer on the length of creation; there are men far smarter than me who frequently debate the subject. I'm not going to pretend I know the answer to the age of the earth either. The one thing I believe to be true in creation is: God did it. I don't exactly know how long it took, but I believe He did it. After all the nights laying in the field, looking at the cosmos, it appears David was convinced of the same thing.

Crowned with Glory and Honor

So far we've seen glory and majesty attributed to the Lord. We've seen God praised for His creative ability but in verse 5 David attributes God to crowning man with glory and honor. It appears David received an answer to his question; knowing the glory and honor God has given to man. It makes sense man would be crowned with glory and honor; after all, think about whose image he was created in. I believe there is a better translation for verse 5 than we find in the NIV. The NIV translates the Hebrew word "מַלְאֲכֵי ה' לְאֱלֹהִים" to be "the angels." The root of the Hebrew word is "elohim" which is always translated "God." I'm not sure why they chose to translate it to "angels" in this one place but I think it's a bad translation. I don't think man is lower than the angels but a better translation would confirm we are a little lower than God, since we're created in His image.

Not everyone knows man was created in the image of God; some people believe man evolved into the species he is today. Some people don't believe in a creator God but believe man walked out of the jungle. We probably all know someone who doesn't believe in God as creator. There are people in our communities who are confused about where they've come from and have chosen to base their value on what they have, not who they are. They are basing their value on their salary, their marriage, where they were educated, the size of their home or the car they drive. There are people in your office or students on your campus who are questioning the value of their existence and need to hear the truth of God.

When I was living in San Diego I had a friend who was struggling so badly with his value. He had a great group of friends, a loving family, a nice car, a great job and a beautiful home. On the outside it seemed like everything was great, but on the inside he felt like he was stupid and worthless. One night Michael hopped into his Volkswagen bus and drove down the freeway making his way to the Coronado bridge. Finding his way to the highest spot on the bridge Michael parked his vehicle. No one really knows exactly what happened next but Michael made a permanent

solution to a temporary problem. A few hours after leaving his house the police called his family to inquire about the vehicle left on the bridge. Michael's dad went into his room looking for Michael where, to his horror, he found the note. The phone call brought many tears, unanswered questions and disarray in his home. Later that night Michael's body was found in the bay. I went to Michael's funeral and it was my first close experience with suicide. How I still wish I could have had more conversations with Michael about a God who loves him. Michael was crowned with glory and honor and he never knew it.

One of the many things that really attracted me to CPC was Vision 2020. When I heard our vision of reaching more people who are far from God I wanted to be a part of that; I wanted to help. I'd say most of us have a Michael in our life; someone who is far from God, who is hurting on the inside but they haven't told anyone. My question to you is: How will you share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with this person? Will you take risk in your relationship to help them see they are created in the image of God and crowned with glory and honor?

Not only has man been crowned with glory and honor but God has given him dominion over creation. If you turn back to Genesis 1:28 you will see how God made man ruler over all creation. *"God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'"* It's actually quite shocking to think God would do something like this. God creates the earth, the plants, the seas, the stars and the animals and He just hands it all to mankind to rule over. He does this because we're created in His image. Far too often Christians talk as if they are just sinners who are worthless, dirty rotten sinners. The truth lies in verse 5 where our value is measured by our creator who created us just a little lower than Himself. Most people don't view themselves as being created a little lower than God, in fact most people think they are way below God and in fact we are. But we can stop trying to find our value in the car we drive or the neighborhood we reside. We can stop calling ourselves worthless sinners. This morning we can confidently praise God for being created in His image; just a little lower than Him.

Repetitious Praise

David started this Psalm praising God for His majesty and glory seen in the earth and the heavens above. He praised God for all His creative work in creation around us and even praised God for making man. David wants to make sure the worshippers will conclude with positive thoughts about God when he repeats the openly line of this Psalm at the conclusion. Without this repetition the worshipper could easily continue worshipping himself and fail to praise God; the intent of this Psalm. The Psalm of praise is literally bracketed with praising God.

Earlier in my message I mentioned how this Psalm doesn't follow the typical structure of a praise Psalm. Generally in a praise Psalm you're going to find a particular event the author refers to as a point of praise, but in this Psalm we find no such occurrence. For example Psalm 17 is titled "A prayer of David" or Psalm 51 was written for when David committed adultery with Bathsheba. In Psalm 8 David is reminding us: God's glory is displayed in the heavens, infants and human beings.

If we are honest, there is a disconnect from what David describes in this Psalm to what we encounter. Why is it we don't experience life as David describes here? We are created in the image of God, yet human beings are constantly fighting against each other. We are crowned with glory and honor yet our family members die of cancer in a fallen world. We are made just a little lower than God, but we can't seem to find our self worth in God.

A few years ago I was in a very unhealthy place in my life; I was spiritually empty. I took three weeks off in an attempt to get my life back in order. I was overworked, not spending enough time with my family, working on seminary full-time and trying to find my self worth in pastoral ministry. I stopped checking email and started praying again. I realized I was trying to find my value in what I did and not in whose image I was created.

This morning you may feel far from God or like your life has no value. The writer of Hebrews quotes a portion of this Psalm in reference to Christ: *"It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking. But there is a place where someone has testified: 'What is mankind that you are mindful of them, a son of man that you care for him? You made them a little lower than the angels; you crowned them with glory and honor and put everything under their feet.' In putting everything under them, God left nothing that is not subject to*

them. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to them. But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone" (Hebrews 2:5–9).

He reminds us God put everything under our feet but we don't see it yet because we live in a world ruined by the fall. If "at present we don't see everything subject to mankind" he must mean at one time we will see everything subject to mankind. In Genesis things were perfect but once Adam and Eve ate the fruit things changed. They became aware of their nakedness and were cast out of the presence of God. Before that day there was no death but after that day everything changed. If your life seems hopeless let me tell you about Jesus Christ, because He came to bring a solution to that problem.

Jesus Christ was made lower than the angels for a time. He made the choice to come to earth and pay a debt none of us could pay. He suffered for our sin, was charged as a criminal and nailed to a cross to pay the ransom for our lives. After His death He did something never done before—He conquered death; breaking the hold on the grave. After conquering death He spent 40 days on earth preparing His disciples for His departure. He currently sits on a throne next to God, where He is crowned with glory and honor.

This morning if you are struggling with your self-worth, just like I was, I want to invite you to place your trust in Christ. Will you let the glory of God be displayed in your life through salvation?

This manuscript represents the bulk of what was preached at CPC. For further detail, please refer to the audio recording of this sermon.