



Sermon Growth Guide

April 25, 2021

What David Knew - Creator

Psalm 8

Key Verse: Psalm 8:9

“Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!”

Big Idea: Creation sings of the majesty of Jesus.

Foundations

Our new series centers around King David seeing the character and care of Jesus.

This week we turn to Psalm 8. Psalm 8 sings of the majesty of God that is seen in creation. When our hearts are calm and we see beauty in creation, it is right and good to offer thanks to God.

When we acknowledge God in His creation we are receiving creation well.

When we embrace the natural rhythms of nature we are treating creation well.

And when we acknowledge and operate out of the image of God bestowed on everyone around us we receive one another well.

Pastor Tim writes, “The world we live in is not a cold, sanitized platform for life forms to grow. It’s full of beauty and wonder, amazement and magnificence! You see the glory of God in creation.”

Together with your circle, pray that God will use this time to help you grow in your appreciation and care of God’s creation, including the pinnacle of God’s creation on earth, humanity.

Understanding God’s Word

David affirms the reality of a creator God in Psalm 8. What is his line of logic?

How does the Lord establish strongholds against His enemies in verse 2?

What is David considering when he pens verse 4 (see verse 3)?

Applying God’s Word

Creation sings of the majesty of Jesus. How can you better cultivate your senses to recognize God in creation, including your neighbor? Ask God to help and also to turn your recognition into songs of praise.

Witnessing God’s Word

One of our 7 values in our pursuit of Jesus at First Pres is to “Make Beauty.” Think of a way you can enter into God’s creation and make beauty. From baking a snack to going on a hike, we are designed to make beauty as we walk through God’s creation. Who can you invite into this process? Pray for someone who does not yet know that creation points to Jesus? Pray that they would begin to sing in their own heart, “Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!”

No matter where you are, there is a Psalm to reach you and lead you back home to God.

Have you ever spent the night under the stars? I'm not talking about a tent, or a cabin, or an RV with the window open. I mean out under the stars. I'm sure a lot of you have. This is Colorado. I admit, I have never done it. I've slept in a hammock with a tarp over it, but that's as close as I've come to sleeping under the stars. It's too big! Too open! Too vulnerable! Besides, what if a skunk comes along? Or a bear? No. Not for me. High thread-count sheets on a master bed in a hotel with a view of the city, count me in! But I do love the night sky. The more stars, the deeper the dark space, the clearer the Milky Way, the better. What does it do to you to look up at the stars? For me it does two things, it makes me feel super small, but it also makes me feel super loved by the God who made it all.

Our hero this series is King David, author of half of the Psalms. David did spend nights out under the stars. Not always by choice; maybe not ever by choice. But he grew up as a shepherd, and shepherds spent nights out with their flocks. As a soldier, he spent nights out in dangerous and open situations. When he was on the run from enemies, he wound up sleeping under the night sky. When we read Psalm 8, it's clear, David knew what it was to look up into the night sky and wonder about the power of the Creator.

"Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens" (Psalm 8:1). It's a song. You can hear the rhythm in it. The creation publishes something of the character of God, something of the majesty of God, available for all to see. The world we live in is not a cold, sanitized platform for life forms to grow. It's full of beauty and wonder, amazement and magnificence! You see the glory of God in creation. We talk about creation in our Reformed tradition as the first book. God publishes something about Himself in creation. It's not enough to know God fully or find salvation, but it's enough to teach you God is there and God is majestic, glorious, powerful, creative, and also loving.

"Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against

your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger" (Psalm 8:2). When kids worship God, strongholds are established against the enemies of God. Do you believe that? I do. When kids praise the Lord. Children don't have a hard time accepting the existence of God. Imagine this. A man grumbles to his friend walking down the street, "Oh, there is no God. If God was there, none of this would happen, none of this pain, none of this frustration. There is no God." A mother comes along pushing her kid in a stroller. The kid looks up at a glowing sunset, points its chubby little finger, blows a few spit bubbles and says, "Oooh!" The poor atheist's entire argument is demolished! It's over! What do you say to that? The kid returns its little finger into its little nose and rolls on down the sidewalk. That's the truth of it. It is obvious from creation that there is a Creator, and this Creator makes beauty manifest to stir the soul. So we say with Jesus, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children" (Matthew 11:25).

"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?" (Psalms 8:3-4). The image here, and it is just an image, is that God is enormously big. Of course, God is not material to take up space as you and I do, but the picture painted is to illustrate the power and majesty, and it paints a big, big, huge God. So big that to put the moon together, God is working with His fingers to do it. The moon, the stars, the earth, they get pinched and rolled up between His fingers. It also speaks to the craftsmanship. God is involved intimately, closely, in a detailed and invested way, in all He makes.

Then the rest of the psalm comes to speak of us, and our having been made by God, and made in the image of God, so close we just missed being gods by a hair's breadth, and our being made as the pinnacle of God's creation, with a role in God's creation, to rule and influence and exercise dominion as vice-regents, as emissaries, as vassals of our King. And that is what we will talk



about next. But first I want to see David. What did David know? David knew God was there, and God created the world, and God was over it all, and that changed him. Probably the most famous story of David is when he stepped out on a battlefield to face a giant. I'll ask the youngest in the room and you'll be able to tell me. David met a giant named ... Goliath! Nine feet tall. Covered in armor. Arms thicker than David's neck. Thighs thicker than David's waist. A sword as long as David is tall. David walked out there toward him with a slingshot and took him down! Why? Because David knew God is bigger. David wasn't bigger than the giant he faced. God was bigger than the giant. So, David said, as he loaded one of his five smooth stones into his sling and started it swinging, "All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's" (1 Samuel 17:47). That's the God David knew looking up at the stars at night. Creator God. Are you in relationship with your Creator? Are you at peace with the one who made you?

Creation declares a bit about God, but not enough to be saved. You come into relationship with your Creator, not through creation alone, but through Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Creator God. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made" (John 1:1-3). That Word, John says, became flesh. That Word is Jesus. Paul said the same: "For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together" (Colossians 1:16-17). Jesus is the Creator God, along with, but as much as, the Father and the Holy Spirit. Jesus is Creator. That big, and that present to us.

Psalm 8 goes on to tell us about our role in the created order—not only to tell us about it, but to celebrate it, to sing about it! Jesus, God, made us and set us in place with a purpose. "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" (Psalms 8:5-8). Any fishermen in here? We're always looking for the paths of the seas where all the fish are. God made us rulers over the rest of creation. This goes back to Genesis. "Then God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground'" (Genesis 1:26). God has a purpose for you, a role for you to play. You are a ruler, you have dominion, you exercise influence over God's creation. The Message translation says, "You put us in charge of your handcrafted world." What are you going to do with that?

If you had a friend who was a woodworker, and made you a handmade coffee table, what would you do with it? What if your friend gave it to you out in front of the shop, and you chucked it in the back of your pickup, then tossed some bags of trash in on top and your golf clubs, tow chains, muddy boots, whatever? Each day we wake up to a world God made over which we exercise influence, you exercise influence every day over the world God made. We want to receive that gift with care. It has to do with at least these three things: **(1) How we receive it**, how we complete the gift; **(2) How we treat it**, according to God's purposes; and **(3) How we receive one another**, as gifts of the Creator.

(1) How we receive it. Do you remember when Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday? The people were shouting and singing, Hosanna, as though the Messiah had arrived. The religious authorities got aggravated and said to Jesus, "You better tell them to zip it." Jesus replied, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out" (Luke 19:40). Why? Because the very stones were made to reflect the glory of God. They were made, like everything else in creation, to glorify God. Hear this



now. You were made to help the stones cry out. They can't. You can. They can't sing to Jesus. You can. How do you receive the gift of God's beautiful creation? Every time you stop and take in the beauty, you are doing that. Every time you look west from here, and you see that glorious mountain pasted with snow, reflecting the pink light of the rising sun, and you stop and say, "Wow!" you are helping those stones praise their Maker. You are completing the gift. Doesn't it feel good to do it? That's because you were made to complete the gift, to receive it before God.

(2) How we treat it. There's so many things to talk about here, so many ways we kind of toss the gift of creation into the back of the truck, but let's talk chickens for a minute. Yes, chickens. A big part of what we are meant to do with our dominion over the beasts of the field, and the birds of the sky, and the fish of the seas (I never have control over the fish!), a big part of this is letting or helping these creatures be what God made them to be. So, this may surprise you, I think cage-free chickens are really a big deal. Have you ever seen an industrial chicken house? Those things are so toxic the chickens have to eat antibiotics with every meal; the workers have to wear hazmat suits. Then, out in Maryland and Delaware, they wash all that toxic sludge out of there and it runs right into the Chesapeake Bay where it has killed off all the oyster beds that used to filter the entire volume of that bay in 24 hours. Let the chicken be a chicken. Let it hunt and scratch and chicken around. Then eat it, to the glory of God! Take that for what you will. Tim's thoughts on chickens. But listen now, and take this fully to heart: When we violate God's designs, the repercussions reach far and wide and deep. We were made to help God's creatures be what God made them to be. My dog is never happier than when I let him off leash on a long hike on a beautiful mountain trail. He just dogs it up! It makes me feel good to watch him being all the dog a dog ought to be! I was made to help my dog be dog.

(3) How we receive one another. Don't forget, you are part of creation, as is every human being you meet; made in

the image of God, and worthy of dignity. Our calling here is to pursue systems of justice, reflecting the justice and truth of God, encouraging dignity and respect to every person; in our own country we strive to guarantee every person equal protections under the law, no matter their background, accent, color of their skin, or anything else. Where we fail, we try to fix. As Christians, we see every person in God's creation as part of that one race, one people handcrafted for dignity by God's own fingers. That's all part of this. We partner with ministries like Springs Rescue Mission and Crossfire who instill dignity. We partner with global missions to instill dignity and honor the image of God in every man, woman and child. We honor the image of God in people at the end of life. We partner with LifeNetwork on behalf of the dignity of the unborn child, and with Focus on the Family to help the world see the beauty and dignity of a child still in the womb, and the gift of family where the first lessons of honor and dignity are learned. Every person, made, fashioned by the very fingers of God, in His image, to His glory, under the glorious canopy of the stars. We complete the gift, graciously receiving what God gives us in one another.

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth! God, so large, so unimaginably, inexpressibly, inconceivably, unspeakably large, Creator God, Himself came down to be with us, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, the Lord God Almighty was Himself an unborn child, helpless, knit together in His mother's womb. Jesus was Himself a man. Then Jesus was Himself subject to death, and breathed His last. David knew a Creator, Jesus, who made the universe and placed him in it with dignity, purpose, and potential, to complete the gift and make the stones sing, "Glory!" O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. You were crowned with glory and honor. Every crown has weight to it. We can't always be the healers and reconcilers we want to be. But Jesus can. Jesus does. Jesus reconciles the world to God and God to the world, then He calls us into the same job—until every stone cries "Glory!"

