

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

12.07.2025 | A Little Lower than the Angels | Psalm 8 | Dr. Ben Day, Senior Pastor

If you have a Bible this morning, I want to invite you to turn with me to Psalm 8. We're going to go to Psalm 8 as we continue in our Advent series. This Advent season, we are going through a series called The Promised One in which we are looking at Old Testament passages that point us to this Promised One who is going to come, Jesus, our Savior. What we're doing is we're trying to understand how these promises were given to the people of God as they waited for the Promised One, how Jesus fulfilled these promises in His first coming, but then also how we still await the greater and ultimate fulfillment of these promises in Jesus' return. One of my favorite things about the Advent season as I came to know it more than just a season of Christmas is that it's not just a season to look back and remember that Jesus has come. That's so important, but it's also a good chance for us to remember that Jesus is going to come again, for us to be able to turn our eyes to the hope that awaits us in Jesus' second Advent. So we're looking at that through Old Testament passages throughout this season.

Today we're in Psalm 8, and Psalm 8 on its surface is not a direct promise like many of the promises that we'll study throughout this series. In fact, if you're just to read Psalm 8 on its own, you may not even get a real hint or an indication that it is a passage about the Promised One. But when you study the whole Bible and you look to the New Testament, the New Testament authors under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit tell us that this Psalm actually was pointing us to the person and work of Jesus Christ. And I chose this intentionally because I wanted you to see, as we go through this series, that it's not just the direct promises or the passages that clearly relate to the Messiah that we should understand as leading us to the Promised One, but really the whole Bible is pointing us to the Promised One.

The whole Bible is showing us our need for a Savior. The whole Bible is showing us how Jesus has come to meet that need and be the only Savior that we could ever trust in. And the whole Bible is showing us how we can live in light of Jesus being our Savior, how we can live now being restored to the people that God created us to be. That's really what Psalm 8 is ultimately about. When you first read Psalm 8, as we will this morning, you'll probably see that it is a lot about humanity in God's creation. But what the New Testament authors help us to see is it was ultimately pointing us to Jesus Christ being incarnated so that he might suffer for and save fallen humanity and restore us to the place that God had given us in creation to God's glory. Psalm 8 is ultimately about Jesus' incarnation, about how he came to suffer for and save a fallen humanity and to restore us to our intended place in creation for the glory of God. That's what I hope you'll see this morning as we study this passage.

Psalm 8, a Psalm of David, let me read it for us. David writes, "O Lord our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. You have set your glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babies and infants you have established strength because of your foes to still the enemy and the avenger. 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. You have given to him dominion over the works of your hands. You have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas. O Lord our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth."

There's this scene towards the end of "Les Miserables." It's a scene that takes place, I think the historical setting is the June rebellion which happened in Paris in the 1830s. In this scene, the rebellion has been crushed. The people who are leading the rebellion have been basically defeated, barricades have been knocked down. There's this young man, this character in the story named Marius, who is laying unconscious. He is bleeding out. Then Jean Valjean, the protagonist of the whole story, comes to him and he makes this decision that Valjean makes so often throughout the second half or the latter part of the book or the story. That is, he chooses not to protect himself, Valjean, but instead he kind of sacrifices himself. He gives of himself to save Marius. It says that he picks Marius up and puts him on his shoulders. Then Victor Hugo writes that Valjean, with Marius on his shoulders, goes down into the sewers underneath Paris. In fact, he describes it as going down into the darkness beneath the city. While there, he wanders through the filth and the grossness of sewers. He's in the mud. He is almost drowning at times as he is carrying Marius on his shoulders, bringing him to safety.

Take just for a moment to think about what that would be like to be in the sewers underneath the city of Paris in the 1800s. Take for a moment, just try to imagine the smell that you would experience as you're in those sewers. Imagine what you would see when you can see past the darkness into those glimmers of light. Imagine what you would feel, what you might bump into as you're going through the sewers. I think it's kind of important to get this imagery in our minds, to get the smells and the feels and the sights. Because what we're considering this morning in the incarnation of Jesus is the fact that Jesus came down into the sewers, the darkness beneath the city, as he came into our world. We talk about Jesus being born as a man, and we picture him a baby in a manger, and we have maybe this very polished view at times, right? No crying he makes. Even in our passage today, we talk about how Jesus was made just a little bit lower than the angels, and that sounds not that bad. I mean, he's just a little bit lower than the angels, right?

But imagine what was read to us, that Jesus was in heaven in the form of God, and yet he stepped down from heaven, a perfect place, no sin, no pain, no brokenness, and he comes into our world. He's born as a person, taking the form of a servant. He comes into a broken, sinful world, and he experiences that brokenness himself. He's mistreated. He's lied about. He experiences the pain of emotional loss in relationship. He experiences the pain of seeing people grieving over physical loss. He enters down into the darkness of our world. That is a descent that is greater than going down into the sewers beneath Paris. And the Bible says that he did so to put us on his shoulders and to bring us to safety. But not just to save us, but to restore us.

You see, Psalm 8 is a Psalm all about the way that we as people are created to The message of Christmas and the message of Advent is that Jesus has come and he is coming again to restore us, as he makes all things new, as he restores all of creation, and he restores us as people to being the people that God created us to be. So as we go to Psalm 8, I just want to point out a few truths that are in this Psalm and then that are revealed later on in Scripture. And the first one that I think is kind of the main idea throughout the Psalm is a focus on humanity. And in particular, I want you to notice the unique position of humanity in creation.

If you're filling in blanks, if you like to follow along the outline, that's the first truth that I just want us to consider this morning. As we look into Psalm 8, we consider David's words. One of the main things that I think he wants us to consider in this Psalm, what most of the content of the Psalm is focused on, is the unique position of humanity in creation. Many ways our passage this morning and what we're focused on this morning relates very much to where we left off last Sunday. Last Sunday we looked at Genesis chapter 3, which how does consider the effect of sin coming into our world, the way that sin fractured God's good design, and we experienced that in our lives. But just even in looking at that, we were able to consider what we were created for.

Pastor Clark was able to help us see that we were created to commune with God. We were created to bear his image, to multiply image bearers, to have dominion and reign over all of his creation. This is what David considers in this Psalm. But as he looks at creation, it leads him to ask a question about humanity. David's looking at creation, particularly look at verses 3 and 4. He says, "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?" You think about the place of humanity in creation, you first have to be kind of humbled to consider who we are as people in creation. David says he looks up at the moon and the stars and the night sky, and it calls him to wonder, who are we as people that God would even care about us or pay attention to us at all? He says that all that he sees in the night sky are the work of God's fingers. That's the idea of an artist who is putting together something beautiful. David looks out at the vast night sky and he doesn't even say, "This is the work of God's strong, mighty arm," or even the work of God's hands in putting these things together. He says this is like a sculptor or a painter at work, putting together something so beautiful but also so vast.

I don't know if you've looked up at the moon the last few nights, but it's huge. I mean, I'm sure it's the same size moon as it's been before, but like it looks bigger. I don't think it's going to look this big for us for like another 15, 20 years. You look up at the sky on a clear night and you see the number of stars. It's kind of hard to count. Science tells us that there are billions of stars in our galaxy. Studies tell us that our galaxy is one of billions of galaxies. Here we are as people on planet Earth in a speck of all that God has created. You don't even have to look out at space to have this feeling. You just go out to Ocean Beach and look at the Pacific. Do you ever feel small as you look out at the vastness of God's creation? That's what David is feeling here as he just considers all of creation. He says we as people are so insignificant. He's talking about

the weakness of people as he's talking about the mouths of children, of babies that God uses. He reflects on really the insignificance, the weakness, the frailty of humanity.

Now how would you consider that or answer that question about who are we as people? How would you answer that question about how significant we are? Let's take just a moment and think about how many people in our city might think about that question. What is the place of us as people in this vastness of the world and of the universe? Many people in our city would say, you know, there actually is no God. There are things that we can see in the world, in the physical universe, in space. That's all there is. They would say that we just kind of happen to be here at this time. That we just evolved through a series of products, causes now resulting in us being here. And that one day we will cease to be and there will be nothing left. What is the significance of humanity?

People who take that world view actually would be honest and say there really is no significance to humanity. Like Bertrand Russell, atheist philosopher of the last century, was just honest enough to say, you know, we're just here by causes and one day we'll be gone. So ultimately none of this really matters. Ultimately you and I don't really matter. Now a lot of people in our city, they wouldn't just go to that answer so quickly. I think they would say, well, no, you actually do matter. You have a meaning, you have a purpose. It's just something within you. You've got to discover it for yourself. You can create your own meaning and purpose. But what a burden that places on you.

I mean to look out at the vastness of our world, to see how small you are and to feel like you've got to come up with your own meaning and purpose. But what if you answer this question not in the way that many people in our city or in our world might answer it, but what if you answer this question the way that David would answer it? As David thinks about creation, he thinks about the frailness, the weakness, the insignificance of humanity, he comes to this realization that as small as we are, God is actually very mindful of us. As insignificant as we've seen, God has done something in creating us unique in creation. Listen to what he goes on to say in verse 5. Was it kind of interesting that David doesn't compare people to the rest of creation? David doesn't say we as people are just above the rest of creation. He says we are just below the heavenly beings. He says we as people, as small as we are, as insignificant as we can seem, we have a unique position in creation. We have been placed above creation.

You, as a person, have been made in the image of God. That's what he's speaking about, that you have been crowned with glory and honor. Every person you see in this room, every person you will see today is made in the image of God, is crowned with glory and honor. He says you, we as people, have a unique position in all of creation, and God has given us a unique role. He goes on to describe this role in verses 6-8. He says you've given him dominion over the works of your hands. You have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

Isn't this what we were talking about last week? That when God created us as people in his image, he created us to commune with him, to have a relationship with him, but also to bear his image by multiplying image bearers and having dominion over the rest of creation. That's what David is speaking about here. He says we are so small and seemingly insignificant, yet God has created us with unique glory and honor. And he has given us this role to have dominion over his creation. But what did we see last week in Genesis chapter 3? And instead of embracing that role as image bearers, we wanted to take God's place. Rather than seeing that we've been given a value and worth of being created by God, we wanted to take his place. We wanted to be our own gods. And so rather than listening to God and his design, we've chosen our own path. Now rather than cultivating creation in a way that leads to flourishing, we consume creation in a way that leads to death and destruction. We must treat all of creation, including each other. People who have been made in the image of God, we now abuse and use for our own benefit. What we're seeing in Psalm 8 is the beauty, the greatness of how God has created us as people. But we're also faced with this reality, that we don't see this as a reality in our world and our lives right now. Yes, each one is still crowned with glory and honor. Each person is still made in the image of God. But we are not living in our place in creation as God created us to live. And this is why the Bible tells us Jesus came.

So the second part that you need to understand from understanding the Psalm is leading us to the Promised One. It's not just the unique position that we have in creation as people, but the loving pursuit of humanity by Jesus Christ. The loving pursuit of humanity by Jesus Christ. As we consider who God created us to be, how God created us to function in his

creation, we're faced with this That we are not currently living in that. And how does a Psalm that is mostly focused on our position as people, as David considers the whole of creation and our unique position in it, how does that Psalm lead us to the Promised One? Well, the New Testament tells us that Jesus was made like us in every way so that he could pursue us and save us from our sins. That what we considered last week in Genesis chapter 3, having seen all of creation, including our place in it, fractured by sin, Jesus was made like us to save us from that reality.

The Hings read for us from Hebrews chapter 2. And I want us just to consider those verses one more time. If you want to turn there in your Bible, you can. Or if you want to just read it as it comes up on the screen. But Hebrews chapter 2 verses 5 through 9 is a time when the New Testament quotes Psalm chapter 8. And in doing so, they help us to understand how this Psalm is ultimately fulfilled in our world. So the author of Hebrews says this, "For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking." He says, "It has been testified somewhere." And I can tell you where somewhere is. It's Psalm 8. He says, "In Psalm 8, it was testified this, what is man that you are mindful of him, or the Son of man that you care for him? You have made for him a little while lower than the angels. You have crowned him with glory and honor, putting everything in subjection under his feet."

And then after quoting Psalm 8, the author of Hebrews gives this understanding to us. He says, "Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him." Now there's some debate in these verses as to how much is the focus on Jesus and how much is the focus on all of humanity. We know there's a focus coming to Jesus in verse 9 as we're about to read, but there's this kind of debate in question. I would just say, I understand the Psalm, excuse me, what I understand the author of Hebrews to be helping us to understand about the Psalm is that there's a reason that Jesus became a man. And that is because God created humanity in this unique position. He created us to have dominion over his creation. And yet right now we don't see that happening.

I think the author of Hebrews is saying, "We don't see everything in subjection to people. We don't see all things in subjection to Jesus even at this moment. We don't see the world functioning as it should." The Bible says this is why Jesus entered into our broken world precisely because it was broken. This is why Jesus stepped down from heaven because we had fallen from our place in creation. So Jesus had to step down into this broken world to save us This is what the author of Hebrews goes on to explain. He says, "We don't see all things in subjection to humanity right now, but here's what we do see. We see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death. So by the grace of God, he might taste death for He says, "We don't see the created world as it should be right now, but here's what we do see. We see Jesus Christ who entered into our creation."

When he says that Jesus was for a little while made lower than the angels, he's saying that Jesus came down into the sewers underneath Paris. He's saying that Jesus stepped out of heaven into a broken He became like us in every way. The one who had spoken the whole world into existence was born as a baby who had to learn to walk and talk. The one who, by the work of his fingers, had placed the stars in the sky, now laid in a feeding trough for animals. He became weak. He came down low to reach us in our lowliness, to reach us in our brokenness. The other of Hebrews says that he was not just born into this world to live like us or experience the world that we experience, but he was ultimately born so that he might die.

Notice it says, "He is now crowned with glory, but it was because he first suffered death." Philippians 2 that was read earlier speaks of his descent all the way to dying the most painful, shameful death you could Death on a cross. The other of Hebrews says he did this so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. In other words, the author of Hebrews is helping us to see that Jesus came down not just into the darkness of a broken world, but he entered into the darkness of death. And he did so to put us on his shoulders and to bring us to life, to bring us to salvation. That we, like Marius, were just laying there unconscious, dead in our sin. But here comes Jesus entering into our broken world, putting us on his shoulders, leading us through sin and death into the victory that he has now claimed.

Do you believe that this morning? The Bible says if you believe this, you don't have to create your own meaning and purpose. The Bible says if you believe this, you don't have to prove your value and worth. God created you with value and worth and he affirmed it in Jesus' pursuit of you. You don't have to do anything to save yourself from your sins that

when Jesus places you on his shoulders, carries you through the darkness beneath the city. He is bringing forgiveness of your sins. He is restoring you to the place that God had created you to be. And this is where we are led to, as we consider Psalm 8, this promise of who humanity was created to be, how Jesus has come to save us, and how he has come to restore us. So here's our third truth this morning. It's the restored place of humanity in creation. God had given us a unique position that we had fallen from. Jesus comes down into our world, experiences not just the life of this world, but death, tastes death on our behalf, experiences the separation from God and the life in him on our behalf so that we might be united to God, that we might be restored. He restores us to a rightful place in creation, and he does so by first restoring us to a right relationship with our creator.

Pastor Clark mentioned last week that when sin entered the world, it brought all sorts of pain, multiplied our difficulties, but the real effect of sin is not just pain and difficulty in this world, it is separation from the God that we were created to be with. True death is not just a physical death from this earth, it is an eternal death of being separated from the life that is in God. When Jesus came and he tasted death on your behalf, he gave the opportunity to be restored with your creator, to have that communion with God that you were created for. In Jesus' first Advent, he accomplished this work, began the work of restoring all things by first restoring us in our relationship with

That's not where he stops. It's not just about him saving people that we might have this relationship with God that's detached from the rest of creation, but he's actually restoring creation, which means he is restoring our position in creation, our place in creation. Remember, what were we created to do? Go back to Psalm 8, verse 6, it says that we were created to have dominion over the works of God's hands. God has put all things under the feet of his created people. The author of Hebrews says we don't see that right now, and the truth is we don't. When we look around the world and we recognize that it is broken, it is sinful, it is not as God created it to be. But the author of Hebrews says, yet we already see Jesus.

Yes, we don't see already a renewed creation, but we already see Jesus. We already see Jesus being crowned with glory and honor. Jesus went into the darkness beneath the city, but he did not stay there. He conquered sin and death. Now he has been raised to heaven to reign. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul says God is currently putting all of Jesus' enemies under his feet. In other words, what the Bible is saying is what we were created for as people, Jesus is already experiencing as the God-Man. He not only experienced our humanity and his life here on earth, but he continues to experience fully God and fully man, now reigning as king, and he is putting all things under his feet. What that means is he will one day make all things new and all of creation will be restored, and that means you and I will be restored in our place in Jesus invites us as his people to be a part of this kingdom, that he is reigning over all things, that we get to inherit this kingdom and reign with him.

Jesus speaks about this in many places. I just wanted to draw one out for you this morning. Matthew chapter 25, Jesus is talking about when he will return, and he will return to. And he looks to a certain group of people that it says are on his right, Matthew 25, and says that the king will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." What is he saying? What you were created for before the world was ever formed, you will now inherit, receive, because you have trusted in the one true king. Jesus in his first advent restores us to our creator, but when he returns, he will restore all of creation, including our position in creation, our place in creation, as we get to be with him and reign with him.

But here's an application for us today. As you think about this great reality, who we were created to be, of how Jesus has pursued us, of how he is restoring all things, you might wonder, "Well, what do I actually do?" Well, you believe in this, you trust in Christ's pursuit, you place your faith in him. The Bible says that when you do that, you are brought into his kingdom. One of the beauties and the difficulties of Advent is that we are reminded that we live between Jesus' two Advents. We live after his first coming, but before his second coming. We live in this already but not yet, which means you are already part of the kingdom, but yet we don't fully see the kingdom on display as we will one day. But it doesn't stop us from living as people of the kingdom right now. You have already been invited in, you have already inherited this kingdom, if you've trusted in Jesus Christ as the one true king. That means you can already begin to live as God created you to live. When you are united to Jesus and his spirit is placed inside of you, it gives you the opportunity to begin to live as the people we were created to be, to begin to live rightly in creation. It's still a broken world, there will still be difficulties, but we can begin to live as restored people, even in a broken world.

There's just one specific way I want us to consider doing that today is living as restored people by treating others as if they are made in the image of God. One of the ways that we see sin fracture our world is the way that we dehumanize people, the way that we degrade people, the way that we treat people as if they are not made in the image of God. You'll see as Lewis writes in the weight of glory that there are no ordinary people. He says you've never met a mere mortal. Every person you talk to is going to live on forever. Every person you speak with is made just a little lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honor. I mean just take a moment, look around this room and see the crowns of glory and honor that are on the people in this room.

Most of you aren't actually looking, I was encouraged, this is an actual thing you can do. Think about the people like in your neighborhood. Think about your classmates. Think about your coworkers. Created by God in his image. A unique position in creation, crowned with glory and honor. Think about every person you walk past on the street, including those who are unhoused. Each person made with dignity and value and worth, crowned with glory and ss people who are part of the kingdom already, as people who have already been restored, we should be people who treat others as if they are made in God's image.

It's actually what Jesus is speaking about in Matthew 25. He's separating those sheep from the goats and he invites people to inherit his kingdom. He says those who treated each one, especially the least of these, as if they were made by my heavenly Father. Cared for them when they were in need. This is a mark of people who have seen the pursuit of Christ in their own lives. I mentioned Jean Valjean is this Christ figure in that moment to descend down to the darkness underneath the city and save Marius. You probably know, many of you might know the story, much earlier, Jean Valjean is not the Christ figure, he is the sinner in need of grace. And he receives grace, and when he receives grace, it changes him. For the rest of the story, he is someone who is always extending grace, he is always sacrificing himself, he is always giving to others. Why? Because he knows what it's like to receive grace.

If we are people who reflect on the loving pursuit of Jesus Christ towards if we are people who know what it's like to be restored by the grace of God, should we not be people who go out and extend that grace to others? Should we be marked by our treatment of other people as if they are made in the image of God? So we do this, we follow Jesus' example, we trust in his life and death and resurrection, we follow his example, and we do it all for the glory of God. And here is just where I want us to end, and that is the unending praise of humanity to our Creator. The unending praise of humanity to our Creator. You know, if you read Psalm 8, you just pay attention to the middle, it could seem like it is very focused on us as people. There is something interesting that you probably noticed, just to draw your attention to, is that Psalm 8 begins and ends with the same phrase. And it is a phrase that is not focused on humanity, but it is focused on God.

Psalm 8 begins, verse 1, by saying, "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all The David closes the psalm by saying, "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth." In the writing of the Bible, this is called an inclusio. Inclusio is when a passage begins and ends with the same phrase. And most of the time, that means that that is the main idea of the passage. Essentially, the author is telling you, "Here's the main idea." And gives you a lot of information to support and explain that main idea. But then, just so you don't miss it, he ends by saying, "Here's the main idea one more time." The whole focus of Psalm 8 is not on us as people. The whole focus on Psalm 8 is that we would join with David and the rest of creation in saying, "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth."

The whole focus of the psalm is that we would praise our God forever. This is why all of that is there in Psalm 8 about who you are as a person, who we are as people. Our unique position, we were created with glory and honor not to have glory in ourselves, or to glory in ourselves. That is what happened in Genesis chapter 3. No, we were created with glory and honor to display the glory of the one who created us. Why did Jesus come to pursue us? Because we were so lovable? Yes, we were created in God's image. He loved us to pursue us, to save us. But why? That his name might be placed above every other name, to the praise and glory of We receive the grace of God that we might be restored to our position, not so that we would be elevated, but so that God would be glorified. We go out and we treat people as if they're made in the image of God. We live as restored people, not so that people would think, "Oh, they're just really good people." And we would be glorified.

We do it all for the We understand who we were created to be. We understand the way Jesus pursued us by his grace. We understand the way that he is restoring all of this, not so that we would be focused on us, but to the praise of God. Even in just a moment, as we're about to sing one other song of worship, we consider what God has done for us in Jesus. And coming near to us is Noel, Emmanuel, God with us. The call is to come and see what God has done. Not come and see us, not come and see how good and how great and worthy we are, but all of this, we come and see what God has done. So it would lead to unending praise of our Creator.