

6-11-23

Sermon- How Do We Keep Things in Perspective

Scripture: Psalm 8, CTW Psalm 9:1-11

Hymns: 77, 74, 75

Theme: Sometimes we believe the whole world revolves around us. Other times, we wonder if God really cares about us. **Psalm 8** gives an attitude adjustment for both. Our true self-esteem is found in God, who is great and greatly to be praised!

I. In Psalm 8, David gives us a reality check

Do you ever think that maybe Galileo and Copernicus got it wrong, that our solar system doesn't really revolve around the sun? Because on some days it seems like the universe just revolves around you?

Now let's be honest. We all have our moments of self-centeredness, right? Or on the other hand, maybe you have times when you wonder if you really matter to God at all.

Today's psalm calls us to adjust both perspectives as we examine the worth of a human being in the eyes of God.

Psalm 8 is one of 150 psalms in the book of Psalms, the Bible's hymnbook. These poems were often sung in worship. And one of the biggest contributors is the harpist king, David, the author of today's passage.

A. David starts and ends our attitude adjustment with a bold declaration about God. The first and last verse both say: "O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!"

The phrase, "O LORD our Lord," might sound redundant but as you read it in the Bible, you'll notice that the two words for "Lord" are spelled differently.

The first is spelled in all caps, L-O-R-D, which our English translators use to indicate the Hebrew name for God, "Yahweh." This is the name God revealed to Moses at the burning bush (**Exodus 3:14**) and basically means, "I am who I am," or "I will be who I will be."

God is the great "I am," the absolutely existing one. He always has been and always will be. He never changes. He is not created. He just is. And everything else in the world is dependent upon him.

The second word for "Lord" only capitalizes the "L" and comes from the Hebrew word, "Adonai," which means "master" or "boss" or "ruler."

So the first "Lord" is a name and the second "Lord" is a title. David is saying, "Yahweh, you are our Master." God is over all, and as such, his name—his character, his being—deserves to be praised and worshiped across the whole earth. This is the thesis of the psalm.

B. You want to know why you matter? Because God is great! This is so important that David bookends it at beginning and end. No matter what role we find for humanity here, everything we have and everything we are comes from God, our Master, who deserves to be praised.

Then David gives us a couple of reasons why God deserves such praise. First, he points to the glory of creation. He says, "You have set your glory above the heavens."

And he adds in verse 3, "When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place..." You can picture the sheep-herder David gazing at the night sky as he writes these words.

Which reminds me: Did you hear about when Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson went camping? In the middle of the night,

Holmes wakes up his friend and asks, "Watson, look at the sky and tell me what you see?" Watson replies, "I see millions and millions of stars." And Holmes says, "What does that tell you?" – "Well, if there are millions of stars, and if there really are other star systems, then it is quite likely that there are some Earth-like planets out there, and if there is such a planet, there may exist life as well." And Holmes says, "Watson, as usual, you have missed the obvious...if we can see the stars, that means someone stole our tent!

Well, David didn't let a tent block his view of the starry sky.

Indeed, the universe is an amazing creation. Consider the sheer size of it: The earth is about 8,000 miles in diameter. But imagine, for comparison sake, if the earth were the size of a grape, then our star, the sun, would be about the size of a giant beach ball. One of the largest stars in the galaxy, Canis Majoris, could hold over 2,000 of our suns within it!

And how about distance? Light from the sun takes about 8 minutes to reach us. So if the Earth were a grape, the Sun would be 163 yards away (almost two football fields), the nearest star 24,000 miles away, and the nearest sister galaxy, the Great Andromeda Galaxy, one trillion miles away! That's bigger than ... Texas!

Certainly we know a lot more about the stars today than David did. Yet, the more we know, the more we should be amazed. When we are in awe of the creation—whether it be the night sky, or a rainbow, or a beautiful sunrise, or the powerful crescendo of a waterfall—we should praise the Creator behind it all.

As David poetically wrote, God's fingers put the stars in place. Do you think this little anthropomorphism is a comment on the size of God?

David's son, Solomon, must have remembered this from Dad as he built the famous Solomon's temple. When he dedicated it, he prayed, "But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!" (**1 Kings 8:27**).

II. David also talks about God and His children

So David cites this reason first, that God is great because the universe is great. But then he talks about another reason. He says in verse 2, "From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger." We see a couple of things here.

First, we see that God has enemies, people and angels who do not praise God, who do not give credit to God for the glory of the universe, but instead want to take it themselves. They want to praise themselves.

A. But then David says a curious thing: He says God takes the praise of babies and infants to silence His enemies. How much could babies add to the fight? Sounds ludicrous, doesn't it? Babies are pretty helpless creatures. Yet, a recurring theme in scripture is that God likes to use the weak to overcome the strong.

John McArthur writes about this verse, "The introductory irony about infants sets the stage for a contrast between the dependent and the foolishly self-sufficient."

The Apostle Paul writes in 2 Corinthians about how God refused to take away his thorn in the flesh, but Paul grew to be satisfied, knowing that in his own weakness, God's strength would shine through. "When I am weak, he is strong" (**2 Corinthians 12:9-10**).

The God of the Bible likes to wage war with choirs in the front lines. He likes to take down giants with a boy and a slingshot. This way God gets all the glory.

Jesus chose to quote verse 2 on the first Palm Sunday. As he was entering Jerusalem, cleansing the Temple, and healing people, some children began joining their parents in worshiping Jesus as the "Son of David," a title for the long-awaited Messiah. Some of the religious leaders complained to Jesus, saying, "Don't you hear what these children are saying?" Jesus first replied with a simple, "Yes." In other words, "Yes, I hear them, and I am not going to correct them, because they are right. I am the Messiah, the Son of the Living God."

Then he went on to quote the Greek version of this verse, which ended the discussion, which interestingly enough is what the verse says, that the enemies of God would be silenced by the praise of children and infants. Jesus, along with the children, fulfilled scripture that day.

III. The key question of the psalm comes in verse 4, the exact center of the poem. David asks, "What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?" To be "mindful of" means to remember someone. "God, why are we so important that you remember us, that you care for us?"

A. Many Christians struggle with this. Some think God must not love them, and others think God has to love them, that he has no choice. But neither are correct. God chooses to love us, to cast his favor upon us. For a Christian, your self-esteem doesn't come from self-talk in front of a mirror, "I think I can. I know I can. I can do this."

No, your self-esteem comes from knowing that God esteems you, that God finds value in you just because he chooses to. And no

matter what trials you face, please remember that God remembers you. You are on God's mind today.

B. Not only does God love us, God entrusts a special task to us. David talks of how God created humans just a "little lower than the heavenly beings," and put us in charge of all the creation.

I wonder if David is thinking of **Genesis 1:26-27**, where 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.' So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."

David is in awe that we have been elevated to such a level of responsibility to entrust all of creation to us. It is amazing when you think of it.

And it is sad, when you consider ways we have let down our Creator: pollution, cruelty to animals, cruelty to each other, litter, wastefulness, envy, gossip, adultery, assault, murder.

Our sinful state, beginning with our first parents Adam and Eve, has introduced to the world sickness and death and natural disaster. It is all a corruption of our original role: to care for the creation in honor of the Creator.

C. Since we fall short, the psalm carries a prophetic hope of future fulfillment. Someday there will be harmony. Someday there will be beauty again. Someday all will be right with the world and with the relationship between the Creator and the created.

We have little glimpses of that from time to time: a rainbow, a beautiful sunrise, the bluebonnets on the hill, a smile, someone

holding the door for us or offering us a hand: all little glimpses of the beauty and harmony God has in store for us.

IV. Concluding Thoughts:

Paul and the writer of Hebrews both point to Jesus as the ultimate fulfillment of **Psalm 8**. Jesus made himself a little lower than the heavenly beings, to become one of us, to die on a cross, and to be raised on the third day, overcoming sin and death for good. And Jesus will return to institute a new heaven and a new earth. Let us Pray...