

Prayer: Lord God, words are not enough to express Your awesomeness, Your majesty, Your holiness. Our highest expressions of theology are but baby talk next to You: Your creation, Your very self. Make us aware, through Your Holy Spirit, that You are here among us. May this awareness lead us to approach this hour more carefully. The words we speak, the tunes we sing, the thoughts we think, the joy and sadness we feel, may these be pleasing to You. For in spite of the inadequacy of our words, this worship is addressed to You. Make it complete, whole, full to overflowing, O God, our rock, and our redeemer. In Christ we pray. Amen.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH: “OUR PLACE IN GOD’S CREATION”

We can find the goodness of God’s creation in Genesis 1. And we see that the fact that God created all things good is what we call a foundational principle. It lays the foundation for everything that follows. God created all things good. What is our place in this world? How should we view the environment? How can we know God better through his creation? How can we use our creative gifts for God’s glory? Today we will look at our place in God’s creation from Psalm 8.

Have you ever wondered about your place in the world? Have you ever wondered why God put you here? That is a personal question, but before you can even begin to answer that on an individual level, you must first answer it on a larger level. “What is the place of man in this world? Why did God put us here?” Because until you understand the place of man in this world, the big picture, how can you ever understand your own individual place in the picture?

Psalm 8 is a beautiful hymn of praise to God. Like many of the Psalms, it was written by David. David begins and ends the psalm with these words of praise and acclamation: “O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!” (Psalm 8:1,8) Because the Psalm speaks of God’s creation and the night sky in particular, it was probably sung quite often in evening worship, beneath the very skies under which the words were originally composed.

The Psalm is in the second person. David addresses God throughout the Psalm, and as he speaks to God, David reflects both on God’s creation and man’s place in God’s creation. And so as we study this Psalm together this morning, we will seek to answer the question: “What does Psalm 8 teach us about our place in God’s creation?”

Psalm 8 explores the theme of God’s majestic splendor and our insignificance by way of comparison. And yet at the same time, God has created us in His image and graciously crowned us with glory and majesty. He has assigned us the role of ruling over His creation. All of these thoughts should lead us, as the psalm both begins and ends (Ps. 8:1, 9), to declare in worship, “O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!

We don’t know when David wrote this psalm. Obviously, it stemmed from his experience (which most of us have had) of gazing up at the night sky and marveling at its vastness compared to his own puniness on this speck in the universe called planet earth. We don’t know for certain what the term “Gittith” in the title means. It refers to the Philistine town of Gath, which means winepress. Thus it may refer to a psalm for the grape harvest (such as the Feast of Tabernacles); to the ark’s journey from the house of Obed-edom the Gittite to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6:11); or to a tune or musical instrument named after the city. Two other psalms (81, 84) have the term in their titles. In Psalm 8, David is exhorting us to... Worship the Lord because His name is majestic in all the earth and because He has graciously crowned us with glory and majesty.

David looked up into the vastness of the night sky and saw the moon and the stars, the work of God’s fingers. He has somehow set them all in their appointed places and orbits. Then David thinks of how small he is and marvels (8:4), “What is humanity that You take thought of them, and the Son of Man that You care for him?” Humanity emphasizes humans in their frail human existence (Psalms. 9:20; 90:3; 103:15). The second line referring to him as “the Son of Man” may hint at our fallen condition, since all of the sons of Adam were born after his likeness and

image, in sin (Genesis 5:3). Compared to the vastness of the universe, what is humanity that God thinks of us, much less that He cares for us!

YET IN SPITE OF OUR INSIGNIFICANCE, GOD HAS CROWNED US WITH GLORY AND MAJESTY AND ASSIGNED US TO RULE OVER HIS CREATION (8:5-8).

God assigned to man the task of ruling over the rest of creation, as David here enumerates. David could have said that we were made just a little higher than the other animals, but instead, he says that we were made a little lower than God to reflect the wonder that we are created in His image.

Psalm 8 is ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ who restores what Adam lost. Humanity since the fall has accomplished some remarkable feats in gaining dominion over creation. Think of all of the wonders of modern science, including the advances in medical science. And yet, all of these accomplishments are tainted by sin. Proud humanity boasts in them and does not acknowledge that the ability to discover scientific facts has been given to him by God. Like the builders of the Tower of Babel, proud modern humanity uses his scientific breakthroughs to proclaim their independence from God. With a few more breakthroughs, we can cure all our diseases and live forever!

But science cannot reconcile us to God. So, what did God do? He sent His own Son, the Son of Man, to provide the sacrifice for our sins and to fulfill Psalm 8 in a way that we cannot. Hebrews 2 cites Psalm 8:4-6 and then applies it to Jesus (Hebrews 2:9): “But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.” “Humanity as created reflects God’s glory. But the Son of Man, in whom the original pattern is more fully realized, reflects this same glory far more perfectly.”

So, David tells us to worship the Lord because although we are scrawny and insignificant, He has graciously thought of us and cared for us. Although we marred God’s image through sin, God has restored it in Jesus Christ. In Him, we are again crowned with glory and majesty. Thus, David comes full circle and closes the wreath of praise: “O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!” And so that is our place in this world. We are under God and over the world. What should our response be to all this?

WE SHOULD BOW IN AWE BEFORE OUR MAJESTIC CREATOR! This psalm should humble us and cause us to marvel at God’s grace and love in caring for us by sending His Son as our Savior. We should be awestruck at God’s majesty in creation. Notice again, this is how David begins and ends the Psalm. “O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!” (Psalm 8:

WE SHOULD TREAT EACH PERSON WITH VALUE AND RESPECT AS BEINGS CREATED IN GOD’S IMAGE. John Piper has said, “You cannot worship and glorify the majesty of God while treating his supreme creation with contempt.”

WE SHOULD BE GOOD STEWARDS OF GOD’S CREATION. While modern humanity worships the creation rather than the Creator, we should not neglect the fact that we are the stewards over God’s creation. We should oppose the greed that often destroys creation with no regard for its beauty and preservation.

WE SHOULD TAKE PLEASURE IN WHATEVER WORK GOD GIVES US TO DO, DOING IT HEARTILY AS UNTO HIM. Psalm 8:1-8 – “O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise because of 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 man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, the

birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!” (NIV) To God be the glory. Amen.