

## Psalm 8

### How Excellent Your Name

**Introduction:** It is so appropriate that Psalm 8 is our closing psalm for this series. Psalm 8 is a Psalm of adoration and praise. The Psalm begins and ends with this declaration **“O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!”**

Each of the five books that make up our book of Psalms close with a benediction of praise; not only that but the last book ends with five psalms each building in praise finally ending with these words: “Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!”

Eugene Peterson writes, “No matter how much we suffer, no matter our doubts, no matter how angry we get, no matter how many times we have asked in desperation or doubt, “how long?”, prayer develops finally into praise. Everything finds its way to the doorstep of praise. Praise is the consummating prayer. This is not to say that other prayers are inferior to praise, only that all prayer pursued far enough, becomes praise..... This is not a “word of praise” slapped onto whatever mess we are in at the moment. This crafted conclusion for the Psalms tells us that our prayers are going to end in praise, but that it is also going to take awhile. Don’t rush it. It may take years, decades even, before certain prayers arrive at the Hallelujah’s....if we persist in prayer, laugh and cry, doubt and believe, struggle and dance and then struggle again, we will surely end up at Psalm 150, on our feet, applauding, ‘Encore! Encore!’”

So the prayers and songs of the Psalms though often complaints are leading us to this end of praise. echoing back to our first studies when we considered how the Psalms are in fact training us, not just directing our heads, but also our hearts..

#### 1. Adoration

1. Adoration is my first thought or impulse as I read through Psalm 8. Look around you! Rocks and trees, skies and seas, sun, moon and shining stars!!! Glory, Majesty, Power!!!! This is a Psalm of praise and adoration as a person walks through the creation taking it all and recounting it all back to it’s Creator. So often people mistakenly equate Christianity with a sacred/secular paradigm found in Greek

philosophy and Eastern thought; nothing could be further from the truth. The God of the Bible created this earth, the whole cosmos in fact, as his good creation, filled with glories and wonders. The Psalmist knows this, he delights in the world around him - the colors, the smells, the animals, the mountains, the trees, flowers, seeds, fruit, honey, the rocks, the mighty seas, the whirlwind, and earthquake, fire and rain...he marvels at it, but not as an end in itself...he sees it as an obvious sign pointing back to the great mind and power who has created it.

2. The tragic thing is that many Christians who know this have lost this wonder that leads to adoration. We take it for granted. Notice though, the Psalmist makes mention of the mouths of babies and infants rebuking their foes and giving God perfect praise. Babies rebuking God's enemies? Is this metaphorical or literal? The weakness of infants is possibly a metaphor referring to the Israelites who believe in YHWH and the Gentile powers that don't; But this is also what Jesus quoted when the little children praised him at his triumphal entry, and yet the "wise and learned" religious leaders failed to see his glory... I think it's probably both. What is small, weak, and despised often sees the wonder that we "mature", older, "wiser" people miss. Children, though often naive, see the world with wonder and curiosity, they see the glories of creation that we've grown numb to....
  1. "Because children have abounding vitality, because they are in spirit fierce and free, therefore they want things repeated and unchanged. They always say, "Do it again"; and the grown-up person does it again until he is nearly dead. For grown-up people are not strong enough to exult in monotony. But perhaps God is strong enough to exult in monotony. It is possible that God says every morning, "Do it again" to the sun; and every evening, "Do it again" to the moon. It may not be automatic necessity that makes all daisies alike; it may be that God makes every daisy separately, but has never got tired of making them. It may be that He has the eternal appetite of infancy; for we have sinned and grown old, and our Father is younger than we." - G.K. Chesterton
  2. What a rebuke! You've gotten old, spiritually old, but not in a good way in a decrepit way, you're heart has become hard and weighed down with "mature" things- cares and concerns of life,

what people think, about how much money to make, how to impress others.....

3. Jesus would point you to the glories of creation.. Psalm 19 tells us the heavens declare the glory of God and the earth shows his handiwork , day after day they are speaking, or perhaps shouting, to us -HOW GREAT GOD IS! (The Heavens are singing about how great God is; and the skies are shouting it out, "see what God has made!" Day after day..night after night..they are speaking to us) Sally Lloyd-Jones paraphrase. The question is are we listening? The wonders of God's creation are shouting out to your restless heart...Jesus says consider the lilies of the field..they neither toil nor spin and yet Solomon in all of his glory was not dressed as magnificent as they are... will not your Father take care of you???
4. C.S. Lewis understood that in allowing ourselves to fully experience and enjoy the pleasures of the world around us as God intended, we are giving Him both thanksgiving and praise. Lewis writes in his book, *Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer*: "I have tried...to make every pleasure into a channel of adoration. I don't mean simply by giving thanks for it. One must of course give thanks, but I mean something different. How shall I put it?".. Lewis is really wordy at this point but what he says is when we see or hear or experience something in the creation around us we are to follow it back to where it came from..."This heavenly fruit is instantly redolent of the orchard where it grew. This sweet air whispers of the country from whence it blows. It is a message. We know we are being touched by a finger of that right hand at which there are pleasures for evermore. There need be no question of thanks or praise as a separate event, something done afterwards. To experience the tiny theophany is itself to adore. Gratitude exclaims, very properly, 'How good of God to give me this.' Adoration says, 'What must be the quality of that Being whose far-off and momentary coruscations are like this!' One's mind runs back up the sunbeam to the sun.'

## 2. Contemplation #1

1. **Thought** - When was the last time you were struck by the magnificence of God? Not the last time you thanked God for His creation; but when was the last time you “followed the sunbeam back to the sun”? When was the last time you simply adored God as our amazing Creator, as the author of life, the originator of all beauty and magnificence, of every smell, color, and taste?
2. **Confession** - Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth, infinite in power and glory, clothed in majesty! We are ashamed to admit that we forget you. We do not give you the praise and glory, the adoration that you deserve. Forgive our ungrateful hearts for ignoring your presence and gifts of creation in the most practical and natural ways. (Let us confess our ungratefulness and our lack of adoration to the Lord.)
3. **Prayer** - Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.
4. **Scripture** - **“Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights! Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his hosts! Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars! Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the Lord! For he commanded and they were created. And he established them forever and ever; he gave a decree, and it shall not pass away. Praise the Lord from the earth, you great sea creatures and all deeps, fire and hail, snow and mist, stormy wind fulfilling his word! Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars! Beasts and all livestock, creeping things and flying birds! Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the earth! Young men and maidens together, old men and children! Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted; his majesty is above earth and heaven.” - Psalm 148**

5. **Scripture - “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.[d] 18 Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.” James 1:17-18**

6. **Prayer - (Pray Aloud Together)** O Lord, forgive us for limiting your speaking to us. You speak to us in a thousand ways every day. Holy Spirit, give us ears to listen and eyes to see our God of infinite love and care; Our Father who dresses the flowers and feeds the birds; our Father who has promised to care for us. Direct our hearts in right worship toward you, for your glory and our joy. For Jesus sake we pray. Amen.

### 3. **Submission**

1. In the first point I said, “Adoration comes from seeing a God of glory” That is true...But submission comes from seeing a God of grace, one who is our covenant God, who redeemed us and brought us back into his divine purpose.
2. Every commentator as well as the Church for centuries have seen in this Psalm not necessarily the creation as it is, but the creation as it was meant to be. Adam and Eve were created to be God’s rulers over the earth as his image bearers. **“Made a little lower than the angels.”** The words a little lower are believed to be in terms of time.. you made them for a time lower than the angels. God set Adam and Eve over the creation as it’s stewards, to tend the animals and the garden, in time they would have ruled not only over the earth but possibly the cosmos, even ruling over the angelic beings, as it says, “You have put all things under his feet” - a common biblical picture of ruling. We know from scripture that it is only mankind who is created in the image of god, not the animals, not angels. He has given mankind, though seemingly insignificant when you look at the majesty of the creation, this great honor....”Crowned him with glory and honor and set him over all the works of your hand”
  1. Side note - when you look at nature you might say “Wow, how marvelous!, how beautiful!”, but truly the most majestic thing in all of the creation are human beings - the only creature created in the image of God.

2. “It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree helping each other to one or the other of these destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all of our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations - these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit - immortal horrors or everlasting splendors.” – C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*
3. Mankind might have dominion in many areas of life, but it doesn't take much for us to realize that we do not have this dominion that is being talked about here.
4. Think about wild animals, “red in tooth and claw”, the elements of nature -hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, storms, fire and rain, sickness and disease and finally death. We do not have this dominion over life!
5. Why? Mankind lost this privileged position, his full dominion, when he rebelled against the Creator.. bringing about what we call the fall. The fall was a fall from Man's intended place of glory and honor, dominion, fellowship with God, sinlessness.. What now of God's majestic name seen through the creation??
6. The book of Hebrews, chapter 2, picks up where psalm 8 might leave us guessing.. **“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. 9 But 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 that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.”**
7. But we see Jesus! Look at the life of Jesus Christ and the dominion that he had over all things. The writer of Hebrews is showing us that

Psalm 8 is fulfilled in Jesus (the son of Man, the second Adam) the truest representation of mankind. The way man was to live in full dependence upon God, his sinless life, his dominion over creation! Jesus was made a little lower than the angels (speaking of his incarnation) Crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death.

1. This is exactly what Isaiah 53/ Philippians 2:8-9 tell us not to mention the Gospels themselves. Christ suffered, rose again and then entered his glory.
2. Isaiah 53 - **“Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.”**
3. Philippians 2:8-9 **“And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. 9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name”**
4. **Eight reasons for the excellence of God’s name as seen through Jesus**
  1. To fulfill God’s purpose for mankind vs 5-9
  2. To taste death for all vs.9
  3. To bring many sons to glory vs.10-13
  4. To destroy the devil vs.14
  5. To deliver those in bondage vs.15
  6. To become a priest for men vs.16-17
  7. To make propitiation for sins vs.17
  8. To provide help for those tested vs.18
    1. Jesus has come, and eventually the world will be under his feet and then everything will be made right. since we already know the end of the story, we know with confidence that all our prayers will end in praise! Yes! Lord how excellent is your name in all the earth!!

#### 4. Contemplation #2

1. **Thought** - O Lord, Yes, How excellent is your name in all the earth! Who are we that you think of us, who are we that you take care of us? The truth is that we are guilty of thinking both too highly of ourselves and too lowly of ourselves. The Gospel brings us this amazing balance of both humility and security. “We are more flawed and sinful than we ever dared believe, yet we are more loved and accepted than we ever dared hope at the same time.”
2. **Confession** - Let us confess the ways in which we try to establish our righteousness and our greatness apart from God and his grace. Let us confess the ways that we fail to believe what God says about how valuable and loved we are in Christ. Forgive us Lord for not locating our glory and self worth in you and you alone. Let us now confess these things to God.
3. **Thought** - **“Define yourself radically as one beloved by God. This is the true self. Every other identity is illusion.” –Brennan Manning**
4. **Scripture** - **“And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” Ephesians 2:1-7**
5. **Prayer - (Pray Aloud Together)** Majestic God, how is it possible that we fill your mind? You love and care for us so much you were willing to become a weak infant and vulnerable child, all in order to

save us. I cannot fathom such amazing love. Help me Lord to submit my life, both body and soul, to this great love that has pursued me and my good, through the cross. Help me that I would pursue your glory, and your kingdom. Help me, in all my daily interactions, to love as I have been loved, and to treat every person as a being infinitely precious in your sight... **“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”**

**Closing prayer: Father, now may our sincere worship be directed toward you, not only in words, but in deed and in truth. For Jesus’ sake. Amen**