



Psalms of David (Part 9)
How Great is Our God Psalm 145
Pastor Ted Cunningham

Today, we are concluding our series of The Psalms of David. If you are new to our church, we've taken a couple of months now to go through the Psalms written by David. Actually, we are going to continue in the Psalms for Christmas, but we are going to be looking at Messianic Psalms, not all of them written by David, but today, we conclude in Psalm 145.

We are going to be looking at this word, *great*. It's kind of like *love*; we overuse the word *love* in our culture. *I love ice cream, I love this, I love that*. We do the same with the word *great*. Did you have a good day today? I didn't have a good day; I had a great day today. Did you watch that Game last night? That was a great game. You ask my father-in-law... I've known Denny Freitag for 30 years. And no matter what he's doing or where he's at, I can ask him, "Denny, how's life going and he'll go "I'm doing Tony the Tiger Great! He uses the word *great* all the time. Our president loves the word *great*. He uses the word all the time.

I think today, whenever you think about God, however big you think God is, think bigger. However great you think God is, think greater. However mighty you think God is, think mightier. Because that's where we're going. As you look at Psalm 145 to 150, the word praise occurs 46 times. When we think about God, how great and how big and how grand he is, we are going to see today we can't even fathom how great he is. He's unsearchable. And when we are left with that thought, we should be left in awe, which should lead us to praise.

Here's what happens in Psalm 145; and it's almost like a summary of the whole book of Psalms. He's overwhelmed by the greatness of God. And at the same time, God responds to those who love him. You've heard me say it and I'm going to keep saying it and maybe at the end of the series I just take a break, but if you go to see the show David at Sight and Sound, you cannot be out in the bathroom for the start of the second half because it will take you to Psalm 145. It will take you to many of the Psalms, but to me, it takes me to Psalm 145 because it starts off really simple with David and his harp in the middle of the stage and then pretty soon, all of the crowd is sitting there in the Galaxies as he is singing before the Lord. That's where we start in Psalm 145: 1-3.

I will exalt you, my God the King;

I will praise your name for ever and ever.

² Every day I will praise you

and extol your name for ever and ever. And Verse 3 is where I want to spend a little bit of time with an illustration today. He says, ***Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom.***

Your translation of the Bible of may read *unsearchable*. And the Hebrew word for unsearchable implies that Gods greatness is so vast it cannot be fully measured, explored, or completely understood by us mere humans. He is so great! Think bigger, think greater, think more powerful, think more mighty. His nature is infinite and there will always be new things we are discovering. And David shares with us that the heavens declare the glory of God. The heavens are telling the story of how great God is.

If you want to be in awe and find time to worship... and we do this all the time. I do this with sunsets. I type in sunset on my search in my photos. I have roughly 16 thousand photos on my phone. That's why my iCloud is up to whatever I have to pay for that storage each month. But I'm keeping it primarily for the sunsets because when you type in sunset, hundreds of ... Why am I still... at 51 years old, I've seen plenty of sunsets. Why is it when I see one, I will still stop and take a picture as though I've never seen one. This is speaking to the greatness of God. Look up and see our great God at work.

So, what I want to do today is spend just a couple of minutes with an illustration I heard for the first time 20 years ago. Louie Giglio and Chris Tomlin were on tour with that last song we just sang – How great is our God. Louie Giglio takes us into just our galaxy, which is the Milky Way. I listened to this illustration several times over the last couple of weeks and I wrote down all the numbers... I'm going to be throwing a lot of numbers at you in the next couple of minutes.

I had a thought about a week ago that I should probably fact check all of these numbers, like you do with me. I should probably see if he's right.

Some of the numbers have changed 20 years later. Now think about this... the Hubble Telescope went up in 1990 so about 15 years later was when Pastor Louie is giving this illustration, so we're not 20 years out, we are 30 years into the discovery. In the talk, Louie says "Think about this... As he shared with passion about the Milky Way Galaxy. He says, "And we are just one of hundreds and hundreds of billions of Galaxies that God created." I'm like, Is that true? Have we found more? I googled it and I just want you to know everything you read on the internet is true. This is AI so how can AI be wrong?

But now, look at the new numbers. There are an estimated 2 trillion galaxies in the observable or known universe, which is... I love it... it's a significant increase from the previous estimate from a hundred to 200 billion.

When we use terms today... and we are going to get beyond billion and trillion and go to quadrillion. I think it's important that we learn that term as our national debt approaches it. This, to me... I was getting these massive estimates and I'm like, that, again, is proof of how God is unsearchable. As far as Hubble can see and the discoveries it has made, it hasn't even scratched the surface of our great God. Then I'm like, *how many stars are in just the Milky way?* Here's what I got. "The Milky Way contains an estimated 100 to 400 billion stars. This is like how our government budgets. We're just going to go somewhere between 100 and 400 billion... They throw these big numbers around. I can't do that with my taxes. How much you owe this year, Ted? *Anywhere between a thousand and 100 thousand.* I have to be a little more accurate than that.

Again, all of this is showing us as much as we have discovered, we will never be able to fully explore or completely understand how great God is. And this shouldn't leave us frustrated, this should lead the follower of Jesus left in awe.

So, what I want to do is we are going to look at four stars today, just in our Galaxy. So, numbers you need to do math and the students are like, it's been a wonderful Thanksgiving break. *We are jumping into school way too early here.* But when God said Let there be light, light came out of his mouth at 186 thousand miles per second. When we use the term light year, we are talking about 5.88 trillion miles. So, I'm going to throw some numbers up there as we talk about these four stars. You are going to have to multiply a couple of times the number of light years times 5.88trillion.

Why we want to look at stars to go to Psalm 33: 6 – ***By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth.***

I love this expression that Pastor Louie loves to use. We serve a star breathing God who spoke them into existence. So, these numbers will be overwhelming and that's the whole point. I've already got people sending me corrected numbers. I was fact-checked at the 8:15 gathering. I'm okay with that because your AI may be in a different mood at the moment you asked questions. But I want to start in our solar system. It's what Louie calls our little the cul-de-sac of the Galaxy of the Milky Way.

How many stars are in our solar system? We got a politician that said "a lot." One, who said "one?" You said one, what is it? The sun. Alright, give him a prize

So, we are going to start with the sun. It's the only star in our solar system. It's 93 million miles away, so think about that. That's why it takes the sun's ray with 10,000 degrees Fahrenheit on the surface of the sun. It takes about eight minutes for that ray to hit your skin here in Branson, Missouri,

This is the part I love. You know I'm going to have a lot of illustrations using a golf ball in the weeks ahead. If the earth was a golf ball, the sun would be 15 feet in diameter. So, you can ruffly fit a million golf balls inside of the Sun. 960 thousand earths fit inside the sun.

This is the smallest star we will look at over the next couple of minutes. Pastor Louie says The one the absolutely reeked him as a teenager... if you've never heard the name Louie online Giglio, he is passionate about apologetics. Actually, my son Carson, in junior high, his apologetics professor at Liberty university was Louie Gigglio. Carson just became a facts guru, passionate about the same study. He said it was the star in our Galaxy called Betelgeuse which can also be referred to as beetle juice. So, kids, use Beetlejuice if that helps you remember. Beetlejuice is 640 light years away, so multiply... Again, we are not in all these other trillion Galaxies, we are in the Milky Galaxy. It's 640 light years. So, that's 640 times 5.88 trillion. That's how far away it is.

And now we are getting into bigger numbers. 262 trillion earths fit inside. So, if the earth was a golf ball, I would tell you to go to New York, go to midtown, go up to the Empire State Building, set this on the ground, back up from it, and look up, and then take and then add to where it's six empire state buildings stacked on top of each other and that's the size of Beatle geuse or Beetlejuice. This number of 262 trillion earths fitting inside... You're like, how many golf balls is that? That would be like filling arrowhead

stadium to the top with golf balls, three thousand times. Louie said that this wrecked him as a teenager when he studied Betelgeuse. He said “up to that, as a teenager, my prayers were advising God, counseling God, correcting God, suggesting things to God, drawing diagrams for God, reviewing things with God. Kind of putting God on my courses when I realized how big God is and how great he is.”

But this is not the biggest star in our galaxy. Let's go to star number 3 – Muceppie, to do that let's do a little bit of math. That sounds like something out of Lion King, but I love it.

Muceppie, also known as the Garnet star, is 3,000 light years away. Again, still in the Milky Way Galaxy. So, take 3,000 times 5.88 trillion and now here's the size... It's hard to comprehend. 2.7 quadrillion earths fit inside. So, let's do a little bit of math. Now I would tell you to go from New York to California and go to the Golden Gate Bridge and add another Golden Gate Bridge to it then down on the end of the golden Gate Bridge. Add another Golden Gate Bridge to it. That is the size of Muceppie. Let's do some math so you can understand quadrillion because our minds can't really wrap around that. A million seconds ago, was how long ago, roughly.

So how much would you say is a billion seconds ago? September? May? No, it would have been 1993. A trillion seconds ago. 29 thousand seven hundred BC.

I'm still a young earth guy, so don't freak out when I get into these big numbers. So, quadrillion seconds ago, is 30.8 million years ago. That's the whole point we are trying to make and yet, Muceppie is still not the biggest star.

Let me give you one more star because you are so enthralled with this illustration. Canis Majoris. Technical term Big Dog Star. Four thousand, 892 light years away. So, multiply that times 5.88 trillion and seven quadrillion earths fit inside. If the earth was a golf ball.

Canis Majoris would be the size of mount Everest. Six miles into the sky. I know some of you have been there. Like how can I fathom how many golf balls fit inside of Mt Everest. It would be like blanketing the state of Texas with Golf balls 22 inches deep. We are talking big.

So, what is the point of all of this besides wanting to use more golf illustrations. This reminds us that God is bigger, greater, grander than we can ever comprehend and we stand in awe of his might, power, and glory, and all God's people said... Amen.

What is the purpose of all this? I like how John Piper sums it all up. Nothing is more clear to me than that the purpose of the universe is for hallowing Gods name. It leads us to praise and leads us to worship.

So, as we think about these stars and the size they are that God breathed out of his mouth, and we think about the earth being a golf ball... How many dimples are on this golf ball? A bunch. There are 300 dimples on this golf ball which means there are 8 billion people on the earth. That would be 27 million dots per dimple. Pastor Louie says the whole point of that is when I think about this, I get this shrinking feeling. But what we must understand is our great God not only knows your name, he cares about you. not, only does he know your name and care about you, he sent his son Jesus to die for you. when I think about how special this place is and the people that are on this small, little globe we call earth, and how much he cares for us. What this should do for you and for me... What some of you are doing, because we experience it all week long, you obsess over your problems and your place in life. And your problems are great. That today, maybe you would stop obsessing over the size of your problems and start declaring how great your God is. Because this is what just captured David, this is what took David and made him go, “look around, look how big God is, and he cares for me?” John Piper says “When we lose our grip on the greatness of God, we lose a divine equilibrium in life, and we become increasingly vulnerable to the problems overwhelming us. We begin to make God small. And he is great. When I don’t understand what God is doing in my life or the world around me, I can still praise him. I think that’s what we take away from this series. We can still lift our hands and worship and go, “I don’t know everything going on...

And some of you in here and across campus and online right now, you have never felt more lonely. I’ve been listening to it a lot to that song by Cody Johnson – *Traveling Soldiers*. I listen to it multiple times a day. It’s kind of a sad story of a young man that meets a waitress in a diner and he’s going off to Vietnam, and he says I know you probably have a boyfriend, but I don’t care. I ain’t got no one to write a letter to, can I write one to you? Then he dies in battle and he is coming home, but he’s going to come home to be buried and it says, the list of names read, and no one seemed to care, except for the piccolo player in the marching band who he fell in love with before he went off to war.

I sit there and go *do you know how many people feel that? Especially this time of year?* They feel lonely, feel isolated. Feel like no one cares. And we start talking about a great big mighty powerful God and you’re like what does he want to do with me? Everything.

He knows you. He cares about you. He never stops thinking about you. That's our great God. We cannot lose a grip, church, on the greatness of God. We must teach our children to stand in awe of the mighty power and glory of our great God. And that's the next few verses.

Verse 4 – ***One generation commends your works to another. They tell of your mighty acts. They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty and I will meditate on your wonderful works.***

Now pause there for just a second because David is not only thinking about the greatness of God that no one can fathom, he's unsearchable. But then bring it closer to home it's like this same God saved me from wild animals. David's going, this is the same God that through me, took down a giant. It's the same God that took a shepherd boy and made him a king. That's who we are talking about and I will declare this. They tell the power of your awesome works, and I will proclaim your great deeds. They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness.

We've been say this through this whole series. These Psalms are meant to be sung. When you don't know what to pray, open your bible to the Psalms. When you feel alone, isolated, when you feel like your problems are too big and nobody will understand, you open to the Psalms, and you read, and you meditate, and you proclaim. Speak it out loud. Do you know how many times Amy walks in on me in a week and I'm talking to myself? She thinks I'm talking to myself. I'm reading stuff out loud. Sometimes it's practicing for this and all these numbers. I'm not a big numbers guy but I just had to throw all this math at you today. But there are other times I'm praying out loud, reading the Psalms out loud. Proclaim, sing, pray the Psalms in your life.

I want to just summarize the rest of the Psalm as we think about our great God, our star-breathing God.

Verse 8 says he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.

Verse 13 says, He is trustworthy in all he promises.

Verse 14 says he upholds all who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down.

Verse 15 and 16... - I love this description that David gives. Our great God opens his hands and feeds us at the proper time. What a great passage for us over the last three days.

I'm going home today to eat leftovers. Anybody else eating leftovers after the services today? We have eaten so much over the last three days. How grateful we are for all that God has provided for us. And this is what is spurring on our generosity when I think about the people around the world that do not have what you and I just consumed over the last three days. And it was your gracious heavenly Father that provided that for you. and now he is asking us to provide that for others.

We get to now go with all that you've done in November to tell people "Hey, You matter." Yes, God is great. He is mighty, he is powerful, and you matter to him.

Verse 18 – our great God is near to all who call on him. Just think about it. Now take that Hubble telescope and go as far as you can and guess what? God is not distant from you. He is near.

I've been told by friends who have gone through open heart surgery or bypass surgery that the day or two following that had been some of the darkest days of their lives. They couldn't speak. Some of them had tubes in for the first day out of the surgery and then they would come out. They couldn't speak, the heaviness and they are told to walk down the hall by the next day or two and I've had friends tell me, "Ted, a walk down the hall not even 50 yards felt like I was running a marathon."

I had a pastor friend last week – 55 years old so this was hitting a little closer to home. He was doing his regular physical. He was doing the stress test and had a heart attack. During the stress test the next day, he had quadruple bypass surgery. I've been thinking about him since he's only three years older than I am. I just texted him last night and I said, "I hope you're recovery, Brother, is exceeding your expectation. I'm praising God that he is giving you more years with us."

He said, "I've never felt God closer. I've never felt him more or thou *I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil because he is with me.* the God of the universe, known and unknown knows your name. He knows every detail of your life. He knows every concern and anxious thought that you have right now.

Verse 19 – he hears our cry. Cry out to him. Pastor Piper says, "You can't pray about a problem he doesn't know and care about. None. No matter how small you think they are.

Verse 20 – our star-breathing God watches over all who love him. couple of weeks ago, we did baptisms and I did baptisms at 8:15. I always ask the same question when people come into the tub. I want them to declare with their mouth what they are doing with a yes or no question. I can't deliver these question without that lower lip quiver and it's usually answered with a lower lip quiver.

I will simply ask, "Do you believe Jesus is the son of God. Yes. Do you believe he lived a sinless life and went to the cross for your sins and for my sins? Yes. Is he your savior and is he your Lord? Yes.

Have you repented of your sins and now you are going in the way he has called you to? Yes.

Do you believe Jesus was raised from the dead? Yes, I believe that, and into the tub we go.

I think about for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him will not perish and have everlasting life.

The Bible says for all have sinned and fall short of the glory God and that the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

In Romans 10: 9 what do we read> If you will declare with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that he has been raised from the dead, you will be saved.

Our great God sent his son to die for us here on what we refer to as planet earth. And I am one of eight billion dots on this golf ball that he died for, that Jesus gave his life for.

So, today, as we close, I'm going to ask you to bow with me. The prayer team will be down front. Isolated, alone, problems big, maybe there are food needs in your family. That's what the prayer team is down front for, to guide you in the right direction and to help you. but for some, food and relationships are not your greatest need. your greatest need is placing faith alone in "Christ alone. Repenting of your sins and trusting Jesus as your Savior.

Father, in the name of Jesus, we are overwhelmed with how great you are, how mighty you are, how powerful you are, and you are unsearchable. No one can fathom how great you are, so we stand in awe before you, and we praise you. All we know to do is praise. And at the same time, how great you are, you are still near to us, you hear our cry, you

care for us, you forgive us, and for that I pray for that one who is hearing it for the first time today and responding, letting the Holy Spirit call them by name that they will place faith alone in Christ alone today and turn their life around and run to you, our great God.

We pray this in the name of Jesus, and everyone agreed and said... Amen.