

August 2

Lesson:

- When You Need to Feel Valued

Scripture ~ Psalm 8

Today we are continuing in the sermon series Summer in the Psalms. Today we will be looking at Psalm 8, another Psalm song written by David. This Psalm begins with David praising God and, more specifically, His majesty, His majestic name.

What does the word majesty mean to you? When you hear that something is described as being majestic, what comes to your mind?

For me, the first thing that pops in my brain is mountains. Now because live in Texas we don't get to see mountains unless we travel for a long while. Who has seen mountains? Did they seem majestic to you?

Webster defines majestic as this: *having or exhibiting majesty*. Super helpful right? Majesty is defined as this: *sovereign power, authority, or dignity OR royal bearing or aspect : grandeur; greatness or splendor of quality or character*. So with that in mind, let's look at our scripture - Psalm 8:

*O LORD, our Sovereign,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

*You have set your glory above the heavens.
Out of the mouths of babes and infants
you have founded a bulwark because of your foes,
to silence the enemy and the avenger.*

*When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars that you have established;
what are human beings that you are mindful of them,
mortals^[a] that you care for them?*

*Yet you have made them a little lower than God,^[b]
and crowned them with glory and honour.
You have given them dominion over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under their feet,
all sheep and oxen,
and also the beasts of the field,
the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,
whatever passes along the paths of the seas.*

*O LORD, our Sovereign,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

How does David's description here match the definition we talked about?

If you were at VBS this past week we sang a song that perfectly illustrates this.
Listen to the lyrics and think about what stands out to you:

Oh Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name.
Oh Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name.
The moon and the stars and the heavens all proclaim.
Oh Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name.

In all the earth and the herd and the birds in the sky now.
Sing your praise loud.
The fish in the sea and I know you made me
To scream the truth out.
Sing your praises loud.

Oh Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name.
Oh Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name.
The moon and the stars and the heavens all proclaim.
Oh Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name.

In all the earth and the herd and the birds in the sky now.
Sing your praise loud.
The fish in the sea and I know you made me
To scream the truth out.
Sing your praises loud.

Oh Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name.
Oh Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name.
The moon and the stars and the heavens all proclaim.
Oh Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name.

Lord, you are powerful.
Lord, you are beautiful.
Glory and honor your crown.
Lord, you are powerful.
Lord, you are beautiful.
We sing your praises loud.

Oh Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name.
Oh Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name.
The moon and the stars and the heavens all proclaim.
Oh Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name.

What stands out to you in these lyrics? How does it line up with our psalm?

The lyrics of the song seem like they were pulled directly from David's Psalm,

don't they? The next time you look at the stars or the birds in the sky or the fish in the sea, remember God's majesty.

God's majesty that David speaks to is also a reminder about how big God is and how small we are in the grand scheme of things.

Despite humans being "small" compared to God's majestic creation, how does God treat us? What does He trust us with?

God entrusted humankind with being caretakers of His majestic creation. In Genesis Adam and Eve are instructed to take care of all the animals and plants that God had just created. We continue in this modern age to be called to take care of God's majestic creation.

In this Psalm David asks what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honour. You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet.

David is flabbergasted that God created the whole earth and everything in it and then made humankind the caretakers of that creation.

How can we be better caretakers of God's creation?

We can pick up trash when we see it, plant trees and plants, take care of animals when we can and so many other things. We can also be kind to one another, and like we talked about last week, try our best to live in unity with one another. Because we are also God's majestic creation!

The Psalm also has a line that many believe point to Jesus:

Out of the mouths of babes and infants

You have founded a bulwark because of your foes,
To silence the enemy and the avenger.

Jesus came in the most vulnerable human form – a newborn baby – so that human kind could be redeemed. He defeated the ultimate enemy death so that we could live with God forever.

How does Jesus coming as a baby contradict how the Israelites thought He would come as their savior?

The Israelites thought they would be “rescued” by a mighty king and warrior. By coming as a helpless infant Jesus showcased that there is strength in what we would normally perceive as weakness. God rarely fits in boxes we try to put Him in and Jesus coming as an infant is another example of that.

Is there anything else about this lesson or Psalm you would like to discuss?

August 9, 2026

Lesson :

- When Life Doesn't Seem Fair

Scripture ~ Psalm 73:1-26

Today we are continuing in the sermon series Summer in the Psalms. Today we will be looking at Psalm 73. Unlike many of the Psalms we have looked at this summer, this one was not written by David. It was written by Asaph, one of David's chief musicians and worship leaders. It is a deeply honest poem, a lament of individual faith that echoes the books of Job and Ecclesiastes. Asaph was a Levite worship leader appointed during the reigns of David and Solomon. This Psalm explores themes of injustice and life not being fair.

Have you ever thought life was unfair? Have you ever lamented to God that life is unfair? What circumstance or circumstances made you think life is unfair?

For better or worse life is often not fair, or at least appears to not be fair. We sometimes, like the author of this Psalm, can have a crisis of faith when the righteous suffer and the wicked thrive. But God's justice is not the same as ours and God's time is not ours. With that in mind, let's look at our scripture – Psalm 73:1-26

*Truly God is good to Israel,
to those who are pure in heart.
But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled;
my steps had nearly slipped.
For I was envious of the arrogant;
I saw the prosperity of the wicked.*

*For they have no pain;
their bodies are sound and sleek.
They are not in trouble as others are;
they are not plagued like other people.
Therefore pride is their necklace;*

*violence covers them like a garment.
Their eyes swell out with fatness;
their hearts overflow with follies.
They scoff and speak with malice;
loftily they threaten oppression.
They set their mouths against heaven,
and their tongues range over the earth.*

*Therefore the people turn and praise them
and find no fault in them
And they say, "How can God know?
Is there knowledge in the Most High?"
Such are the wicked;
always at ease, they increase in riches.
All in vain I have kept my heart clean
and washed my hands in innocence.
For all day long I have been plagued
and am punished every morning.*

*If I had said, "I will talk on in this way,"
I would have been untrue to the circle of your children.
But when I thought how to understand this,
it seemed to me a wearisome task,
until I went into the sanctuary of God;
then I perceived their end.
Truly you set them in slippery places;
you make them fall to ruin.
How they are destroyed in a moment,
swept away utterly by terrors!
They are like a dream when one awakes;
on awaking you despise their phantoms.*

*When my soul was embittered,
when I was pricked in heart,
I was stupid and ignorant;
I was like a brute beast toward you.
Nevertheless, I am continually with you;
you hold my right hand.
You guide me with your counsel,
and afterward you will receive me with honor.*

*Whom have I in heaven but you?
And there is nothing on earth that I desire other than you.
My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*

There is a lot to unpack here. Let's start with the first few verses, specifically verses 1-14. Asaph admits his faith has nearly failed (*But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled; my steps had nearly slipped.*). The next few lines are the explanation as to why his faith faltered. He witnessed the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer. He laments, asking what is the point of doing the right thing if we are still going to suffer. This is some heavy theological questions that experts have wrestled with for centuries. Before we really get into it, let me ask a question.

Did God promise an easy life for followers of Jesus? Was Jesus Himself able to escape the frustrations of life even before He was crucified?

Of course God never promises an easy life for believers. In fact early believers faced real dangers and even now there are places in the world where believing in Jesus is a crime.

Jesus Himself, the only perfect person to ever walk the earth, experienced relationship frustrations and loneliness, emotional anguish and injustice. If we want to talk about life being unfair Jesus has the ultimate argument - tried and punished for crimes He never committed. All so that we can be redeemed and live with God forever. Talk about unfairness. But I for one am grateful for that!

Have you ever experienced something like what Jesus experienced that was seemingly unfair, whether that be relationship frustrations or emotional anguish or true injustice? Are you willing to share what happened and what that was like for you?

We are all going to go through things in life that seem unfair. The key is to keep our eyes focused on God. We also might, like Asaph, assume things that aren't actually true or jump to conclusions based on incomplete information. Asaph confesses to envy AND to having judged ONLY by what he saw.

Have any of you jumped to a conclusion based on limited information that later turned out to be not quite what you thought?

We can all easily fall into the trap of assuming things or jumping to wrong conclusions. Because for better or worse the human brain tries to make sense of the world around us. In the best of times this is super useful – our brains fill in missing information that often keeps us safe. But sometimes our brains can fill in missing information that is absolutely false.

Let's circle back to the author of the Psalm. Asaph realizes that looking only at his earthly circumstances instead of God's eternal realm is what causes his faith to shake. From [Crossway.com](https://www.crossway.com/): *Asaph nearly speaks his bitter doubts aloud, but stops to avoid misleading others. He goes into God's sanctuary (place of worship) and gains an eternal, spiritual perspective on human destiny.*

When you are feeling the unfairness of life do you turn to God? Do you go to church? Do you read scripture? Do you listen to worship music? What have you found helpful in the past?

The last two lines of this Psalm are the most powerful according to many. Let's review them:

*My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*

Numerous worship songs, including the popular I Will Rise by Chris Tomlin, repeat these words.

What do these lines mean to you?

As humans we will mess up. We will find ourselves feeling jealous or that life is unfair. Our hearts will betray us. We will have to remind ourselves over and over to keep our minds and hearts and souls focused on Jesus and HIS way

instead of our own. But the last line reminds us that we do not have to do it alone. That God is our strength – NO MATTER WHAT. And thank God for that!

Going forward, when life seems unfair, what will you do?

August 16

Lesson :

- When the Seasons Change

Scripture ~ Psalm 121

Today we are continuing in the sermon series Summer in the Psalms. Today we will be looking at Psalm 121. This Psalm is known as a Psalm of ascents.

What does it mean to ascend something?
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Ascend means to go up or climb, right. Like when we climb mountains. Well some of us like to climb mountains....but the point is this should be a Psalm of going up, so a positive Psalm. With that in mind, let's look at our scripture - Psalm 121.

*I lift up my eyes to the hills—
from where will my help come?
My help comes from the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.*

*He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.*

*He who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.*

*The LORD is your keeper;
the LORD is your shade at your right hand.
The sun shall not strike you by day
nor the moon by night.*

*The LORD will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.*

*The LORD will keep
your going out and your coming in
from this time on and forevermore.*

Thank goodness this is a much shorter and more straight forward Psalm for us to examine this week! So we already said this was a Psalm of ascent. It was often recited by travelers journeying to Jerusalem in ancient times. Let's take a look at some of the verses and think about why this would be a good Psalm for travelers.

The author begins this Psalm with looking UP to the hills – where his help comes from. Where does the author say his help comes from?

God, right. He proclaims that his help comes from the Lord – the maker of heaven and earth. This indicates that if the creator of universe can create all He did, then surely He can help the Psalmist as well. Travelers to Jerusalem were surrounded by mountains – often associated with danger, robbers or pagan shrines. This prompted the Psalmist to ask the anxious question about where his help would come from. The answer (God) immediately shifts focus from earthly dangers to the heavenly realm.

When you are facing danger (either real or perceived) what helps you calm down?

The answers to this question can vary greatly – we all use different tactics to calm ourselves and what works for one person might not work for someone else. Deep breathing can help, listening to music (worship or other) can help, reading God's word can help. There's also an exercise where you list things you know to be true – things you can sense physically – in order to calm a racing brain. An example of this would be listing 5 things you can see in the room, or 5 things you can hear in a space, etc. This helps our brain anchor to something tangible. Like we talked about last week, sometimes our brain fills in information for us and we imagine things that aren't true.

How many of you started school this last week? Hopefully none of you felt like you were in danger but did any of you feel nervous or anxious? What helped calm you?

Change is a part of life – for better or worse. We all will experience seasons in life where everything seems to be changing at once. The key to not only surviving these seasons but to thrive in them is to remain focused on God and the bigger picture. This Psalm is a good tool for that. Because while everything else in our life changes, God remains the same.

Verses 3 & 4 speak about God, the one who watches over us, never sleeping or slumbering. What does that mean to you?

God watches over us always, throughout every season of change, and we can ALWAYS come to him with our prayers. With our tears. With our joys. God in that way is very much like a parent anxiously waiting to hear about our day. In contrast with our human weakness, God is an unmoving every present resource for us as believers. The Maker of Heaven and Earth is also our Father and watches over us and protects us throughout every season of our lives.

Verses 5 & 6 describe God as our keeper and that He is always at our right hand. Do you find that hard to believe, particularly when you haven't felt Him or heard His voice in a while?

It is perfectly understandable and fair to wonder if God is there, particularly in seasons where we don't hear His voice. It is unlikely that God will appear to us in a burning bush like Moses so we have to be diligent to discern what is from Him and what isn't.

How do you think we can better be in tune with God's voice?

Like any other relationship we can easier hear and understand His voice if we are close to Him. We remain close to Him by reading our bible, coming to church and youth, listening to worship music, etc. And for better or worse sometimes it's easier to see/hear His voice when we look back on our lives. It does become easier as we mature in our walk with Him and He is always with us – even if we can't necessarily feel or sense Him.

The final few lines of the Psalm are this:

*The LORD will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.
The LORD will keep
your going out and your coming in
from this time on and forevermore.*

The Psalmist declares that the Lord will protect us from all evil. Does this mean literally or figuratively?

This line does not mean that nothing bad will ever happen to us right? It means that as believers the Lord is keeping our souls – safe from paying for our sins because Jesus did that on the cross. No matter what happens to us in this lifetime we will spend eternity with Him if we believe in Jesus. There's also some experts who believe that this protection from evil refers to keeping us safe from our own fears and anxiety if only we will ask Him for divine protection.

Finally those last two lines indicate God is watching over us always – from the moment we are born to the day we leave this earth. What a powerfully reassuring thing for anyone going through this life which so often seems chaotic and uncertain. One thing that is certain is God and His provision over us.
