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**Series:** Knowing God

**Date:** January 9, 2022

**Speaker:** Spence Shelton, Lead Pastor

**Text:** Psalm 8

**Title:** Finding Self-Worth in the Greatness of God

### **Advent Giving Update**

Quick advent giving update. Our church tries to practice what we preach when it comes to money. And since we preach from scripture that we should give a tithe, 10%, to God's work through the local church...we want to model that by giving away 10% of our income to God's mission in the world. Well for this past Christmas season we decided to bump our giving from 10% to 1/3. Or 33%. And give it to international missions' work. Now we aren't pulling anything away from our giving to our local partners here in Charlotte. Still giving there. This is just above and beyond that. But let me tell you what we were able to do by doing it this way. Christmas of '20 - we took up something called a Christmas missions offering. And you gave 80k to it. Well, last month ya'll was our second highest giving month in history. And because of that - Our 1/3 gift to international missions was \$130k!!!

Speaking OF - Mercy Nairobi Interest Meeting this Saturday Night!

### **Intro**

Psalm 8. We are in a sermon series called "Knowing God" where we are looking at the book of Psalms. Our purpose is really simple - God is a person we are meant to know. He's not an abstract force or just a divine rule maker, he's a person. And he made us to KNOW him. Not just know *about* him but know him. And I think that's the big gap people experience in their faith. They know information but it's not leading anywhere because they don't have a relationship with God. They have information, not **relationship**. And so, this month we are trying to make a shift from a faith that is primarily INFORMATION and move into a faith that is activated and empowered through a relationship with God. The psalms give us words for this relationship.

What I love about this Psalm, written so long ago, is that **it gives a really powerful, better word to our present-day quest for what pop culture calls "self-worth."** Older word would be self-esteem. That word was introduced into our world in the 18th century by David Hume. Who labeled this perspective - **the kind of value you ascribe to yourself** - as self-esteem? And with each generation this perspective has risen in importance, especially in the western world which is highly individualistic. In fact, at present the call for valuing yourself is as loud and constant as it's ever been.





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Mantras like Be proud of who you are. Groups are trying to flip the whole world on its head so that I am free to be me. I am enough. The world around us tells us what is true to me, that's what is true.

The problem is - **as the call for self-worth is at an all-time high, so is the craving for it.**

More self-help books than ever. More time on screens scrolling for encouragement. More life coaches, more movements to join. And yet, our sense of self-worth has never been lower. We are all more fragile. That's why we are so easily offended right now. We are fragile. We aren't confident in who we are. So, we fight or flee.

Don't you feel this? Like more than ever people just need a hug.

Our collective history with self-worth is showing us **the more we try to validate ourselves, the more insecure we are becoming.** It's like we are drinking salt water. The more we drink the words of self-worth the world has to offer, the thirstier we get. It doesn't quench our thirst; it dries us out.

The truth is - the human heart was made to search for self-worth. It is a built-in need. So, you aren't crazy or wrong to desire to be loved and valued. **But if nothing in this world**

**satisfies that desire, we must look beyond it.** In fact, C.S. Lewis said it best

*If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world."*

And that is what our sermon is going to explore today. Psalm 8 is going to show us a soul satisfying, soul uplifting perspective on our self-worth. I'll go ahead and tell you what it is because you might get a little offended at first. The psalm is going to tell you to LOOK UP! Get lost in the greatness of God...and then it's going to spend most of its verses telling you how that GREAT GOD loves you, cares for you, & has a purpose for you. THAT GOD has better words for you than anybody in this world does. Words that can quench your thirst. Fresh water for your soul. So, you gotta let it unfold. And I believe you will be encouraged.

The title for today is

**Psalm 8: Finding Self-Worth in the Greatness of God**

This Psalm is going to show us that the way to a satisfied heart that no longer needs the praise of people...no longer needs the search...is taking our eyes off ourselves and fixing them on the greatness of God. And as we are awed by who HE is...As we are captivated by the GREATNESS of God...that great God actually speaks the



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words that will finally quench our thirst for self-worth. He speaks value & purpose over us. And it's awesome. There are only 9 verses, but they are packed. And I'm going to show you the process they unfold for **finding a better identity in the Greatness of God.**

LORD, our Lord,  
how magnificent is your name throughout the earth!  
You have covered the heavens with your majesty.

The first step in seeing yourself rightly is seeing God rightly. There is nothing about us in verse 1. And that is very, very good for us. The very best thing for our self-image is actually FIRST - forgetting about ourselves all together and being wholly captivated by God. To get a better self-image we need a better God image. Now remember I told you we are going to get to what HE says about us. But there is actually great freedom in forgetting about yourself. In fact, it is the **first step** to discovering the self-worth God has designed for you:

Celebrate the Magnificent Universe Covering Majesty of God

Lord our Lord - That's actually not repetitive. In Hebrew these are 2 different words. The first is Yahweh - the first one, with all caps, is a translation of the name Yahweh—not a generic name for God, but the personal name of Israel's God built on the statement in Exodus 3:14, "I am who I am." God named himself Yahweh, that is, the absolutely existing one—the one who simply is, who did not come into being, and does not go out of being, and never changes in his being, because he is absolute being. He depends on nothing for his being and all else depends on him.

This is *our* Lord. This is the point of the Psalm. The psalm begins and ends in the praise of the God who is Magnificent. There is no place on earth where God is not the I AM. He is God over UNC Charlotte, He is God over uptown, he is God over Waxhaw & Wedding & Matthews & Gastonia. He is majestic in his reign over your home, over your bed, and that same God is majestic in his reign over Jerusalem, Over Mecca, over the alps & Himalayas, his greatness reigns over the great wall of china, over the streets of Nairobi, and in the most remote corner of the frozen tundra of Russia. He is more beautiful and powerful than all things everywhere in the earth.

And the heavens - the stars & the planets and the galaxies - David is saying - they are his canvas. And he has painted



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his majesty upon them. **Which is why you find much more AWE and WONDER looking at the stars than you do looking at a mirror.** Because it is better for your soul to be reminded of the greatness of God before even considering yourself. He is Magnificent! And the aim of the Psalm is to lift your eyes up off yourself and call you to WORSHIP. GOD.

The connection to last week in Psalm 46 - be still and know that I am God. This starts with LORD OUR LORD HOW MAGNIFICENT IS YOUR NAME! You want to experience the fullness of knowing God? The first step is take your eyes off yourself and look at the majesty of God! BE STILL! WORSHIP!

Then the Psalm takes what feels to me like a strange turn.

2 From the mouths of infants and nursing babies, you have established a stronghold on account of your adversaries in order to silence the enemy and the avenger.

What are we to do with verse 2 here? The rest of the psalm is about us and God. But then there's verse 2. What are we to make of the mouths of infants and nursing

babies? God brought victory over the enemy, over the devil...through the mouths of small children?

Well, first off - if he really is this God who makes the universe his canvas...then he is not threatened by any enemy. Even the devil himself. These are not threats to God. God can defeat them however he pleases. And so, he chooses not the strong, but the weak, to be his instruments of victory. The mouths of infants & nursing babies. Who can't really even speak. They babble. And through these weakest of humans God establishes victory over our greatest enemy.

There is an important reminder here of a truth that runs throughout the scriptures. God seems to always bring his victory through the weak. Through the youngest, through the smallest, through the outsider. It shouldn't surprise us then that he came to earth not as a warrior but as a baby. Because

27 God has chosen what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen what is weak in the world to shame the strong. -- 1 Corinthians 1:27 (CSB)

In fact, Jesus comes along and actually gives full meaning to Psalm 8. Bible reading 101 is always let the bible interpret the bible before you do. And Jesus himself makes the meaning of Psalm 8 really rich and clear in Matthew 21



14 The blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them. 15 When the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonders that he did and the children shouting in the temple, "Hosanna' to the Son of David!" they were indignant 16 and said to him, "Do you hear what these children are saying?"

Jesus replied, "Yes, have you never read:

You have prepared praise from the mouths of infants and nursing babies?" -- Matthew 21:14-16

Why did the priests become indignant? Because they were thinking...THESE CHILDREN ARE SAYING THAT this is the messiah! Aren't you going to rebuke these ignorant children? Are you going to let them call you by such a holy title? And Jesus says...YES. Because he uses the foolish to shame the wise. The weak to shame the strong. And as he quotes Psalm 8 verse 2, he simultaneously fulfills it. But notice he quotes it slightly differently (actually quoting the Greek translation of the Hebrew) because he is showing how it is fulfilled.

Psalm 8.2 doesn't tell us how the babies use their mouths to establish strength and silence the enemy. It just says, "Out of the mouth of . . . infants, you have established

strength" to still the enemy. But the Greek version that Jesus cites ventures an answer to the question of how these babes use their mouths to silence the enemy—they praise God. "Out of the mouth of infants . . . you have prepared praise." This would not be the only time in the Old Testament when the praises of God's people was the power that defeated the enemies of God (e.g., 2 Chronicles 20:22). **Second step: See how God works.**

God achieves victory over his enemies through the weak things of the world

And what you and I need to take away here in this little aside is first how counterproductive it would be to try and wrap up your self-worth in your strengths. Because God doesn't use the strong. So, you can calm down, take a deep breath, and know you don't have to prove yourself to find worth. He's going to use the weak. And second - you can see that the majesty of God has a face and a name - Jesus Christ. He is the object of our praise. He silences his enemies with the voices of weak children, he will have his victory through an act of apparent weakness (death on the cross) which will actually be a magnificent show of strength if only you can see it. And you and I, weak people, can be set free from trying to build up our own strength. We can rest in his. And we'll be ready for the next step in finding true, fulfilling self-worth.



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3 When I observe your heavens,  
the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars,  
which you set in place,

Here we are still looking up. Eyes still seeing the canvas of God's majesty. God made the universe with his *finger*. (Not even his arm!) If the Milky Way were the size of North America, our solar system would be a coffee cup. Earth would be a speck of dust inside the cup. And each of us is a speck inside that speck. The universe is tiny to God. What are we?

4 what is a human being that you remember him,  
a son of man that you look after him?

See we are meant, in light of how majestic and perfect and powerful God is...we are to be somewhat surprised that God would even remember us. God how incredible it is to me that you care about little fragile humans? Especially considering we so often neglect and reject you! And even though we little specks of dust who desperately need you continuously reject you...you care for us. Amazing!  
You don't just remember us, You look after him...don't miss this guys this is the connection between you and

God. starting to unfold. We are staring up into the heavens in awe of this great God...we are tiny little specks of dust...and he not only has thought of us...he provides for us. Cares for us. Values us. You want to talk about some self-worth...The God of the universe looks down at you - the individual human being - little ole messed up super fragile trying to keep her life together with duct tape & a prayer - and says I SEE YOU! I'M GOING TO LOOK AFTER YOU! God has chosen to direct his universe creating & sustaining power towards looking after you. That's insane. And its deeply life giving. Because you could never give yourself that kind of worth. You aren't God. God has a greater capacity to ascribe worth than mere mortals ever could. And HE looks after you. Start to catch the power of letting God set the terms of your worth right here in verse 4:

**Believe God SEES YOU**

Actively. Right now. He sees you. And in the quiet still moments when you are all alone. He sees you. And says you are never alone. He sees you. He loves you. By the way if you are living a double life where you are rebelling against God in secret but pretending to worship God when in public - he sees that too. And that should sober you up and bring you to repentance. And you'll find value in that God sees you even in all your sin and still loves you



and offers you forgiveness. Stop fighting. Stop hiding. Come home. The gospel is crazy to me. We can't receive the forgiveness God has already offered in Christ until we confess the sin he already sees.

Out of everything he created he chose to single us out & give us special significance and purpose in his creation.

**5 You made him little less than God and crowned him with glory and honor.**

Now not surprisingly we are going to see that this finds its fullest meaning in Jesus. BUT it does give value and purpose to each of us. There are two incredibly important things here about your self worth.

1. Verse 5 - You were created in the image of God, crowned with his glory & honor. That's David taking genesis 1.27 and putting into a song lyric that he can sing back to God. God has crowned you with glory and honor as his image bearer. GLORY AND HONOR - ya'll those are words reserved for GOD himself in the psalms. And as he extends his image to us, he extends a reflection of his own majesty. We are in a lesser measure than him - glorious & worthy of honor. Though we are just earthlings - there is an echo of heaven reverberating in and through each of us. There is a desire for eternity on our hearts because we are created by an eternal God in his image.

2. Here's why I pause here - you could scour every self-help book, every Orpah episode, every silly insta-post about being a boss girl and NOTHING WOULD come close to Psalm 8.5 - **GOD GIVES YOU HIS GLORY AND HONOR**. What can touch that? Come on. Nothing. You can fail at grades, relationships, your job, friendship, and even be bad at your hobbies - and you know what - you cannot fail OUT of his SIGHT or OUT of the GLORY & HONOR God has given you. That should at the EXACT SAME TIME - humble you and empower you. Humble you because you had nothing to do with it. And empower you because divine glory & honor are with you.
3. So, when you are tempted to loathe yourself - teenagers let me talk to you for a second - When you are tempted to put your head down frustrated at yourself - The answer is not to look down...ITS ALSO NOT TO LOOK AT A SCREEN HOPING YOU'LL FIND APPROVAL THERE. When you get down on yourself & the world tells you to pick yourself up...Psalm 8 is saying GO OUTSIDE AND pick your head all the way up! (Can't pick your head up? Psalm 139 - he's down there too) The one who painted all that - sees you. And gives you your worth. That's all you need. Listen we are fragile. And one word of "you are lazy, you are useless,



you are \_\_\_\_\_” man these labels. They have a way of sticking, don’t they? That’s why the sky is always there. Reminding you God is always there. And his label, the size of the universe, says GLORIOUS. So, pick up your head and then here’s what you do next:

6 You made him ruler over the works of your hands;  
you put everything under his feet:  
7 all the sheep and oxen,  
as well as the animals in the wild,  
8 the birds of the sky,  
and the fish of the sea  
that pass through the currents of the seas.

We are made to rule over his creation. There is your purpose. God looked at you. Gave you his image and the dignity that comes with it. Then said care for my creation. Get to work. This is Genesis 1 again. Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and subdue it. Rule it. Cultivate it. This again shows off the glory of God. He established victory over the enemy through the weakness of children. And then he rules his creation through the weakness of mankind. God made you LIKE him. gave you his capacity to bring good out of the earth. To rule is to build and cultivate. Man, there is a whole sermon series right in here on how

to think about work. But suffice it to say Ephesians 2.10 tells you that God created you specifically for certain good works. You weren’t made to sit around. You were made to work. And whatever work you do - its purpose is to bring glory & honor to him.

23 Whatever you do, do it from the heart, as something done for the Lord and not for people, -- Colossians 3:23

SO, you can walk into your work, your schoolwork, your job search...Walk into it tomorrow saying “God, help me glorify you today.” AND IN THAT - you will find renewed self-worth. You will have a purpose. BUT...ok listen...you will mess up. YOU WILL. You will struggle with this. You will try to exalt yourself & you will run after your own desires. Which is why you need the Greater meaning of this Psalm.

Several places in the NT cite this Psalm. Hebrews 2 gives us its fullest treatment, I think.

It quotes this psalm and then says the “he” is actually Jesus.

6 But someone somewhere has testified:  
What is man that you remember him,  
or the son of man that you care for him?  
7 You made him lower than the angels



for a short time;  
you crowned him with glory and honor  
8 and subjected everything under his feet.  
For in subjecting everything to him, he left nothing that is  
not subject to him. As it is, we do not yet see everything  
subjected to him. 9 But we do see Jesus — made lower  
than the angels for a short time so that by God's grace he  
might taste death for everyone — crowned with glory and  
honor because he suffered death. -- Hebrews 2:6-9

And this Jesus was crowned with glory and honor  
because he suffered death. He was crowned with a crown  
of thorns. Foolish & Weak according to the world. But a  
crown of glory & honor according to God because this  
was the one who was defeating the curse of sin OVER  
US!

See you and I are to see ourselves in this Psalm and it  
should encourage us to know God is BIG, He sees you,  
He cares for you & God has a purpose for you. And THEN,  
when we see the greater meaning...That this is first about  
Jesus. And if you are IN CHRIST - then everything God  
says in Psalm 8 he says to you in Christ. He says you have

approval - not because of what you do but because of  
what Christ has done. You have glory and honor because  
Christ does. You  
and secondly about our identity in him - our hearts should  
be overflowing with worship. Because we see God's love  
for us! He tasted death for everyone. That's why he has  
glory and honor. Because he took our death. Drank it to  
the dregs. And offered us LIFE, PURPOSE, AND ETERNAL  
UNION with GOD. So then with the full understanding of  
this psalm we can say

9 Lord, our Lord,  
how magnificent is your name throughout the earth! --  
Psalms 8:9

**Action Step:**

5 Minutes of listening prayer each day. - "I'm listening."

Closing Prayer: God, show me how to live for your glory  
today. I'm watching.