

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

*You have set your glory  
 above the heavens.*

<sup>2</sup> *From the lips of children and infants  
 you have ordained praise  
 because of your enemies,  
 to silence the foe and the avenger.*

<sup>3</sup> *When I consider your heavens,  
 the work of your fingers,  
 the moon and the stars,  
 which you have set in place,*

<sup>4</sup> *what is man that you are mindful of him,  
 the son of man that you care for him?*

<sup>5</sup> *You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings  
 and crowned him with glory and honor.*

<sup>6</sup> *You made him ruler over the works of your hands;  
 you put everything under his feet:*

<sup>7</sup> *all flocks and herds,  
 and the beasts of the field,*

<sup>8</sup> *the birds of the air,  
 and the fish of the sea,  
 all that swim the paths of the seas.*

<sup>9</sup> *O LORD, our Lord,  
 how majestic is your name in all the earth! (Psalm 8)*

### **What Would You Ask Your Child to Do?**

I once heard a pastor tell a story about some parents who wanted to teach their children a lesson about helping others. So on Christmas morning, they passed out the presents that were under the tree. The kids took turns unwrapping them. Then when they were all done, the parents made each child choose one brand new gift to give to Toys for Tots. Now, the pastor didn't tell us how those kids responded. Did they pick the most expensive gift? Did they whine and complain? Did they have to have a long family meeting about why they were doing this? I don't know. But would you ever ask your children to do something like that? The world we live in is full of pain and sorrow. It's full of people who need help and that help doesn't come easy. Some people need kidney transplants. Some people need roofs over their heads and food in their stomachs. Some people need someone to work with them day after day to help them beat an addiction. Would you ask your child to sacrifice their own well-being and advantages in life to help someone else with those kinds of problems? My friends, **what would you ask your child to do?**

#### **I.**

This morning, we're looking at Psalm 8. It's about what God asked his child to do. God asked his Son to go far beyond anything I could ever imagine asking my children to do. **God asked his Son to die for strangers.** That's the fulfillment of this psalm. King David talks about God's glory and the majesty of his name. He goes on to call the heavens "**the work of [God's] fingers.**" He says that God put the moon and the stars in their place. When I was in middle school, I took an art class. I remember one project where we melted down crayons of all different colors and poured them layer by layer into wet sand that surrounded a wick. When it hardened, we brushed away the loose sand and you had this multicolored sand and wax candle. Some

of the kids did a great job with it. Not me, of course. But the teacher took the best ones and put them on display for parents and other students to see when they walked by. It was a moment of middle school glory to have your creation on display.

How does that compare to what God did when he made the universe? He didn't go out and buy crayons and melt them down. He didn't buy bags of sand. He made the moon and the stars out of nothing. And he didn't use anyone else's plans, either. He didn't buy a book about making your own universe. He didn't see what a neighbor was doing and think, "Hey, I think I could do that!" God thought it all up on his own and he made it.

Then King David wrote, "**What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?**" Compared to God, we human beings are nothing. Even when he gives us the crayons and the sand, we don't always do a good job. Why should almighty God care about underachievers like us? But God wasn't just talking here about any son of man – any human being – when he had King David write these words. The book of Hebrews applies these words directly to *the* Son of Man, to Jesus. The next line says, "**You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.**" The Hebrew says: "You made him a little lower *than God* and crowned him with glory and honor." There's a long, technical Hebrew debate about this translation and I won't bore you with it. But the book of Hebrews applies these verses to Jesus coming into the world.

So this is what God asked his Son to do: to be made lower than God. He asked Jesus to join this race of underachievers. God asked him to live in our place, to experience everything that life does to us in order to rescue us from our sin and failure. To complete that mission, God's Son had to die. That's the point. God asked his own Son to leave behind the glory of heaven and make himself nothing for us. He didn't even give him the option of dying a big, heroic death in battle. He asked him to die on a cross. To suffer the shameful death of a slave. And God didn't ask him to lay down his life only for the good people or only for the people who deserved it. God didn't ask him to do that only for those people who are part of God's family of believers. God asked him to lay down his life for people who were strangers, spiritually speaking. Jesus died for his enemies – even those who mocked him while he was on the cross.

Could you ever imagine asking your child to do that? Especially for a stranger? How about for an enemy? I've seen news reports about families who had a child who had cancer or some other disease and that child needed a bone marrow transplant. They couldn't find a match, so the parents conceived another child hoping he or she might save the first one. Maybe I could see myself asking one of my kids to save a sibling. But a stranger? An enemy? Maybe I could even be convinced to ask them to serve as a bone marrow donor for someone like that. It wouldn't kill them. But would I ever ask my child to die to save someone who hates me? I don't think I could ask them to die to save the life of another one of my own children, let alone an enemy or a stranger. But that's what God did for us. He asked Jesus to lay down his life so that we will live.

And Jesus did. Because he did, God applies the rest of this psalm to him. God raised Jesus from the dead and he ascended into heaven where he is no longer lower than the angels. He sits on the throne of glory and hears their praises. God exalted him to the highest place and made him ruler of the universe. The psalm ends by pointing to that rule over flocks and herds and wild animals. Yes, it's true that this psalm is pointing back to creation when God gave mankind dominion over the world. But it's also pointing forward to the truth that now Jesus is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. God placed all things under his feet and he rules over everything for the good of the church.

Did you hear that last part? Even when God exalts his Son to rule over the whole universe, he still does it for our good. Jesus is no tyrant whose ego has to be fed. He loves us so much that he hides his rule now so that he can gather in his Church. If he wanted to, Jesus could just say, "Enough of this. I'm going to be in charge and everyone's going to know it!" But that would mean the end of this present world. It would mean no more new Christians coming in. So the ruler works behind the scenes. He's still in charge, but he hides himself so that day by day he can reach out and bring us in. That's the kind of ruler God asked his Son to be.

## II.

Now, when the Father asked him to do all that for us, Jesus didn't argue. He loves us just as much as the Father does. He gladly came into this world and suffered that death to give us life. Jesus joined the family of mankind so that we can join the family of God. We believers are now brothers and sisters of Christ. If your brother or sister saved your life, wouldn't you tell people the story? Our Father in heaven calls us to spread the

word about how our older brother saved our lives. **What would you ask your child to do? God asks us to give Jesus praise.**

King David wrote: **“From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.”** Does that verse sound at all familiar to you? Jesus quoted it during Holy Week. On the day after Palm Sunday, the children were still singing “Hosanna to the Son of David” the way they had heard their parents singing the day before. The Jewish leaders were angry about this and they wanted Jesus to silence those kids. And Jesus quoted this passage. While King David was specifically talking about Jesus here, God has ordained the praise of children in every age. He loves to hear their songs of praise and to see their faith. That’s true for us adults, too. The psalm begins and ends the same way, **“O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!”** What is that except a call for us to praise the majesty of his name?

How do we praise Jesus? True praise for God is telling the story of Jesus. You can’t say that God’s name is majestic in all the earth unless you tell why. That’s what this psalm does. That’s what the Bible does from beginning to end. That’s what God calls us to do. We praise him for all that he has done for us. Certainly, we do that here. One of my greatest joys as a pastor is hearing the children of our congregation sing praise to Jesus. But this isn’t just for kids. We adults, too, lift up our voices and sing Jesus’ praises. Yes, I know, many of us don’t have great voices. I don’t have a great voice. But we have the voices that God gave us. He wants to hear them.

But we don’t just praise him when we’re in church. We don’t just praise him when we sing. Every time we tell the story, we’re praising the majestic name of Jesus. So, when we teach our children to know their Savior, that’s praise. That’s why we operate a school and a Sunday school. Last Sunday, we adopted a budget. And it’s a scary budget because running a school costs a lot of money. We have two new faculty members coming on line in July. But they will be here for one reason: to tell the story of Jesus. To praise God by teaching our children to know their Savior. You support that praise when you support our ministry. But it isn’t just a money issue. We parents have the job of teaching our children to know their Savior. We praise Christ every time we sit down with a preschooler and read one of those illustrated children’s Bibles with them. We praise Christ every time we go through the *Christlight* lesson with our kids. We praise Christ when we do home devotions and pray with our children and just talk about our faith naturally as a part of our lives. God calls us to praise our Savior by teaching our children.

We also praise Christ when we share our faith with others. Out on the table, there’s a sheet that’s also been in the bulletin on occasion and will continue to appear there from time to time. It’s called “Friends Who Need Jesus.” It’s just a tool to get us to think about who in our life needs to hear the story. People who don’t know what Jesus did for them or who don’t realize the comfort and strength that comes from hearing the gospel need to hear that story. God calls us to share it with them. That’s part of our praise.

Do we praise Jesus like that? It’s what God has assigned us to do. Are we faithful in doing it? I can’t answer for you. But as a Christian parent, as much as I have tried to always point my kids to Christ, I don’t feel that I’ve always done as good a job as I should. When it comes to sharing with people outside, well, that’s even worse. What about you? Do you praise Jesus by telling his story inside and outside your family? Or does the question just make you feel guilty because you know that your answer is an embarrassment? That failure to praise him is sin. But it’s exactly the sin Jesus came to rescue us from. It’s exactly why God made him a little lower than the angels. Jesus lived and died for us. He paid for all our failures to share the gospel with those who need to hear it. He paid for all our failures as Christian parents. His blood has washed all that sin away. He rose to tell us it’s gone forever. He rose to tell us that God is not angry with us and he’s not going to punish us. He rose to tell us that God’s heart is full of love for us his children.

That’s the key to praising him. That’s the key to the job God has given us to do. God the Father sent his Son to rescue us. Then he sent us to tell the story. And in that story, he gives all the tools we need to do his work. But he also gives us all the power we need. The story of Christ saving us transforms us into storytellers. The power of the gospel leads us to praise Christ in all that we do and say. Drink deep of that power. And share that praise. Amen.