

## The Life of David | A Song of Wonder | Psalm 8

September 28, 2025 | Matthew McNutt

[Title slide] We are returning to our journey through the life of David today, Israel's favorite king. This week we want to take some time to consider David the Psalmist, the songwriter, the poet. The king, the man, the leader who expressed so much of his heart through song and poetry.

David is credited with writing 73 of the 150 Psalms we have in the Bible. They range in topic from lament to joy, repentance to fear for the future, love and wonder – he covers the full range of emotion but always turns it back to God. Today, I want to dive into one of his songs of wonder, Psalm 8. Let's look at it in its entirety before we try to go deeper with it:

*Psalm 8 (NLT) For the choir director: A psalm of David, to be accompanied by a stringed instrument.*

*<sup>1</sup> O Lord, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth! Your glory is higher than the heavens. <sup>2</sup> You have taught children and infants to tell of your strength, silencing your enemies and all who oppose you.*

*<sup>3</sup> When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers—the moon and the stars you set in place—<sup>4</sup> what are mere mortals that you should think about them, human beings that you should care for them? <sup>5</sup> Yet you made them only a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honor. <sup>6</sup> You gave them charge of everything you made, putting all things under their authority—<sup>7</sup> the flocks and the herds and all the wild animals, <sup>8</sup> the birds in the sky, the fish in the sea, and everything that swims the ocean currents.*

*<sup>9</sup> O Lord, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth!*

Oh Lord, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth!

N.T. Wright wrote that **“the Psalms offer us a way of joining in a chorus of praise and prayer that has been going on for millennia and across all cultures.”**<sup>1</sup>

Dietrich Bonhoeffer claimed that there is **“unsuspected power”** in the Psalms for the church.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> N.T. Wright, *The Case for the Psalms: Why They Are Essential* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2013), 6.

There is incredible power, praise and prayer contained within Psalm 8. Its vivid imagery, its loud declaration of worship, it is a beautiful song. It's also a call to humanity to live up to all God has entrusted to us.

### **God is Infinitely Majestic (Psalm 8:1-3)**

There are three beats to this short Psalm; it opens with the majesty of God, moves on to the frailty of humanity in light of God's power, and then addresses both the empowerment and responsibility of humanity.

Let's get into the first beat, **God is Infinitely Majestic** (Psalm 8:1-3)

***<sup>1</sup> O Lord, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth! Your glory is higher than the heavens.***

There are actually two different Hebrew words translated Lord here. Some of your Bibles will actually use a different typeface for the first one to identify it as "Yahweh," God's holiest name. It's followed by the name "Adonay."<sup>3</sup> David opens this song with the words, "O Yahweh, our Lord" and then praises the majestic name Yahweh. The glory of the name Yahweh is above anything known to humanity.

***<sup>2</sup> You have taught children and infants to tell of your strength, silencing your enemies and all who oppose you.***

Children and infants can silence those who oppose God? What does this mean? David is claiming that even the most vulnerable of humanity can have power through God, that even the most powerful enemy has no chance against a toddler empowered by God.

Taylor Swift sang **"Now the sun burns my heart, and the sand hurts my feelings"** in her song Hits Different. Do we actually think for a moment that the sun is burning her heart and the sand is hurting her feelings? No, it communicates a vibe, an emotion, a feeling.

David is doing the same thing; he's saying that it doesn't matter how vulnerable you may feel, God can build a strong defense out of our

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<sup>2</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible* (Minneapolis, MN: Broadleaf Books, 2022), Kindle location 274.

<sup>3</sup> Gerald H. Wilson, *Psalms Volume 1: The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 111.

weakness. Why? Because as we recognize our weakness we can begin to put our dependence on the strength of God.

*<sup>3</sup>When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers—the moon and the stars you set in place—*

“The work of your fingers” is a way of saying that the night sky was light work for God, He didn’t even break a sweat. It was simple for His power.

Which is incredible to stop and think about.

We have a lot of light pollution in our region. On a good, cloudless night, it feels like we can see ... dozens of stars. We really don’t get the full effect of the night sky in our region.

When I was a teenager, I lived in a remote area of Bolivia. It was a dry climate with no clouds and no electricity at night, probably in a lot of ways similar to what David experienced. The night skies were incredible.

*Here’s a photo a missionary I know took of the night sky from where we lived.*

I didn’t bother with flashlights. Why? Because even when there was no moon the sky was so thick with stars that I could see my way around at night with no problem. I used to sneak out late at night and just lay down on the ground to stare at the sky. It was overwhelming. It was awe inspiring.

That same awe is what drives David to realize, in the second beat, that:

**We Are Infinitely Small (Psalm 8:4)**

In light of God’s power, the frailty of humanity is revealed.

*<sup>4</sup>what are mere mortals that you should think about them, human beings that you should care for them?*

When we slow down enough to consider creation, to consider our world, the universe around, how incredibly big and powerful God is, David’s words are the natural response. Who are we to be the objects of God’s love? How dare we think ourselves that special? Thankfully, it doesn’t end there:

**God Gives Infinite Worth and Responsibility (Psalm 8:5-8)**

*<sup>5</sup> Yet you made them only a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honor.*

These crowns of glory and honor? The ancients would have understood them as symbols of royal authority, a sign of divine favor.<sup>4</sup> We have been entrusted with attributes of who God is, we are in His image, and carry authority in His name in creation.

We were created lower than God but above the rest of creation. It is both an empowering promise and a statement of responsibility. We cannot take these words lightly. David continues:

*<sup>6</sup> You gave them charge of everything you made, putting all things under their authority—<sup>7</sup> the flocks and the herds and all the wild animals, <sup>8</sup> the birds in the sky, the fish in the sea, and everything that swims the ocean currents.*

Our American individualistic culture that prizes power and wealth tends to read these words as the world being ours to consume and use for our own gain. That's not the idea David was communicating; instead, it is a picture of God setting apart humanity to have responsibility for His creation.

This word “authority” describes a responsibility to provide structure, to steward, to provide order.<sup>5</sup> We are God's agents called to work towards His kingdom on earth. Our authority here is given to us by God and ultimately we answer to God for how we wield that power. So often I find myself wondering as I look around our world at the ways we have failed to live up to that responsibility. And yet, while we may corporately as a human race fail, individually we can still honor God in how we wield our authority.

David then closes the Psalm the way he opened it:

*<sup>9</sup> O Lord, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth!*

So, where do we go with all this?

**At its core, Psalm 8 calls us to live in the tension: God is infinitely majestic. We are infinitely small. Yet God has given us infinite worth and responsibility.**

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 119.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 120.

There are two challenges for us today:

The first is this ... **we are called to worship**. When was the last time you slowed down and truly appreciated creation? When was the last time you stopped to see and consider all that God has made? Yes, we live in a city – but we have access to parks, to trails, rivers, the ocean. Set aside time this week – while the weather is still good – to spend some of your time with God in nature. Take time to see what God has done, to set aside the distractions, to cut off the noise, and instead find yourself crying out **O Yahweh, my Lord, your majestic name fills the earth!**

The second challenge? To live into the responsibility that God has entrusted you with. **We are called to steward creation**. What does that look like practically? I think it comes in two forms.

We just came back from our annual student ministry fall retreats. Each year I sign a contract agreeing to steward High Point Camp. Each year I look over it as we get ready to leave, to see if there are any ways in which we as a group failed to live up to that responsibility with the property.

When we leave a rental property, we are very aware of whether or not we have cared for it well, whether we are losing our damage deposit – or perhaps even receiving a bill for ways in which we did not steward our responsibility well.

God has called us to steward creation. How do we treat the world around us? Do we care for the environment, for nature, for creation? If God were to examine your life today, your habits, the things you value, would He be happy with how you have used your power and authority? Would He be disappointed with how you have treated His creation? If so, what needs to change?

There is a second, deeper way that we are called to steward creation. How have you treated His children, His most precious creation? Each year on our retreat we remind the adult volunteers that our primary purpose is to connect with the kids and point them to God; the retreat is fun, but it has a deeper purpose. Does your life point others to God? If not, what needs to change? How do you steward your relationships, your influence?

Think about relationships: every interaction is a chance to either reflect God's character or to push someone further from Him. Are you stewarding

your marriage, your friendships, your coworkers, your family in a way that points them toward Christ?

Or leadership influence: some of you have official leadership roles at work, in church, in your home. But all of us have influence; on neighbors, on coworkers, on our kids or grandkids. Are you using that influence for your benefit or to serve others and glorify God?

If God did a stewardship “audit” of your week, what would He find? Would He see you investing your time in what matters, speaking life into people instead of tearing them down, being generous instead of clinging to control? Or would He find places where you’ve been careless with the authority He’s entrusted to you?

I want to challenge you to write down ways in which you can live out this responsibility, this high calling this week, both with creation and with God’s children. What is one way in which you need to steward creation better? Who is someone you could commit to stewarding your relationship and influence with better this week? Commit to following through, commit to living out the truths of this Psalm so that your life reflects someone who truly believes that God’s majestic name fills this earth.

David ends where he began: ***“O Lord, our Lord, your majestic name fills the earth!”***

That’s the invitation: to live a life that becomes an echo of that praise. To worship the majestic God, to embrace our smallness, and to step into the worth and responsibility He’s given each of us.

***Let’s pray.***