**Sermon on Psalm 8**

**Title:**

***Seeing God in the Stars:***

***How Looking Up and Looking Down Brings God Into Focus***

Near the University of Tel Aviv in Israel

Lies the Negev Desert

This desert is a good distance from any big cities

There’s very few homes or businesses near it

So at night it gets very very dark

Which makes it a perfect place

To look up into the night sky and see the stars

Star gazers come from all over the world

To the Negev Desert to look at the stars

It’s an experience that leaves people breathless

I’ve only seen a picture but it truly is beautiful

Here are some quotes from a few visitors

**(on screen)**

“It’s beautiful, it’s magical

It’s all dark, it’s pitch black

You just look up and it’s---(pause)

I don’t even know how to describe it”

Dror Zar Visitor to Negev Desert for Stargazing

**(on screen)**

“The stars are amazing. There are a few times, you look up

And see this quick flash of light and--- it’s something

That makes you forget about everything else for a fraction

Of a second.”

Joe Bundorosky Visitor to Negev Desert for Stargazing

If you’ve ever sat under a night sky

Gone camping or to a cabin

In the forgotten woods

You know the feeling of gazing up into the stars

It’s a transcendent feeling

Like everything in the world stops for a moment

The sheer vastness of it all, the beauty

Brings this sense of wonder and awe

And a stark awareness of how small we really are

That tiny star that looks like a firefly

Stuck in a large black canvas

Is really trillions of miles away

Proxima Centauri is the closest star to earth

(other than the sun)

It’s 5.88 trillion miles away

Travelling in a space shuttle

Would take you 43,000 years to reach it

We are so very miniscule

In this vast universe

Can you imagine the God

That dreamt it up and spoke it into existence?

Staring up into the stars

Is meant to leave us breathless

In awestruck, lost for words

At the greatness of our Creator

But lately it’s getting harder to see the stars

The Int’l Dark Sky Association studies light pollution

Light pollution is the excessive use of artificial light

Making it far more difficult to see the stars

Due to industrialization and the expansion

Of big urban centers with lots of businesses & homes

99% of America & Europe can no longer

Experience a natural night sky

To give you a picture of the contrast

A massive power outage knocked out

Electricity for 55 million people in the NE

In 2003 and this photo shows the difference

Between the sky with and w/o artificial light



You can see the massive difference

The artificial light from street lamps, storefront signs,

Big buildings, 24/7 businesses, and houses

Sure, they help us see what’s around us better

But God’s beautiful tapestry in the sky

Gets washed out in the process

Rather than being amazed with a dark night sky

We tend to be more amazed by backlit screens

Of our iPhones & televisions

We’re more enthralled by a sporting event or concert

We’re more in touch with the lives of Hollywood stars

Than we are with the ones lighting up our sky every night

We’ve grown so enamored with

Everything that is around us

The stuff here on earth

That we don’t look up as often

As we used to

We have so many products

That show the creativity of the human spirit

So much access to information

About our universe…instantly

At the snap of our fingers

Type in amazing in YouTube

And you can watch endless hours

Of things people describe as amazing

My primary concern for us today

Is not that we’ll miss the stars

But that we’ll miss the one

Who put them there

***Show Sermon Title:***

***Seeing God in the Stars:***

***How Looking Up and Looking Down Brings God Into Focus***

Our Psalm today speaks of the wonders

Of God’s Creation

To teach us something about God

And about who we are

The Psalms are like a songbook

For people in exile

For people who are having trouble

Seeing God because they look

At the world around them

That seems to have little interest

In the existence of a supreme being

Who created everything

The Psalms give us a vision of who

That Creator truly is

They take us back to ancient Israel

To the dark night skies

So we can gaze up at the stars

And leave with a clearer, more robust image of our Creator

We’ll be in Psalm chapter 8 today

**(Psalm 8 on screen)**

**1**Lord, our Lord,
how magnificent is your name throughout the earth!
You have covered the heavens with your majesty.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+8&version=CSB#fen-CSB-14014a)]
**2**From the mouths of infants and nursing babies,
you have established a stronghold[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+8&version=CSB#fen-CSB-14015b)]
on account of your adversaries
in order to silence the enemy and the avenger.

**3**When I observe your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
which you set in place,
**4**what is a human being that you remember him,
a son of man[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+8&version=CSB#fen-CSB-14017c)] that you look after him?
**5**You made him little less than God[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+8&version=CSB#fen-CSB-14018d)][[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+8&version=CSB#fen-CSB-14018e)]
and crowned him with glory and honor.
**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.

**9**Lord, our Lord,
how magnificent is your name throughout the earth!

Psalm 8 is bookended with these lines

That show how utterly amazing God is

Says that God is magnificent

Magnificent means to inspire awe or reverence

In someone

For David when he thinks about God

Seeks to formulate an idea of who He is

He is awestruck, dumbfounded (*with slow emphasis)*

What made David feel this away about God?

**(Show verses Psalm 8:1 and 3)**

It’s the heavens that He made

The moon and the stars

He says they’re majestic

They have glory or weight

David was a shepherd boy

His job was to be out in the fields

Watching the sheep

Would have spent many a night

Under the dark starlit sky

In that same Negev Desert

Gazing up at God’s canvas

No artificial light

No light pollution

Just the sky lit up with God’s creation

The moon, the stars

The purple hue of the Milky Way

The constellations

David just stared up in amazement

And in his wonder, his thoughts turned

To the Creator of this vast universe

God you are majestic

You are powerful

You are creative

You are brilliant

When David saw the heavens

He saw God

The sheer vastness & beauty humbled him

Only one word could describe it---Magnificent

This leaves us with a simple question

When is the last time I described God as magnificent?

Why am I not as in awe of the Lord as David was?

Could it be that we’re so focused on the world

Around us, that our vision of God has gotten murky?

**Point #1: When our eyes are fixed on the world**

**around us, we can’t see God clearly**

I think part of why God doesn’t seem so

Magnificent to us

Is the same reason we struggle to see

The stars in more populated cities

As the artificial light hides the light of the stars

The light of stuff on earth hides the Creator of the earth

Our hearts are crowded with love for other things

John Calvin called the human heart

“An idol factory”

Ever since the fall

We are prone to take good gifts from God

And turn them into idols in our lives

Things we worship

How do we do this?

In western culture we’ve been sold the lie

“You are what you wear”

“What you drive says something about you”

“Your experiences set you apart”

“You’re special because you have…fill in the blank”

So we are tempted to define ourselves

Through the stuff we have & experiences we partake in

Cultural commentator, pastor, and Australian most

Likely to be impersonated by City Church staff Mark Sayers

said this “In a commodified culture, we give weight to things

That do not deserve mountains of attention & time.”

What does he mean?

-We seek to enhance our lives through media intake

“We’ll spend millions of hours working through

TV Series, scanning social network sites,

downloading music, and playing video games.”

Not evil things, but far too much weight & attn

-We seek to enhance our lives thru buying stuff

The newest technology, a new home, car,

New clothes (sometimes from Urban Outfitters,

Which actually look like old clothes)

Again not evil to have any of that

God loves to give us good gifts

But what position has getting more stuff

Taken in our hearts and lives?

-We seek to enhance our lives by the

Experiences we take in

Attending sporting events, concerts,

Festivals, road trips, vacations,

Extreme sports

Again nothing wrong with these

But it’s about the weight these things

Have in our lives

When our lives become about acquiring

Stuff and experiences

We’ve exchanged God for the stuff He’s made

It’s a horizontal vision not vertical

Rather than being in awe of the God

Who made the stars

We’re in awe of the stuff He made

Or stuff humans made with the minds

God has given us

It’s almost like instead of saying with David

“How magnificent you are God”

We say, “How magnificent is all this stuff!”

Which ironically will lead us to believe

That nothing is magnificent at all

(Explain with excitement)

Travel back in time with me

It’s the year 2009

Black Friday and you’re shopping

For the newest, best TV out there

It will be amazing, magnificent

You’re walking through Best Buy

And you see it there

In all it’s glory

The Sony Bravia LCD with full 1080 & Motionflow

And a screen that’s a whopping 40 inches (ahhhhhhh angelic singing)

Where is that TV now?

College students are like

It’s in your living room Elisha

Hey watch it, my tv is at least 48 inches

What’s my point?

One minute something is magnificent

But ironically later on

When it’s no longer useful

Or when it becomes outdated

It’s worthless

Should we really love things

That are so temporary

So quickly rendered useless?

A life about acquiring stuff

Is an endless cycle

Of Buy-Use-Discard

Our hearts are trained to be dissatisfied

To always want more

This training plays over into

The way we think about God

Buy-Use-Discard

Church isn’t really meeting my needs

Like it used to

I’ll stop going or get a new one

God is hard to understand

The Bible is so weird

I can’t understand it

I’m not going to read it anymore

Everything (Even God) is a commodity

That can be consumed

Why are we so enamored with non-weighty things?

David said God covered the heavens with majesty or weight

We’ve put so much weight

On non-important things

That we can’t see the important ones

(Read this as personal, “We…)

**(Verse on Screen)**

**“They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and**

**worshiped and served what has been created**

**instead of the Creator, who is praised forever. Amen.”**

**Romans 1:25**

(Share this personal example)

And I can do the same thing

Since I was young I’ve been enamored with sports

I love to see incredible athleticism on display

Determination through adversity

Or excellence in situations with great pressure

And there’s nothing wrong with that

If it leads me back to worshiping the God who

Made these athletes

Who is Himself a trinitarian team

That overcame through impossible odds

With one of the least likely scenarios imaginable

But so often it leads me to over-indulgence

Consumption of not just great moments

But every moment I can get my hands on

It leads me to distraction so I’m not

Present with my wife or children

It leads to meditation on my hopes

And dreams for the teams I pull for

It leads to a hunger for more and more

Information about players and teams

So I miss deep meditation on Truth

From the God who made sports

And I settle for deep meditation

On the decisions of 17 year old kids

That could help my team’s chances

To win football games

Exchanging the deep truths about God

Who is this infinite well of personality

This incredible source of power

This creative, perfect, author of all things

Who crafted the perfect ending for mankind

Out of an impossible start

With beings like us

Who are so busy acquiring

Stuffing more information in

At lightning fast speeds

That we can’t even see Him

We don’t have time to sit down

And stare into the majestic skies with wonder

Or we’ve blinded ourselves to that wonder

With the bright lights of our consumer culture

More likely to have the lights at a concert

Reflecting off our face

Than the light of a shooting star

And in this moment

When we recognize the greatness of God

And how we’ve missed it at times

Substituted things in God’s place

We feel so very small

We agree with David

**(Show verses Psalm 8:3-4 on screen)**

Who am I God?

In comparison to your greatness

With so many other Biblical characters

I have to say

God I’m not worthy to be here

I’m a sinner, I’m just a man

A man who forgets you too often

But God’s greatness shines through

In Psalm 8 as we see His mercy

Toward us, toward all mankind

**Point #2: Looking up to God Empowers Us to Shine Like Stars**

David is painfully aware of the gap

Between him and God

As he ends verse 4 of Psalm 8

So he is all the more amazed

At the role God gave man

At Creation

**(Show verses Psalm 8:5-8 on screen)**

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

The language here is meant

To remind you of Creation

Genesis 1 and 2

**(Show Gen 1:26 on screen)**

God said, “Let us make man in our image,

According to our likeness. They’ll rule the fish

Of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock,

The whole earth, and the creatures that crawl

On the earth.”

Words very similar to this Psalm

God gives the man a special role

He is the caretaker of the garden

And of the animals

**(Show Psalm 8:6 on screen)**

David describes this act of God

As crowning him with glory

And honor

God saw fit to make us like Him

Right after He creates

He turns around and says

Now I want you to watch over

My creation.

David recognizes God’s mercy

You didn’t need man’s help

But you involved us anyway

And how is it that we are involved?

In being like the Lord

In caring for the creation

Using the creation to honor God

And benefit others

So we use the resources

God has given us

To be a blessing to others

We’re like little creators

Managing what the Creator

Has put under our care

So what does this look like?

How do we use God’s resources

To care for others and be a blessing?

Think about your roles on earth

Parents, Teachers, Grandparents

This is our children

We care for children

Certainly by feeding, clothing them

But we live in the age of anxiety

Looking at current trends

Our kids typically have material needs met

But they’re anxiety is only growing

So what they need most

Isn’t for us to get them more stuff

It’s to shepherd them spiritually

Emotionally, socially

Full-time and part-time workers

It’s recognizing how

Your work can be done

To care for people

So often we only acknowledge

The misery of work

And it is messed up b/c of sin

Things don’t work like they should

Simple tasks grow much larger

Corruption exists, etc etc.

But God made work before sin

Entered the world

So every job has dignity

Graphic Designer

You add beauty to things

Like God does

He didn’t have to make

Sunsets gorgeous, but He did

And you can make something

More appealing with your craft

Engineer

God builds bridges between

Broken ppl and Himself

You literally build bridges (

Helping ppl get to one another

in an easier and safer way

Mom’s

If you’re child doesn’t learn
How to use the bathroom

They won’t make it past the 8th grade

8th graders are vicious

Your labor will shape

The most basic & essential things

Your child needs to thrive

So in our work we care for others

And that images God’s glory

It shows His personality inside of us

And through what we do in the world

We do this as a church by caring

For our neighbors

Whether that be our physical

Neighbors we live beside

Or the ones in our city

And the area around City Church

Every person we see

Has significance and value

So when you showed up

To Community VBS last week

You took time out of your day

To care for a child

Try to show them Christ’s love

In the way you prepared food for them

Or taught them a lesson

Or laughed with them playing a game

That is caring for creation

That is recognizing dignity

When you serve a meal at Journey Home

You are being generous with your time

So someone can know

I see you, I see that you are a person

Made in the image of God

You eating matters to me

I care about your well-being

When you serve at PORTICO

You are helping someone

With an unforeseen pregnancy

And seeking to help them know

They are not alone

And people can help them

Figure out how they can love and raise a child

In all these ways

We get to be like God

We imitate Him

Especially in the way He cares

For those who are most vulnerable

In our society

You may wonder why I didn’t cover

Verse 2

And I am not going to pass it over

I just wanted to save it for the end

**(Show Psalm 8:2 on the screen)**

“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.”

If you are anything like me you read that

And you’re like, “Whaaaaat?”

What is David talking about here?

Well we have a little help from someone

Who meditated on this verse

And that person is Jesus

He quoted this verse in Matt 21:16

It’s right after Jesus entry into Jerusalem

On Palm Sunday a few days before his death

All the people are praising Him

Saying Hosanna, to the Son of David

A Messianic term

Equivalent to saying Jesus, you are God

But what’s interesting is Matthew’s point

He says that the little children were singing as well

And upon hearing the kids singing

The religious leaders are fed up

Jesus, do you hear this mess?

Are you going to stand there and let these

Young children sing these things about you?

What’s especially sad about this

Is Matthew places this in the Temple

Directly following Jesus removing

The traders and merchants

Who were trying to make money

Off all the worshipers who would

Visit Jerusalem to offer God praise

The religious leaders gave no rebuke

To them

But they now rebuke these children

For praising God

**(show Psalm 8:2 on screen)**

And Jesus turns to the religious leaders

& quotes Psalm 8:2

He’s saying Guys

You’ve spent your entire lives

Reading these scriptures trying

To understand what they mean

And you don’t recognize

That they are pointing to me

Yet these little children

Might be 2-3-4 years old

They are singing the truth

**Point #3: To see God most clearly, look down to the most vulnerable**

The weak are putting the strong

To shame

Isn’t that Just like God?

Making the strong weak

And the weak strong

Flipping the script on what we’d expect

This is a pivotal lesson for us to grasp

God comes to those who are

Willing to acknowledge their weakness

We’re all sinners

Who desperately need the Lord

We desperately need Him to

Work in our hearts

So that we’ll love him more than idols

We desperately need Him

To give us compassion for others

So that we’ll seek to serve other people

Rather than ignore them or use them selfishly

We desperately need Him

Yesterday I went on a long walk

Pushing my son in a stroller

It was really early, just life for me now

He was content in the stroller

So I didn’t realize it

But I walked for about two hours

It was just me, Jack, and my Bible

I walked real slowly

Had a place on the stroller

That could hold my Bible open

As I read through the Psalms

And talked with God

It was an incredibly sweet time

Of fellowship with my Father

Towards the end of my walk

It had been pretty overcast

Mainly gray clouds, and darkness

But I looked up

And I was amazed at this beautiful sky

These intricately shaped clouds

Overlapping one another

Gray clouds, mixing with white ones

And a perfect blue peaking through

With bursts of amazing light

And I said out loud

That’s so beautiful Daddy

The way my daughter would say it to me

If we were coloring together

That’s so beautiful Daddy

You are so amazing

So creative, so powerful

You made all this, you spoke it into existence

God I want to know you

I want to be near you

And I prayed for all of you

That God would be gracious enough

To give all of us moments like that

That He’d help us to slow down

And look up into the sky

To look deeply into His Word

To get wrapped up into that story

Meditating on it

And being changed by it

Let’s pray that for ourselves now!