

Sermon 05-31-2026  
"Space, the (not so) final frontier..." – Rev. Markus Wegenast  
Psalm 8

<sup>1</sup> O Lord, our Sovereign,  
how majestic is your name in all the earth!  
You have set your glory above the heavens.  
<sup>2</sup> Out of the mouths of babes and infants  
you have founded a bulwark because of your foes,  
to silence the enemy and the avenger.  
<sup>3</sup> When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars that you have established;  
<sup>4</sup> what are humans that you are mindful of them,  
mortals<sup>[a]</sup> that you care for them?  
<sup>5</sup> Yet you have made them a little lower than God<sup>[b]</sup>  
and crowned them with glory and honor.  
<sup>6</sup> You have given them dominion over the works of your hands;  
you have put all things under their feet,  
<sup>7</sup> all sheep and oxen,  
and also the beasts of the field,  
<sup>8</sup> the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,  
whatever passes along the paths of the seas.  
<sup>9</sup> O Lord, our Sovereign,  
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

1)

I don't know if I had a chance to tell you before: I am a big Star Trek fan. When "The Next Generation" came out on German television I was hooked. I was ready to follow Captain Picard to wherever the road or the universe leads.

I was a young teenager, and I didn't have a good understanding at the time about the sheer vastness and dimensions of our Milky Way Galaxy in which Star Trek plays.

It wasn't until they installed another ST show, "ST Voyager," several years later, when I began to understand the concept of how large our galaxy, let alone our universe really is.

Does anyone remember ST Voyager?



The concept of the show was that the crew of this spaceship was accidentally catapulted into the delta quadrant, pretty much to the other side of the Milky Way Galaxy, far away from earth. The premise of the whole show with all its 7 seasons (172 episodes, 1995-2001) was for them to make it back home.

Now, what you have to understand is that the USS Voyager was the fastest spaceship in the entire Starfleet – it was faster even than the good old enterprise. Warp 9.975 compared to 9.8! That may not sound like a huge difference but the warp scale is exponential so that means that the USS Voyager was almost 3000 times the speed of light faster – at maximum speed it could travel at over 6,000 times the speed of light. 6,000 times the speed of light! The fastest space probe we've had to date is the Parker Solar Probe which traveled at 192 km/s, that's like 0.064% of the speed of light. In other words: The USS Voyager is almost 100,000 times faster than the fastest thing us humans have ever produced so far AND YET: Even at maximum speed it would take the USS Voyager over 70 years to make it back home to earth from one end of our galaxy to the other.

That was the time when I realized how big our galaxy is. And that's just our Milky Way galaxy! Astrophysicists estimate that the total number of galaxies is somewhere between 100 billion to 2 trillion galaxies. BTW, the closest galaxy to us is 2.5 million lightyears away from us – it would take us 2.5 million years to get to Andromeda IF we could travel at the speed of light! Even if we had the USS Voyager it would take us a couple of 100 years!

Does all of this at least somewhat blow your mind?!

I think it is safe to say that the mind of King David was blown when he contemplated the greatness of God. I'm pretty sure he was not a Star Trek fan, and his understanding of the universe was somewhat different than ours – but he was just as amazed as he contemplated the grandeur of God's creation including space when he composed Psalm 8:

**When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars that you have established – Psalm 8:3**

David may not have known about the speed of light and the number of galaxies, but he clearly had the same ability to marvel about God's creation as we do today.

I have to tell you I'm uncomfortable when we 21<sup>st</sup> century people think we are so much more advanced than people in the far past. Of course time and technological advances are on our side – but we shouldn't assume that we are in any way any more intelligent than people 100s and 1000s of years ago. In some cases we even have to acknowledge that the brain power of people in the past was in many cases higher than ours because they needed to rely much more on memorization and paying attention than we do. (...)

There is really not that much of a difference with the marveling about God's great universe between David 3000 years ago and us today. The interesting thing now is where all this marveling leads David. And I'm curious, when you marvel about the universe and the creation, is that where you end up too? Here is what David concludes:

**What are humans that you are mindful of them,  
mortals that you care for them? – Psalm 8:4**

David is thinking about how great the universe is and the God who created it and then he is immediately drawn to think about himself and the human race in general.

We are nothing compared to the greatness of the universe and its creator! Nothing! Why, God, would you even care for us since we are nothing but tiny pebbles compared to the sky, the moon and the stars?

Culturally, David fits really quite well into our times with this conclusion. Have you ever heard statements – maybe on social media or on TV – that us people are nothing but dust in an endless universe? Our whole existence, even the timespan of the entire human race, is nothing compared to the age of the universe? Nothing but specs in time and space?

Interestingly, even though this is how David initially concludes in Psalm 8, this is not at all where he stays. He moves on to the next conclusion:

2)

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established  
What are humans that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? – Psalm 8:3f

**Yet you have made them a little lower than God\*  
and crowned them with glory and honor. – Psalm 8:5**

All of the sudden us people are no longer just tiny insignificant specs of star dust in an endless universe – all of the sudden we are compared to God and crowned with glory and honor. What's up with that?

While the word "God" is certainly a legitimate translation of the Hebrew original text, you will find that many English Bibles offer alternative translation options. The NRSVue edition that we often use in worship, for example, puts a footnote in the text and offers this alternate reading:

**\*Or than the divine beings or angels** (evtl point out jealousy of angels...)

It does so because the Hebrew word for God is plural and while this is typically translated in the singular voice in a place like here it is good to point this out. But it doesn't change the fact that as humans we are given a very special status.

If ever you feel down and struggle with your self-worth, read Psalm 8! Read it with your heart, let these words become a word from God for you. You are loved so much by God he cares for you, you! The tiny spec in the dust of space, the creature who lives but a few decades compared to the many, many years our universe is old – you are crowned with glory and honor - not because of your achievements but because of who you are: a precious child of God, a son or daughter of the eternal one.

I should note that David speaks of all humans. There is no way of arguing that David is just writing a Psalm about himself: “I am the king of Israel, and I compare my majesty with that of God.” No! David isn’t writing in the 1. Person singular, he is writing in the third person because he has all of us people in mind.

Just as mind boggling as the size of the universe is, so is the fact that in holy scripture we hear that the majesty of God is compared to and somehow shared with his creation, his people, with you and me!

Friends, let us remember that the next time we are tempted to belittle others. Let us remember that the next time when we compare cultures or races or educational classes – there is no distinction in Psalm 8 whatsoever. We all share the same dignity.

3)

But before we get lost in our dignity – let’s honor what Psalm 8 continues to say:

In Verse six we move now to the problematic expression of dominion that is given to us:

**You have given them dominion over the works of your hands;  
you have put all things under their feet. Psalm 8:6**

A-I-Y-Y-A-Y-Y-A-Y! This can easily become a very problematic Bible verse, can’t it? Being given dominion, that can get scary fast.

Here is what we need to understand: Dominion is not despotism! Power easily corrupts, but being crowned with glory and honor does not allow for abuse.

The creation story in the Bible puts us as stewards of God’s good creation. It might be more helpful for us to see ourselves as responsible shepherds, rather than kings who lord it over others!

God has created you as an image bearer, he has crowned you with glory and honor not to rule like a reckless leader but to share in the wonderful responsibility of living in a manner that gives glory back to God. We do not give glory to God when we think that the world revolves around us – we are part of this wonderful world and called to care for it in the same way as God cares for us!

In my sermon prep I came across this sentence in a study Bible that I feel puts this very neatly into context:

**“Human rule is properly exercised in submission to God and God’s will for the whole creation.”**

In other words: Let’s be responsible with the glory and honor God has given us!

4)

Psalm 8 was written by King Davie, but I want to invite you to hear God in his words. Psalm 8 gets referenced several times in the New Testament and I believe we find a core Jesus-theme in Psalm 8.

It starts with the glory and majesty of God, it moves to the glory of people as part of God’s sacred creation, and then it moves back and ends with glory and majesty of God again.

Isn’t this a great way to reference the great commandment: Love God (how majestic is his name?) and love your neighbor (who is crowned with glory and honor). Isn’t that the best way to be responsible instead of abusing dominion?!

**The best way to be responsible:  
Love the Lord your God, and your neighbor as yourself...**

We have started this sermon with a Star Trek based reflection on the vast size of the universe, using the USS Voyager as a tool to help us understand the dimensions of space.

We are now invited to go on a voyage ourselves as we have learned the deep meanings of Psalm 8. To me Psalm 8 has very strong ethical implication. If I’m crowned with glory and honor by the one who created the universe, then I want to treat my neighbors in a way that testifies to this.

I hope you can take that with you today as you go into a new week and a new month. Whether you go on a choir tour and sing God’s praises to other glorious people who are crowned with honor, whether you are a parent and a family who promised to help their children to get to know the love of God: You are on a holy voyage to give glory to God and honor your neighbor. Amen.