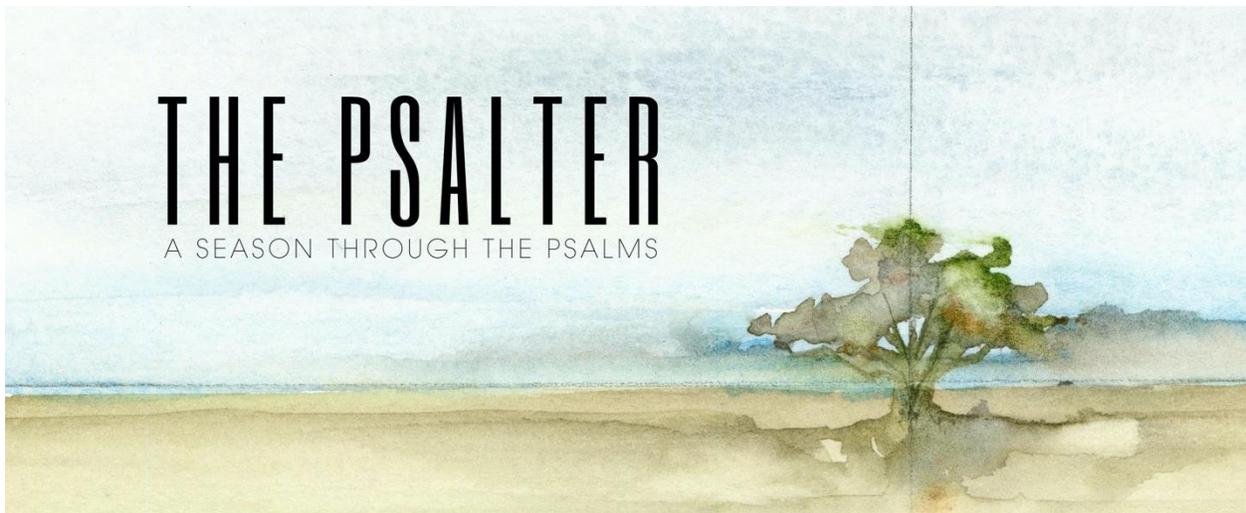


# THE PSALTER

A SEASON THROUGH THE PSALMS



## *Psalm 8*

How much do you notice the tension between the various ways culture speaks about humanity and the ways the Bible speaks about us? We are quite well-versed in the different messages about humanity when it comes to contemporary social questions, such as sexual ethics (one of the dominant points of disagreement over the last fifty years). But have you ever considered how out of step we can be with the world's understanding of *both* human depravity and goodness?

Those are both Christian ideas, by the way. *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* is definitely in the same Bible as *"So God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female."* We are simultaneously stamped with God's image and yet we are sinners desperately short of His glorious standard. Depravity and goodness, rolled up together. But notice how influential thinkers over the last millennium have taken another angle at the idea of what it means to be human. Some have determined that we are little more than an animal at the very top of the food chain. Over the years, humanity has been described as a political animal, a religious animal, a tool-making animal, a tool-using animal, and nothing more than any ol' animal. Isn't it strange? A playwright of the last century famously described humanity as "nature's sole mistake." Notice the progression? Human depravity has resulted—untethered from the Scriptures—in a popular idea that we are simply a cancer on this earth.

On the other hand—and more recently—some have taken this dismal outlook and determined that we have no collective identity. Instead, to be human is to be completely autonomous. We are all individual sovereigns, and we decide for ourselves what suits ourselves. There is no longer a shared foundation of humanity. When things aren't going according to plan, we can then chant one of the age's favorite mantras: "Believe in yourself!"

But God's Word calls us to believe in Him. In fact, Jesus says in John 2:24 that He *"would not entrust himself to them, since he knew them all."* Jesus knew He couldn't believe in humanity. Psalm 8 tells us both in whom we should believe (hint: the LORD) and how we should consider ourselves in relation to God. The psalm begins with adoration at the Lord's majesty, calling to mind His creative works and His power over His enemies (Ps 8:1–2). We are then told of His affection for the pinnacle of His creation, human beings, and how He has even crowned us with glory and honor (Ps 8:3–5)! It concludes with a reminder of our original task to steward His created order on His behalf (Ps 8:6–8; cf. Gen 1:26–28),

before repeating the opening praise to bookend the song. What joy and humility should fill our hearts that the LORD himself has made us with such care and with such prominence.

Yet, we've marred the beauty and honor we were given with our sins against God. This is why Hebrews 2:5–18 is such a stunning passage. The writer tells us that Jesus took on Psalm 8 for Himself, tasting "death for everyone," which in turn brought "many sons and daughters to glory." You and I, as human beings, were created with a pedigree the rest of creation cannot conceive. And you and I, as followers of Jesus, have been restored to glory and honor, to reign and rule as co-heirs and adopted children forever.

Psalm 8 is a beautiful reminder of God's majesty—a majesty so great that it isn't diminished in the slightest when He loves a rebellious people and moves mountains to restore them to communion with Him and life everlasting.

---

### *Discussion*

1. What are some of your most instinctive thoughts about people? Do you ever struggle to think of others as fellow-image bearers?
2. What are some other ways the Bible describes humanity? Why is it so important to develop a full biblical anthropology (study of humanity)?
3. Does it surprise you that God has designed us to rule the earth on His behalf? How do you think you can take steps to better steward that for which you've been made responsible?
4. How has this Psalm encouraged, strengthened, or challenged you?

---

### *Our Corporate Prayer*

*LORD, your holy name truly is magnificent. You have filled this world with beauty. Open our eyes to see your gracious hand in all your works, especially in those you formed in your own image. Make clear to us ways in which we have not loved other precious people you have made. (Pause and examine your heart towards others. Wait on God to reveal any you have not loved.)*

*LORD, we pray that we will learn to see your glory in all of your works. Teach us to rejoice in your creation and to serve you, our Creator, with gladness. Teach our hearts to give thanks for your kindness and providence, and show us how to honor you with all that you have entrusted to us. (Pause and reflect on God's kindness and provision. Wait on God to bless you with joy and gratitude.)*

*LORD, how magnificent is your name throughout the earth! Make all of those who follow you to be of one heart and of one mind, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and love, that with one voice we may give you praise. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God in everlasting glory. Amen.*