

Psalm 8

In order to understand Psalm 8, we must learn a new term. It is probably a term that most of you have heard before, but it is a term that might be new for some of us. That term is *condescension*. That is the new word that we have to learn today—*condescension*—because Psalm 8 teaches the condescension of God to his people.

What does this word *condescension* mean? The word *condescension* means *to come down*. The word *condescension* refers to someone who is high and lofty and lifted up; and that one who is so high comes down to those who are low, to those who are humble, to those who are far below that one who is high. And when that one who is high comes down to the one who is low, we say he *condescended*. That is what God has done, and that is what Psalm 8 is all about: it is about the condescension of God to his people. God is high. His works are powerful. He is marvelous and glorious in all his works. And yet he thinks about us and comes down to us and visits us and puts his truth in our mouths and even puts his truth in the mouths of the lowest of us, the babes and the sucklings. God, who is high, comes down to us who are low; and we call that God's condescension.

That condescension of God to us is taught at the beginning and at the end of the psalm, where we see how exalted and how high God is. "O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!" When we read there of the name of God, we are reading about God's revelation of himself. That is the main idea of God's name. God's name is how he shows himself. God's name is how he tells us about himself. For us, our names don't tell very much about us. Our names are more handles, so that if you want to get someone's attention, you say his name. One's name is just a handle to get ahold of him. But God's name is not a mere handle. God's name is his revelation of himself, so that when you know God's name, you know God. When you know God's name *God*, you know God—and the same with his name *Jehovah*, his name *Almighty*, his name *Maker*, his name *Savior*. The name of God reveals God.

And Psalm 8 says that when you look around in the creation, the name of God—that revelation of God—is great in all the earth. Psalm 8 picks out a few examples of that as well. We see some examples in verse 3: the heavens, which are the work of God's fingers, and the moon and the stars, which God has ordained. Maybe some of you have been looking up to the moon and the stars these past few nights, trying to catch a glimpse of the meteor showers that are going on right now. The moon and the stars and the vastness of the heavens that are so high above us teach the greatness of Jehovah God. They reveal how excellent his glory is in the heavens.

Even though the heavens are high and hardly comprehensible by us in their vastness, verse 1 tells us that God's glory is set *above* the heavens, so that Jehovah God is greater yet than the greatness of the heavens that he has made. Go through the creation; go through the heavens; go through all the things you can see; and you will find that the name of the Lord our Lord is great in all the earth. That is the astounding highness and majesty and exaltation of our God.

And *that* God has condescended to his people. He has come down to man. We see that in verses 3–4: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" Do you see what we are by contrast with Jehovah God? He is high and exalted above the heavens; we are made of the dirt, of the dust of the ground. We are made of the earth. Our first father, Adam, was scooped up by God as a handful of dirt and formed into a body, and God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul. And God named Adam according to what Adam was. The name *Adam* means *earth*, *dirt*, *dust* because that is what man is. From dust we have been made, and unto dust our bodies shall return. We are so low. We are so weak. We are so beneath Jehovah God. And yet Jehovah God condescends to us, comes down to us, and is mindful of us and visits us.

How is it that God comes down and visits his people? How does he visit his church? He visits his people by giving to his people his truth. The truth of God is the reality of who God is and what God does.

The truth of God is the reality of his purpose and his will to save us in Jesus Christ. The truth of God is the doctrine that you learn in your catechism classes, in your school classes, in the sermons in church. The truth is the reality about God.

And God makes that truth known to his people. We see that in verse 2: “Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.” When God talks about something coming out of the “mouth” of the babes and the sucklings, he is talking about this truth that he has put in their hearts, this truth that they know from the time they are very, very young children: that God is God, and God is our God, and God is our savior, and God made Dad and Mom, and God made me, and God made all things. That truth that is put in their hearts comes out of their mouths in their confession. That truth comes out of their mouths when they sing Psalm 8. That truth comes out of their mouths when they learn their catechism answers and say those catechism answers to their parents and then to their catechism teacher. That truth comes out of their mouths when they learn about that truth in school and write that truth on a test. God puts that truth into the hearts of the littlest, and that truth comes out of their mouths. God condescends to his people by making even the weakest and the smallest among his people know that truth, know that he thinks about us, know that he visits us.

What is even more amazing is that God uses the smallest among his people to put to flight the mighty enemies of God’s people. God has put his truth in the mouths of even the littlest and the youngest because of the enemy and the avenger. The enemy and the avenger are not little children. The enemy and the avenger refer to mighty men who have set themselves against God and against his truth and seek to teach and stand for the lie that man is God. They come against the truth. They fight that truth. They want revenge against God for being God and for not allowing man to be God. And how does God defend his people? Not by sending mighty men armed with swords and spears and guns against those avengers but by putting the truth in the hearts of the babes and the sucklings and causing that truth to come out of their mouths. That truth itself is the defense of the truth. That shows the power of the truth—not the power of the men who defend the truth but the power of the truth. The truth itself is the defense.

That happened in Jesus’ life. When Jesus was in the temple in Jerusalem, there were children who followed behind him, singing the words of Psalm 118, “Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Matt. 21:9). And the Pharisees—whom no one would think were the enemies of the truth because they were the powerful men in the church—said to Jesus, “Do you hear what they’re saying? They’re calling you the son of David. Are you going to stand for that? You think you’re the Son of David?” And Jesus answered them with the words of Psalm 8. “Have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?” (Matt. 21:16). The children’s cry “Hosanna to the son of David” told the truth of who Jesus is. It was the reality of who he is. He is the son of David, and all praise and honor belongs to him.

And then if we go as deep as we can in this psalm regarding the condescension of God, we will find that God condescends to his church through Jesus Christ. That was how God came down to us. God came down to us by sending his only begotten Son in our flesh, so that his Son was a man, made a little lower than the angels. That is the idea of verses 5–6: “Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.” That doesn’t leave anything out. Everything on earth is under the feet of man. And in Hebrews 2 the writer to the Hebrews, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, says, “But now we see not yet all things put under him” (v. 8). That is, when you look at man, you don’t see everything put under his feet yet. Do *you* have control of all the sheep of every field in the world? Are all beasts and all oxen under your control? The writer to the Hebrews says that this can only be referring to one. It can only be referring to Jesus Christ. He is the one made a little lower than the angels, come in our flesh. He is the one who has been given dominion over all beasts and all creatures of

the field, so that what we are reading about in Psalm 8 is the condescension of God to his people in Jesus Christ. As the writer in Hebrews 2 goes on to say, Jesus came down as the one who was man, made of the seed of Abraham, for our salvation. He is your brother. He became like you, with a body like you have a body and as a human being like you are a human being, to save you from your sin, from your death. That is the condescension of Jehovah God.

And when you see Jesus Christ as the condescension of God, then you also understand the reason that God condescends to those who are low like us. He doesn't need us, but he comes down to us because he loves us in a powerful covenant love, because it is his good pleasure to make us his sons and daughters. And then the child of God, understanding that condescension of God in his grace, his mercy, his love in Jesus Christ, sings, "O LORD our LORD, how excellent is thy name in all the earth."