

In my lifetime a number of unforgettable statements. Muhammad Ali, *'I am the greatest.'* John Lennon, *'We're more popular than Jesus now.'* Bob Hawke, *'By 1990, no Australian child will be living in poverty,'* Overstatements, false statements. Thousands of years before I was born a statement from another David. Grand statement. True statement. *'LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!'* Beginning and ending **Psalm 8**. A song of praise to God. By Israel, the people of God. From the pen of David, servant of God. The whole of **Psalm 8**, a grand statement of praise. Brothers and sisters, when was the last time you praised God? For who he is and who you are? This Psalm ought to move us to daily praise. The Psalm affirms two foundational truths for Christian faith and living. There is a God of glory and grace who created everything, This God invests humanity with dignity, value and purpose. The Psalmist declares, *'You have set your glory in the heavens'. 'When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,' v1,3* The Psalmist goes on to speak of the creation of humans, animals, birds, fish. The work of his hands. Standing on Ubirr Rock at sunset watching the sun disappear beyond the vast expanse of floodplain and shadowed escarpments. Looking out from the top of Cape Leeuwin lighthouse watching and listening to the pounding waves where the Indian and Southern Oceans meet. Driving north up the old Pacific Highway. Reaching the point where the Byron Bay lighthouse and Pacific Ocean come into view. Walking outside on a clear night, looking up at the myriad of stars stretching beyond view. The beauty of creation. Seeing a fellow human being. The beauty of creation. The majesty, power and creativity of the creator on display. Speaking of Jesus, Paul writes, *'For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.'* **Colossians 1:16** The Father, the Son and the Spirit worthy of praise. God the Trinity active in creation. Sisters and brothers, praise God the Creator, along with all the saints. *'LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!'* The Psalmist points to another profound truth. We humans are so small. A mere speck in the universe. Yet, so eternally significant. Set apart from the rest of creation. Central to God's purposes. Focus of God's gracious attention and care. The only part of creation able to understand our identity and purpose by asking the Creator, *'what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for*

them?’ **v4** The Spirit inspired answer. *‘You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor. You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet: all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.’***v5-8** A grand statement taking us back to **Genesis 1**. Human beings, made in the image of God. Given stewardship over the rest of creation. Supervising and taking care of what God has made. Our place in God’s world an exalted one. Given by grace. To be accepted with humility. Lived out in dependence on the Creator who calls us to serve and worship him. This Psalm of praise an integral part of liturgical worship in the Old Testament. Yet in its recital a disconnect with life experience. Creation not subdued. Out of control. Taking revenge on its masters. Humility not glory for stewards made in God’s image. Our experience too. The New Testament rightly points to the one who overcomes this disconnect. Fulfilling this grand statement on our behalf. Enabling us to share in the fruit of its fulfilment. Quoting **v4-6**, **Hebrews 2** teaches that, as the representative man, Jesus is crowned in glory and honour by his death and resurrection. **1 Corinthians 15:27** also quoting the Psalm. Pointing to that day when everything will be placed under Jesus’ feet as the perfect ruler. Brothers and sisters, the Psalm speaks about two fundamental planks in the Christian worldview. God the creator and the exalted status and purpose of humanity. Are those planks in your worldview? Do you really believe God made everything? That God made you in his image? Don’t be surprised that these truths are among the most commonly attacked by opponents of Christianity. So, the Psalm’s teaching leads to three warnings. **First**, a warning for those who think they know better than God. About the origins of the world and the place of mankind. They will be silenced by the truth coming out of the mouths of babes. From the weak and vulnerable. **Verse 2**, *‘Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.’* This happened on the first Palm Sunday. While Jesus is in the temple. Children praising Jesus as the Messiah. Angering the Pharisees. In response, Jesus pointed them to this verse. Sisters and brothers, loud voices will seek to drown out these truths. Your testimony is the means by which God defends the truth and silences his enemies. **Second**, the loss of a sense of the uniqueness and dignity of humanity is corrosive and damaging to the wellbeing of our world. The words of philosopher Peter Singer, *‘We can no longer base our ethics on the idea that human beings are a special form of creation made in the*

image of God, singled out from all other animals, and alone possessing an immortal soul.' His denial of biblical truth breeds conclusions that advocate protection for animals because of their capacity to suffer. While proposing it is a mercy and good economics to kill disabled children. Brothers and sisters, we ought to grieve the terrible consequences of failing to heed the words of the living God. **Third**, a warning against the blindness of believing we own the world and control it and our destiny. We are not owners. We are stewards, caretakers. Sisters and brothers, godly stewards will exercise their care paying attention to the owner's purposes. Asking the question, *'What is the owner's purpose for each part of the creation in my care?'* The Psalm's teaching leads to two grounds for rejoicing. **One**, the security that flows from creation by a powerful, gracious creator. Order, structure, purpose, nothing random nor meaningless. **Two**, the dignity and value inherit in being made by someone. Brothers and sisters, we are loved, we have a purpose. The work of our hands has value. We are not trapped on an unstoppable treadmill of meaningless work and activity. What we do and produce matters to God. Finally, the Psalm's teaching shapes the living out of our role as rulers under God. Living what we are created to be. Sisters and brothers, please consider what this looks like in your particular circumstance. In your place of work, your neighbourhood, your daily decision making. Principles to apply in your thinking and living. Look for the image of God in others. Stand up for the dignity of each human being. Pray for others that they find their hope and purpose in a relationship with their Creator and Saviour. Wise stewardship of creation mindful of God's intention for each part of creation. Eliminating waste, greed and extravagance in your lifestyle. Brothers and sisters as sinful human beings our grand statements tend to be about us. *'LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!'* That is a grand statement worth singing.