

# How Great Thou Art

Bubba Garner

We use the word “great” almost as often as we do the word “love.” “That was a great game.” “Have a great day.” “What a great sermon.” Well, maybe not that last one. But we do use the word a lot.

Yet no One is more worthy of such a description than our great God. Just because we have diluted the term to cover anything from all-time athletes to Frosted Flakes, that does not change the magnitude of His might, the greatness of His goodness. The Psalmist surely thought so. “For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised” (Psa. 96:4), and “His greatness is unsearchable” (Psa. 145:3). God is not only great. He is the greatest.

I love to hear my children sing in the worship service. Morgan is able to read now, so she can follow along with just about any song. But David is at the mercy of the song leader; he can only sing the ones he’s heard before. So if it’s Hallelujah! Praise Jehovah! or I Know That My Redeemer Lives, he seizes the opportunity and lets it all out. Sometimes, I just stop and listen to these beautiful sounds coming straight from their beautiful hearts. It’s great.

Singing gives every child of the Father a voice, one He delights in hearing. It allows us to express our emotions, to pour out our souls, to join the words of our mouths with the melodies of our hearts. It helps us learn new truths and better appreciate old ones. It’s something we can do anywhere at any time. Whether we’re happy or sad, peaceful or anxious, in the pew or in the car, one thing will never change. “Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee, how great Thou art!”

Just how great is God? Let Psalm 19 speak for Him.

His creation announces Him. “The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands” (Psa. 19:1). A homebuilder may carve his name in the brick. A composer or film maker may be known by some trademark. But the Lord has left His fingerprints on every page of creation, and His world clearly testifies to the might and authority of their Maker. Someone might wonder while looking at a sunset, “How can anyone see that and not believe in God?” That’s what it was designed to do. While people in the world deny His existence, the world itself will not let them.

This is still our Father’s world. No matter how far men flee from Him, He remains in control and over all. He who “placed a tent for the sun” and orchestrates its rising from one end of the heavens to the other (Psa. 19:4-6) is still concerned about what’s going on in my corner of the world. Look around. Listen. This part of the song doesn’t require words. That’s how great God is.

His word reveals Him. The word of God is an expression not only of His will but of His character (Psa. 19:7-9). It is “perfect” because it comes from a blameless Lawgiver. It is “sure” because He who spoke it is unchangeable. Its effect is “rejoicing the heart” because of His desire for all men to experience the joy of His salvation. Its “commandment” is a demonstration of His authority to rule and legislate. It is “enduring forever,” fixed and firm as His eternal throne. Its “judgments” are “true” and “righteous altogether” for they flow from His ancient and infinite wisdom. The Lord wants us to know the truth. But He also wants us to know Him who stands behind it.

A God who is clearly seen through the eyes of His world is intimately identified in the pages of His word. He is not far away; He is not difficult to find. He has not left us to discover hidden meanings or uncover secret clues. He has expressed His will plainly so that His creation can have a relationship with their Creator. That ought to cause us to value His word as “more desirable than gold” and sweeter than “the drippings of the honeycomb” (Psa. 19:10). It is the source of true treasure and satisfaction. What else could come from such a great God?

His people are perfected by Him. David, the sweet singer of Israel, was not immune to sin. He concluded his psalm with a prayer for deliverance from “hidden faults,” “presumptuous sins,” and “great transgression” (Psa. 19:11-14). Even the shepherd-king of Israel went astray. But the world and the word were constant reminders of the glory of God and the law of the Lord. They pointed him back to his goal.

The result of following the Lord’s will is a transformation into His image. “Then I shall be blameless” (Psa. 19:13) is an aim that we grow closer to achieving only as we grow closer to God. He has revealed Himself to man so that we can become more like Him who created and redeemed us. We are to “be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matt. 5:48). It is just one more way for those in the world to see God. They can know that He is alive in the lives of His people. Our goodness is a reflection of His greatness.

Indeed, how great Thou art! Let us sing and make melody to Him with a grateful heart.