

Another View
Small People... Big Purpose
Matthew 28: 16-20 and Psalm 8:1-9

Have you ever stood outside on a clear night and looked up at the stars? Really looked?

Long before telescopes, satellites, or spacecraft, the writer of Psalm 8 looked into the night sky and was overwhelmed by the vastness of creation. Today, images from the Hubble and James Webb telescopes reveal galaxies and stars beyond anything the psalmist could have imagined.

And yet the question remains the same:

“What are human beings that You are mindful of them?”

It is hard to stand beneath a sky filled with stars and not at least wonder if there is something greater than ourselves. The night sky has a way of making us feel very small, and maybe that is part of its gift.

Psalm 8 does not pretend we are bigger than we are. It honestly reminds us that we are small — but not forgotten

The psalmist looks at the heavens, the moon, and the stars, and seems almost stunned that the God who made all of that would still care about us. Not just humanity in general, but ordinary people. Fragile people. Forgetful people. People who get tired, discouraged, distracted, and overwhelmed.

And yet Psalm 8 says God is mindful of us. That is an astonishing thought. In the vastness of creation, we are not invisible to God. We are not cosmic accidents. We are not too small to matter. The same God who formed the heavens still sees us, knows us, and gives human life purpose.

Psalm 8 reminds us that humility and dignity belong together.

We are small – But we are not meaningless.

We are limited – But we are loved.

We are dust – But we are entrusted with purpose.

That may be one of the great gifts of this psalm. It helps us look up long enough to remember who God is — and then look around long enough to notice the people and responsibilities God has placed in front of us.

Because awe is not meant to leave us standing still. Wonder should lead us somewhere.

When we remember how great God is, it should change how we live. It should make us humbler, kinder, more grateful, and more aware of the people around us.

If God has placed care, responsibility, and purpose into human hands, then our lives matter more than we sometimes think. The way we treat creation matters. The way we treat one another matters. The way we use our words, our time, our influence, and our compassion matters.

Psalms 8 begins with the greatness of God. But it also reminds us that small people can still be given a big purpose. That matters because we live in a world that often tells us to prove our worth by chasing more and more success, more status, more influence, more control. Before long, we can begin to believe everything depends entirely on us.

Psalms 8 gently reminds us where we fit.

We matter deeply.

But we are not God.

We have responsibility.

But we are not carrying the world alone.

And that makes Jesus' words in Matthew 28 even more powerful. The risen Christ looks at ordinary people — people who had worshipped, wondered, struggled, and even doubted — and still tells them to go into the world and help others learn His way of love, grace, and hope.

You may feel small... but God still sees purpose in you.

A disciple is simply a learner — someone trying to become more like the one they follow. The interesting part is that Jesus gave this responsibility to ordinary people. Not famous leaders. Not perfect people. Ordinary people who still had doubts, fears, and questions of their own.

In fact, Scripture tells us that even as the disciples worshipped the risen Christ, some still doubted. In many ways, that sounds a lot like real life.

Sometimes faith and doubt exist together.

Sometimes we worship while still carrying questions.

Sometimes we pray while still struggling.

Sometimes we trust God - still wondering where He is leading us.

God is not intimidated by our questions. Faith is not pretending we have every answer neatly wrapped up. Sometimes growth begins when we stop hiding our struggles and honestly bring them to God and to one another.

The disciples themselves did not fully understand everything when Jesus gave them the Great Commission. Yet Jesus still trusted them with meaningful work.

That means discipleship is not reserved for “perfect Christians” who never struggle. It is for ordinary people still learning, still growing, and still trying to follow Christ one day at a time.

At a fire scene, individual firefighters may only see the room on fire directly in front of them. The incident commander sees the larger picture — the structure, the dangers, the strategy, and where crews are needed most. Faith can feel that way too. We often see only the immediate problems in front of us while God sees the broader picture of our lives and our purpose.

The same God who hung the stars in the sky still chooses to work through ordinary people — people who show mercy, offer kindness, practice forgiveness, speak encouragement, and help carry someone else's burden.

That does not mean every person is called to change the whole world. But every person may help change someone's world. Sometimes in ways they may never fully realize. Most discipleship does not happen in stadiums or on television.

It happens quietly in everyday life:
through patience,
through kindness,
through forgiveness,
through compassion,
through listening,
through helping someone carry a burden.

Every day we interact with family members, friends, coworkers, neighbors, cashiers, caregivers, and complete strangers. In each encounter we have an opportunity to let the Holy Spirit work through us and reflect something different into the world.

Sometimes discipleship looks less like preaching and more like choosing grace when frustration would be easier.

Maybe it is letting the rushed driver merge into traffic.
Maybe it is showing patience to the exhausted cashier.
Maybe it is checking on a lonely neighbor.
Maybe it is listening to someone who simply needs to be heard.

These moments may seem small, but small acts often plant seeds. The kingdom of God often moves forward through very ordinary acts done faithfully. Psalm 8 reminds us how small we are. Matthew 28 reminds us how much God still trusts us anyway.

So maybe the invitation this week is simple: Look up long enough to remember God is bigger than whatever you are facing. Look around long enough to notice someone who could use kindness.

Then do one simple thing that shows God's love — make the call, offer help, forgive the mistake, show patience, say the kind word, or simply listen. Because in God's hands, ordinary people doing ordinary things with love can still make a real difference.

Walking It Out This Week

Small People, Faithful Steps

Psalm 8 reminds us that we are small but not forgotten. Matthew 28 reminds us that Jesus still trusts ordinary people with meaningful work.

That can feel overwhelming. The needs around us are real. Families struggle. Neighbors hurt. Churches have work to do. The world can feel too big, too loud, and too broken for anything we do to matter.

Remember God does not ask us to fix everything. God asks us to trust Him, lean on Him, and keep moving forward one faithful step at a time.

This week, consider these simple ways to live that out:

Look up before you look around.

Take a moment this week to look at the sky — day or night — and remember that God is bigger than whatever feels overwhelming. Let that reminder steady you.

Remember that small does not mean useless.

You may not be able to change the whole world, but you may be able to make one person's day lighter. A kind word, a phone call, a prayer, or a helping hand can matter more than you know.

Ask God, "Who needs my attention today?"

Before rushing into the day, pause and ask God to help you notice someone who needs patience, kindness, encouragement, forgiveness, or help.

Do not wait until you feel ready.

The disciples still had doubts, and Jesus still trusted them with work to do. You may not feel ready to do something big, but you can still do something good. Check on someone. Offer help. Pray honestly. Show patience. Listen well. God can work through small steps taken with a willing heart.

Let God carry what you cannot.

Some burdens are too heavy for us to carry alone. That does not mean we have failed. It simply means we are human. We cannot fix every problem, heal every hurt, or control every outcome. Psalm 8 reminds us that we matter deeply, but we are not God. This week, do what you can faithfully — offer help, pray honestly, speak kindly, and show up with love. Then trust God with what is beyond you.

Take one simple step of love.

Make the call. Send the note. Offer the ride. Forgive the mistake. Hold your tongue. Say thank you. Listen without rushing. Pray for the person who is struggling.

Keep moving forward.

Faith is not always a giant leap. Sometimes it is just taking the next right step with God's help.

This week, remember: God does not need you to be enormous. He does not need you to be perfect. He does not need you to solve everything. He simply invites you to trust Him and let His love show through your ordinary life. Because in God's hands, small people can still do big things — one faithful act of love at a time.

This week, as we remember that we are small but not forgotten, this prayer may help us trust God with what is beyond us and remain faithful with what is in front of us:

*God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.
Amen.*

Faith Between Sundays Small Steps with a Big God

Monday — Psalm 8:3–4

“When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars... what is mankind that You are mindful of them?”

Take a moment today to look up — at the sky, the clouds, the stars, or even just the wide world around you. Remember that God is greater than whatever you are facing. You may feel small, but you are not forgotten.

Tuesday — Psalm 8:5–6

“You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor.”

God gives human life dignity and purpose. You do not have to be famous, powerful, or perfect to matter. Today, look for one simple way to honor the purpose God has placed in your life.

Wednesday — Matthew 28:17

“When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.”

This is one of the most honest verses in Scripture. Some worshiped and doubted at the same time. If you have questions, struggles, or uncertainty, you are not alone. Bring those things to God instead of hiding them.

Thursday — Matthew 28:19

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...”

Jesus trusted ordinary people with meaningful work. A disciple is a learner — someone trying to become more like the one they follow. Today, ask yourself: *How can I help someone see a little more of Jesus through my words, patience, kindness, or actions?*

Friday — Galatians 6:2

“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”

You do not have to carry the whole world. But you may be able to help carry one burden for one person. Make the call. Send the note. Offer help. Listen without rushing. Small acts of care can become holy work.

Saturday — Philippians 4:13

“I can do all this through Him who gives me strength.”

This does not mean we can do everything. It means God gives us strength for what He calls us to do. Today, do what you can faithfully, and trust God with what is beyond your hands.

Sunday — Matthew 28:20

“And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Jesus does not send His people out alone. As you prepare for another week, remember this: God is with you in the big things, the small things, the hard things, and the ordinary things. Keep moving forward with Him.

Thought for the Week

You may feel small, but God still sees purpose in you. In God’s hands, ordinary people doing ordinary things with love can make a real difference.

Prayer for the Week

God of the heavens, when I look up at the night sky,
help me remember that You are greater than anything I am facing.

Remind me that even though I am small, I am not forgotten.

Open my eyes to the people around me
who need kindness, patience, encouragement, or help.

Use my ordinary life
to show Your love in ordinary ways.

Amen.

From the Pew **The Night I Looked Up**

In 1986, I took a day off from work and drove to the Powell Observatory in California.

At the time, I was working for a company that built satellite reception equipment, technology designed to capture signals from the sky. I spent a lot of time around satellite dishes, receivers, frequencies, and equipment meant to pull something invisible out of the air and turn it into something we could see or hear.

But that night, no piece of human technology could compare with what I was about to witness. As darkness settled in, something ancient and magnificent slowly appeared in the night sky: Halley's Comet.

Halley's Comet circles the sun roughly every 75 to 76 years, which means most people, if they are lucky, may only see it once in their lifetime. It had passed by Earth long before any of us were here, and it will return long after most of us are gone.

I remember looking up and seeing it stretched across the night sky, its long, ghostly tail fading into the darkness.

It was silent, Majestic, almost timeless.

There are some moments in life that do not need much explanation. They just stop you in your tracks. That night was one of them.

Standing there under that enormous sky, I felt small — but not worthless. Humbled — but not forgotten. I remember thinking how hard it would be to look at something so ancient, so vast, and so beautiful and not wonder if there is more to this life than just us.

The next day, I went back to work with very little sleep and a mind still full of wonder. Some of my coworkers laughed. "Why would you waste your time on that?" they asked. At the time, I probably said something simple like, "It was really cool." And it was.

But looking back now, I wish I had said more.

Even the word "comet" carries wonder. It comes from an old Greek word meaning something like "long-haired star," because ancient people looked up and saw that bright head and sweeping tail across the sky.

Today we know comets are not stars with hair. We know they are made of ice, dust, rock, and frozen gases. We can predict Halley's return. We can study its path. We can even send spacecraft into deep space to intercept comets.

And still, mystery remains. Maybe that is part of the gift.

A comet reminds us that there is more to creation than we can fully explain, own, control, or understand. It gives us a glimpse of something vast and ordered, something far bigger than our daily worries and schedules.

I wish I had told my coworkers that.

I wish I had said, “You don’t just get the chance to look at a comet. You get the chance to look at something that points beyond itself — something that reminds us of the steadiness, greatness, and faithfulness of God.”

Halley’s Comet returns on a schedule we can predict. The earth sits at just the right distance from the sun for life. The tilt of the earth gives us seasons. The rotation of the earth gives us days. The path of the earth around the sun gives us years. We set our watches, calendars, workdays, holidays, birthdays, and anniversaries by the order God placed into creation.

And because it is so steady, we often stop noticing it.

That may be one of the strangest things about God’s goodness. If any of us had created something as magnificent as a comet, we would probably want everyone to know about it. We would point to it, put our name on it, and make sure people gave us credit.

But God’s creation keeps moving with quiet faithfulness.

No announcement, No spotlight, No need for applause.

The sun rises. The seasons turn. The stars shine. The comet returns. And God keeps holding it all together whether we notice or not.

That kind of faithfulness should humble us. It should also remind us that we are not in control as much as we sometimes think we are.

When I was younger, especially as a firefighter and paramedic, I think I sometimes carried myself as if everything depended on me. I was going to save the patient. I was going to handle the emergency. I was going to make the difference.

But as I got older, I began to understand the truth a little better.

I was not the savior, I was a servant.

I was only there in case God changed His mind.

That does not mean the work did not matter. It mattered deeply. But it helped me remember that I was not the one ultimately in control.

We are called to serve, help, respond, love, and do the work placed in front of us. But we are not called to take God's place.

That is where Psalm 8 and Matthew 28 meet.

Psalm 8 reminds us that we are small.

Matthew 28 reminds us that Jesus still trusts us with work to do.

Not because we are in control.

Not because we have all the answers.

Not because we can save the world.

But because we are disciples — learners and servants in God's kingdom — invited to join in the work God is already doing.

And that is the part I still think about. Looking back, I realize I missed more than a night's sleep. I missed an opportunity.

When my coworkers asked why I had bothered to go see Halley's Comet, I could have said more than, "It was really cool." I could have told them that, for me, it was a glimpse of God's greatness — a reminder that creation is ordered, steady, beautiful, and far bigger than anything we control.

But I did not say that. I let the moment pass.

That was almost forty years ago. Halley's Comet will not return for many years yet. But we do not have to wait for the next comet to notice God's work or speak about His goodness.

Those opportunities come more often than we think.

They come in ordinary conversations, quiet moments, unexpected questions, and everyday chances to point someone toward hope, grace, kindness, and faith.

Maybe the lesson is not to wait when one of those moments opens in front of us.

When the moment comes, do not wait for perfect words. You may not need a sermon. You may not need all the answers.

Sometimes all you need is the courage to say, "That reminded me of God," or "I think God is still working," or "Maybe there is something bigger going on here."

You do not have to wait for the perfect moment. You can be a disciple today.

The heavens may declare the glory of God, but we have to look up to notice. And when we do, maybe we begin to see everything else a little more clearly too.

We see God's greatness, we see our own limits, we see the people around us. And we remember that even small people, with ordinary lives, can still be part of God's good work in the world.

Biblical History **When People Looked Up**

Throughout the Bible, the sky often becomes a place where people are reminded of God's greatness, promise, guidance, and power.

In Genesis, God creates the sun, moon, and stars to mark days, seasons, and years. The steady rhythm of creation becomes one of the ways we measure time and order our lives.

When God speaks to Abraham, He tells him to look up at the stars and try to count them. The stars become a reminder of God's promise.

Psalms 8 and 19 look at the moon and stars and ask one of life's great questions: "What are human beings that You are mindful of them?" Psalm 19 says, "The heavens declare the glory of God." In other words, creation itself points beyond itself.

Isaiah says, "Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these?" That is still a good question.

In the New Testament, the Magi follow a star connected to the birth of Jesus. At the crucifixion, Matthew, Mark, and Luke all describe darkness covering the land from noon until three in the afternoon. Some early Christian writers also referred to earlier historians who may have mentioned an unusual darkness or eclipse-like event during that general period. There is even geological evidence of a significant earthquake in the region sometime between A.D. 26 and A.D. 36, which overlaps the likely time of Jesus' death. That does not "prove" every detail, but it does make the biblical account worth noticing and discussing.

In Acts, Peter quotes the prophet Joel, speaking of wonders in the heavens and signs on the earth.

Again and again, Scripture reminds us that looking up can help us remember what we often forget: God is greater than we are, creation is not accidental, and our lives are held within a much bigger story.

We may not understand every mystery in the sky.

But we can still let the sky remind us to wonder, to worship, and to trust the God who made it all.

Nate's Wisdom for the Week

Still Looking Up

Nate loved hats.

Some dogs tolerate a hat for about three seconds before shaking it off. Not Nate. He seemed to enjoy wearing them. He would keep a hat on until we took it off, as if he knew he looked good and was willing to let everyone admire him.

He also loved chasing frisbees.

One day, I threw a frisbee and it got stuck near the top of a tree. We tried to get it down, but we could not reach it. I figured the wind would eventually bring it down.

It never did. But Nate never forgot.

Every time he went outside — whether to play, explore, or do his business — that frisbee was the first thing he looked for. He would stop, look up into the tree, and stare at it with that confused look on his face. You could almost hear him thinking, “Why won’t you come down? We had so much fun before you decided to stay up there.”

Even when we moved, as we were getting ready to leave for the next home, Nate looked up at that tree one more time. It was almost as if he was saying, “I know you’re still up there. I haven’t forgotten.”

Maybe we understand that more than we want to admit.

Sometimes something happens in life, and we keep looking up too. We still believe God is there. We still know where to look. But we may also wonder why He has not answered the way we hoped.

“God, I thought You would help me.”

“I thought You would fix this.”

“I thought You would bring that back down.”

“I thought You were close, but right now it feels like You are staying just out of reach.”

That is not a failure of faith. That is part of being honest with God. Psalm 8 reminds us to look up and see God’s greatness. Matthew 28 reminds us to keep walking with Jesus, even when we do not understand everything.



The disciples themselves worshiped Jesus, and some still doubted. Yet Jesus did not walk away from them. He still trusted them. He still sent them. He still promised to be with them.

Maybe Nate's wisdom is this: Keep looking up.
Not because every frisbee comes down.
Not because every prayer is answered the way we expected.
Not because we always understand what God is doing.

But because God is still there. And even when something we love feels stuck beyond our reach, we can keep trusting the One who sees us, loves us, and walks with us into the next home, the next chapter, and the next faithful step.

A while back, I drove by the old house and that frisbee was still in the tree. The new owners even wondered how it got there. I suppose Nate would have understood. Some things stay beyond our reach longer than we expect. But maybe the lesson is not that every frisbee comes down. Maybe the lesson is to keep looking up, keep trusting, and keep walking into the next chapter with the One who never forgets us.

Prayer to Carry This Week

LOOK UP

Lord, when life feels too big, help me remember You are bigger.

When I feel small, remind me I am not forgotten.

Open my eyes to the people around me.
Show me where kindness is needed, where patience is needed,
where forgiveness is needed, and where love can do more than I realize.

Help me do the good I can do and trust You with what I cannot fix.

Use my ordinary life in some small way this week
to bring hope, peace, and love to someone else.

And when I do not understand, when the answer has not come,
or when something I hoped for still feels out of reach, teach me to keep looking up.

You are still God. You are still near. You are still holding what I cannot carry.

Amen.

LOOK UP

- L — Lord, You are greater than what I face.**
- O — Open my eyes to the people around me.**
- O — Order my steps when I feel overwhelmed.**
- K — Keep me faithful in small things.**

- U — Use my life to show Your love.**
- P — Give me peace with what I cannot control.**