

The Victorious King

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[0 : 00] Thank you very much, Alice, and everyone else who's been involved in the service so far. As has been mentioned, my name is Alistair. It is my joy to be the assistant pastor here at the church.

And that means I have the privilege of being paid full-time to spend my time in God's Word and to care for you all. So Alice has already prayed for us, so do keep that psalm open in front of you as we spend time in it this morning, Psalm 21.

And I would like to begin by asking you a question. What is the function of a king? So when you hear the word king, what kind of images come to your mind?

Maybe you see things similar to that in an art gallery. Men with really long robes, walking sticks, a massive wig, and some very, very questionable footwear.

Maybe you imagine a king sitting on a throne in a room full of officials shouting at them because there are enemies on his borders. Maybe you imagine a man sitting at a table scoffing copious amounts of food when all of his subjects starve outside the palace.

[1 : 10] If you haven't guessed already, I quite enjoy watching movies from the Viking and medieval periods. But when we think about kings, we probably have the idea of someone who has power, who earns a certain kind of respect, and who can basically do whatever they please.

But when we come to the Bible, and particularly the psalms that we're looking at in this short series, Psalms 20 to 25, we get a completely different king.

See, instead of seeing a king who boasts in his power and authority, we find a king who writes poetry and sings and songs about his needing help from God.

Instead of finding a king who celebrates in great victories and throws big banquets, we see a king who attributes his victories to God.

But also these psalms are a bit like a viewpoint. Now, if you've visited some tourist sites in Scotland, you'll know exactly what I mean.

[2 : 17] Last year, Sabina and I went to the Isle of Skye. And we stopped at one viewing point. And we got out of the car and we saw a wonderful waterfall with a phenomenal view of some mountains.

Since breathtaking Scottish nature, you can't find anything better in the world. A grand view to take in. But then as you walked further around the corner, the scenery became even more grand and you saw cliffs, waterfalls, the beautiful sea, more Scottish scenery.

You could stand there for ages and it would seem that seconds had gone by. These psalms are a little bit like that. So imagine you're on the Isle of Skye with me.

Probably not the kind of holiday you imagine. But we get out the car together and we are at that initial viewpoint. You see the ancient kingdom of Israel under the King David.

A land that God has blessed and people at times have attributed all the good that they have to God. God is the King of Israel. And God said in 2 Samuel 7 that one of his descendants would be on the throne of Israel forever.

[3 : 29] But David would die. And David's son would die. And so on down the family line. So is this the end? Well, no. Come back to the Isle of Skye with me.

If you only focused at that first viewpoint, it's nice. It's a good view. But you would miss out on so much. Because each of these psalms finds its ultimate fulfillment and its full beauty in Jesus.

The ultimate King. The eternal King. And so that's what we're going to do this morning. We're going to walk around the corner to the second viewpoint as well. We're going to see God's provision through God's King.

First in the context of David. But ultimately how this psalm is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. We're going to look at this psalm by thinking about what God has already done.

And what God will do. So the first thing in this psalm that we see, if you have it open in front of you, verses 1 to 7 of what God has already done. What God has already done.

[4 : 33] So last week we looked at Psalm 20. And these two psalms, Psalms 20 and 21, they go together. Psalm 20 is the prayer. And basically Psalm 21 is the answer to that prayer.

In Psalm 20, if you look over the page in verses 1 to 5, there's a prayer for protection for the King. Asking God to grant victory to His King.

And so as we turn to Psalm 21, verse 1, and it reads this, The King rejoices in your strength, Lord. How great is His joy in the victories you give.

We can see based on that verse that it seems God has answered His prayer. And He has granted victory. And so the King rejoices and is joyful. And in fact, He goes even further in the next few verses.

Look from verse 2 with me. You have granted Him His heart's desire and have not withheld the request of His lips. You came to greet Him with rich blessings and placed a crown of pure gold on His head.

[5 : 36] He asked you for life and you gave it to Him. Length of days, forever and ever. God has answered the King's wish and given Him His heart's desire.

God has answered that prayer. And the psalmist uses language of God coming to meet Him with a crown to put on His head.

A sign of victory over a defeated power, a defeated enemy. The King asked God to spare His life and He did so time and time again. God gave David great victories and verse 5 says God gave him splendor and majesty.

Now take a second to look through these verses in front of us. Verses 1 to 7. Who is the one who's doing all the work? Well it's God, isn't it? Verse 2.

You have granted. Verse 3. You came to greet and place the crown on His head, the King's head. Verse 4. You gave life. Verse 5. God gave the victories. Verse 6.

[6 : 47] You have granted unending blessing. In each of these verses, at least once, the focus is taken off of King David to see what God has really done in his life.

To see what God has accomplished on David's behalf. See the main character of this psalm is not David. But it is God. Because He is the one who is the basis.

Who is the foundation of everything happening. It is God who has done the work. And isn't God abundantly gracious to this? To do this?

To provide for and care for David. A man who'd done atrocious things. A rapist. A man who murdered another man's, another woman's husband to be able to take her as his wife.

David was not perfect. He had done awful things. And yet the focus is not on him or on his sin. But it is on what God has already done.

[7 : 51] God has brought about victory. And the best blessings that David received from God, we see them in verses 6 and 7. Read those with me. Surely you have granted him unending blessings and made him glad with the joy of your presence.

For the king trusts in the Lord. Through the unfailing love of the Most High, he will not be shaken. See the biggest blessings that the king receives is that God is present with him.

And that God bestows on David his unfailing love. Now none of this is to be taken lightly. This is a powerful king. Attributing all of his greatness.

All of his wealth. All of his victories and blessings. He says he's got them all from God. The ultimate king of the universe who's given him everything. It's all part of God's provision for his people.

Through his covenant promises. And through his king. God has already worked for this king by defeating his enemies. So that's what it means in the context of David in that first viewpoint.

[9 : 04] But follow around the corner with me. And remember that this psalm ultimately points us forward to and finds its fulfillment in Jesus. Because this psalm points forward to Jesus.

It is through his life, his death and his resurrection that our ultimate enemies have been defeated. See the Bible describes the moment when sin, rebellion against God entered into this world.

From then on sin has plagued every single human heart. Causing humans naturally to be at odds with God. But God in his amazing love and mercy sent his son Jesus into this world.

To live the perfect life of obedience that we couldn't even dream of living. To die the death that every single one of us deserves. And by doing so, defeating our ultimate enemies of sin and death.

For all those who trust in Jesus, we are no longer in darkness and under death. But we have been brought into the family of God. We have been forgiven through Jesus and have been given true and everlasting life.

[10:14] So standing on this side of the cross, every Christian can paraphrase this psalm by saying, I rejoice in God Almighty who has given me victory over my enemies through Jesus.

God, you have made it possible for me to live the life you created me to live. God, you met me in my suffering and transformed my life. No longer making me a slave to sin and bound to eternal death. But you have given me a place at your table as your child. Through Jesus, God, you have given me true and everlasting life that I will spend in your glorious presence.

Therefore, God, I will give you all the glory and splendor and honor and praise for this new life you've given me through Christ.

And God, I thank you every day for the glorious gift of the Holy Spirit, who is making me more like Jesus and preparing me for the day when we will be united to spend eternity in the new creation.

[11:18] Sounds a little bit different, doesn't it? But that is the reality of every single Christian because of what God has done in their life through Jesus. God has defeated our greatest enemies and given us so many wonderful blessings in this life.

And so because of that, as Christians, we can be even more confident than this psalmist is. When he says in verse 7, For the king trusts in the Lord through the unfailing love of the Most High, he will not be shaken.

We can be more confident because as Christians, we aren't saved by our own efforts. There is nothing that we can do by ourselves, in and of ourselves to defeat sin and death, our ultimate enemies.

But we trust entirely in what God has already done through Jesus Christ. Because of his work, we are saved. Because of Jesus, we are victorious.

Now if this is the good news of Jesus, why wouldn't we want our friends and our family members to hear about it? Don't we have every single reason in the world to shout this news from the rooftops of the amazing truths of the good news of Christ?

[12:38] And yet so often we don't do that, do we? This week I sat with someone from our church family and they're not doing that well and they have so many struggles in life.

And yet as we were talking, we were reading some of the Bible together. They said they had one regret. That in their life, as they looked over the years of their life, that all that God had done for them, the thing they regretted was not witnessing for Jesus when they had the opportunity to.

Brothers and sisters, seeing what God has already done for us in Jesus should spur us on to tell people about him. Not to cower away, but to boldly proclaim the life and hope that is found in the completed work of God through Christ.

Friends, this is what God has already done for us in Jesus. He has defeated our enemies on the cross. We should remember that and rejoice and be glad because of the everlasting life that we have.

These are the glorious truths of the gospel. Once oppressed, now free. Once dead in our sins, now alive in Christ. Once in darkness, now in light.

[13:56] Once enemies of God, now his children. That is what God has already done for you in Christ. Well, maybe you're sitting there thinking, well, that sounds lovely, but that is definitely not the world I live in.

My world isn't full of good news and happiness. Maybe we resonate with the Chris Tomlin song, Is He Worthy? Which asks the questions, Do you feel the world is broken?

Do you wish that you could see it all made new? Do you feel the shadows deepen? And as that song goes on, I think most of us, if not all of us, looking at our world with a deep sense that something is wrong, can wholeheartedly sing, yes, yes, we do think the world is broken.

So how do, how does our current world of war, famine, disease, and death match up with the glorious truths of what God has already done?

How do you bring those two together? Well, look at the second half of our psalm. And the second thing I want us to see this morning is what God will do. In verses 8 to 30, what God will do.

[15:20] See, the language of battle and enemies continues. Look with me at verse 8. Your hand will lay hold on all your enemies. Your right hand will seize your foes when you appear for battle.

You will burn them up as in a blazing furnace. The Lord will swallow them up in his wrath and his fire will consume them. This is what the Lord will do in the future for his king and for his people. It's the language of a final victory, the final day when the Lord's hands, referring to judgment, and his right hand, referring to his strength and might, will seize his foes.

The psalmist is looking forward to a future day when God, in his justice and in his wisdom, will bring judgment. And we know that this is the final judgment being spoken about here because the language it uses is final.

It speaks about swallowing up his enemies in wrath, verse 9. In his fire, meaning his just wrath and anger, will consume his enemies. But who are these people?

[16:35] Who are those who will be consumed by this judgment? Well, the key is in verses 11 to 12. Read those with me. Though they plot evil against you and devise wicked schemes, they cannot succeed.

You will make them turn their backs when you aim at them with drawn bow. Those who plot against God and his people and those who reject God and Jesus.

See, if the gospel of Jesus is often referred to as the good news, then this is the hard news that goes along with it. Not everyone will be saved on that final day and brought into everlasting life that we thought about in the first half of this psalm.

There will be those who reject Jesus and turn their back on him. And they will sit under the just judgment of God forever in a place we often refer to as hell.

The ESV translates verse 12 a little bit better and makes it clear that those who reject Jesus will be rejected by Jesus in the end. The ESV says, for you will put them to flight.

[17:46] You will aim at their faces with your bows. See, the people who will be under the future judgment of God are those who are running away from him in this life.

They see the judgment coming and they run away from God. Instead of seeing the judgment coming and running to him through Christ and trusting in what God has already done.

They're running away from him in the end, on that final day, because in this life, when the opportunity was there, they refuse to put their trust in Jesus. Using the imagery of the psalm, some people will try to flee from God and on that final day, because they refused to acknowledge him in this life.

Friends, the place to be right with God, the way to be at peace with God, the way to receive all the blessings from verses one to seven, the way to live the life you were created to live, is to run to Jesus now in this life.

Do not waste time, but run to Christ, find forgiveness, find peace, find rest, and true life. Outside of that relationship with God is an eternal life of judgment.

[19:11] Now, I don't say that with joy, because it's not something I want people to go through, which is why I'm standing here this morning being honest with you and begging you, if you do not know Jesus, do not put it off.

Turn to him now. Do not turn your back on him, but consider his life, death, and resurrection. See what God has already done through Christ. That can be true for you.

Put your trust in him. God will come in judgment. We don't know when that will happen, and so there is no time to waste. And this is the consistent message throughout the whole Bible, from beginning to the end.

The good news of salvation also comes with the hard news of judgment. Jesus himself says in Matthew 10, verses 32 to 33, Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven.

But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven. Friends, I beg you, consider carefully where you want to spend your eternity.

[20:20] In the presence of God, in a place often described as heaven, or under the judgment of God, in a place often called hell. So how do we respond to, how do we respond when we see God's provision through God's King?

When we see what God has already done in Jesus, providing forgiveness and true life? And when we see that God will come in judgment? What should our response be?

Well, the same as the psalmist in verse 13, where he writes, Be exalted in your strength, Lord, we will sing and praise your might. Our response to the truth of what God has already done and what God will ultimately do as he brings judgment on our enemies and those who reject him is that we

turn to God in submission and we recognize Jesus as Lord and King and we follow him till our dying day or until he returns.

This means that we praise God for who he is. We acknowledge all that the King has done in his might and the victory in life he's brought us through Christ.

That should lead us to be in awe of how great he is and praise him every single day for the wonderful, uncountable blessings he has given us.

[21 : 46] But it also means that we take this news to a world that is dying. It's dying without him. Because we don't want anyone to die without the opportunity to hear the good news of Jesus and respond.

Because only in him can true life be found. So think back to where we started. What do you imagine a king to be like?

Normally a man with power and prestige, someone who demands a certain respect, someone with authority, who can do whatever they please. Well, the Bible gives us a completely different story of a glorious king who left his place of glory, who stooped into our world of sin and darkness so that we could be free from the sin that binds us, so that we could be freed to be in a right relationship with God, so that we can take that message of hope to a world that is hopeless.

Jesus is the greatest king who came to seek and save the lost. Have you been found in him this morning? Or are you still running?

Let us pray together. Heavenly Father, we thank you for the glorious truths of the gospel.

[23 : 32] that through Jesus, we can have life and life in all its fullness. Thank you that he came to take the place, to take our place, the death that we deserve, so that we can be right with you.

Father, I pray this week that you would help us have the opportunity to tell that good news to one person. Help us tell one person about Jesus and the wonderful hope and life that is to be found in him.

And Father, for anyone here who does not know you, we pray that you would do a work in their heart, that by your spirit, you would be drawing them to yourself and help them run to you on that day and now.

In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen.