

The Glorious King

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[0:00] Thanks, Kata. Well, good morning, folks. It is wonderful to see you, whether you've been here for years or whether this is your first time with us at Bronzefield. Welcome. And what a joy it is to look at this psalm together, to do exactly what we have just been singing, right?

Behold our God seated on his throne. Let us come and adore him. That is my prayer, that that is what we would do this morning. My name is Alistair. It's been said I'm the assistant pastor here at the church.

And this morning, it is my joy to lead us through this psalm. So please do keep that open in front of you. Everything we do at Bronzefield should be rooted in God's word. So don't take my word for it. Follow along in the psalm and we will see what the Lord has to say.

Now, this short summer series that we've been going through on Psalms 20 to 24 is all about the king in all of his glory. Each week we've looked at a different description or aspect of the king that finds its partial fulfillment in David, the ancient king of Israel.

They're rooted first and foremost in his life, in his time as king. But then each of these psalms points us forward to the ultimate king, Jesus Christ.

[1:13] The true king of glory whose dominion knows no end, whose kingdom will continue to grow until the end of time, and who is crowned in splendor and in majesty.

This series is designed to help us take a step back and see the glory of God. To readjust our thinking about who God is and to stand amazed in his presence.

And to think how amazing it is that we get to call this all-powerful, mighty, majestic God, our Heavenly Father.

So if you haven't been around for this whole series over the summer, I know many people have been away on holiday. Please do go back and listen to the sermons. You'll find them on YouTube. You'll find them on our website or on the podcast. They have been a great encouragement to us all. But let me just give you a recap of where we've been the last few weeks. So in Psalm 20, we saw the prayerful king.

[2:18] In Psalm 21, we saw the victorious king. In Psalm 22, the suffering king. Psalm 23, the shepherd and host king. And today in Psalm 24, we will see the glorious king.

Now Psalm 24 this morning in a similar way points us beyond King David to the Lord Jesus Christ. This psalm is all about how people can, like us, can come into the presence of this glorious king. The king of glory as he's described in Psalm 24. But this psalm is slightly different from the others in this series because David isn't actually the focus of this psalm at all.

The sole focus of this psalm is God. It's a liturgical psalm. One that would most likely have been sung as the people gathered corporately to praise and worship God.

It's a psalm of praise and recognition of who God is. And it describes the immense privilege it is to come into his presence and worship him. Now I hope that as we gather this morning as a church family and as we walk away from this series, that we walk away in the same sense of awe and wonder as the original hearers would have.

[3:37] The sense of awe that we get to come before this great God this morning and praise him. So David wrote this psalm as a procession psalm. For when two things happened.

First, when people would enter the presence of God to worship in the tabernacle or the temple. And then secondly, when God draws near to his people. Now we don't know exactly when it was written, but one of the possibilities is that it could have been when the Ark of the Covenant was brought into the city of Jerusalem.

Now you can read about the Ark of the Covenant in Exodus 25 later on this afternoon, if you have time. It was basically a big chest that contained the Ten Commandments, a piece of manna that

God fed Israel with in the wilderness, and the staff of Aaron, the first priest of Israel. The Ark of the Covenant was a physical symbol of faith and a reminder of the presence of God among his people. It was one of the most instrumental symbols for the nation of Israel and their worship of God.

So in the Old Testament, before the temple was built and you talked about the presence of God, the Israelite would have gone and thought about the Ark of the Covenant. That's what you would think about.

[4 : 56] It was a very big deal for the nation of Israel. It is how God's presence, or it was how God's presence, was interacting with his people. So this whole psalm is about when the normal lives of people interact with the spiritual realm of God and his kingdom.

It's about entering into the presence of this God, the King of glory. And I think it's quite fitting to end our short series on this particular element of the King, because it gives us an insight also into the end of time.

The time when the King will come in all of his glory and every single eye will see him. So we're going to look at this psalm using the two selahs as a break in the text in verses 6 to 10.

Now your pew Bibles don't actually have the word selah from the original text. We're not exactly certain what that word selah means. It could be a note to those singing or playing instruments to this psalm.

And it could have been a sign of a break, a time to stop and to reflect on what God has just said in his word. And so as we come to the word selah in verses 6 and 10, we're going to do just that.

[6 : 10] I'm going to say the word and we're just going to pause for a few seconds and think about what God has said in the previous verses. But let me just draw our attention to the first thing that we see in this psalm.

In verses 1 to 6, we see draw near to God. Draw near to God. Now read verse 3 with me. Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord?

Who may stand in his holy place? This question is the crux of our first point. David is basically asking, who can approach God?

Who has the right to stand in his presence? I wonder if you've ever had a time where you've been around someone and you've been flabbergasted.

I saw a little bit yesterday with Graham as he saw Rachel coming down the aisle. That moment where you're unable to speak properly. You're unable to think straight.

[7 : 11] Everything is a blur. You are dumbfounded as you approach someone or they approach you. Maybe it was your celebrity crush that you met in a concert accidentally.

Maybe it was your spouse when you first met or maybe it was on your wedding day. Maybe it was even a member of the royal family or some other famous person. There are times where we meet people and we are taken aback.

And those might be our responses when we come into the presence of certain people of prominence. But we're still allowed to be there. Unless you've got a restraining order. You're still allowed to be there.

But David is asking who can approach God because he knows that nobody should be allowed to be there. To ascend or to stand, the language of verse 3, are not specific things about posture in worship.

But they're about the presence of the worshiper. They're words used to talk about a person's acceptance or approach to God in worship. Both in the public gathering of God's people to worship God and in private.

[8 : 22] And the mountain of the Lord in the Psalms is shorthand for the tabernacle or the temple. The place where God would meet with his people and they would worship him. Now the key thing that David wants us to know and the key thing that he knows.

Is that for us to be able to enter into the presence of God. To be able to worship God. We must be accepted by God. Because God is completely different from us.

And David highlights that by drawing out two aspects of the king. First of all, he is creator in verses 1 and 2. And he is holy in verses 3 and 4. So read verses 1 and 2 with me.

See, David looks out and he knows that everything in the world was created by God.

He is the one who made the seas and he governs them. He is the one who told the sun and the moon when they should shine. He is the one who put the stars in their place.

[9 : 32] God is the one who created every single human being with dignity and worth. So how, David says, can we the creature approach our creator in worship on our own?

When since the beginning of time, humanity has done nothing but defile creation. And then in verses 3 and 4, David highlights the holiness of God.

He is so holy that only certain people can enter into his presence. And we see who those people are in verse 4. Read it with me. The one who has clean hands and a pure heart.

Who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god. So only the purest of the pure can come into the presence of God because he is holy.

And we all know that is not us. Humanity cannot do that because we are not holy. We are not pure. In Genesis 3, we get the story of how sin entered into the world.

[10 : 41] That first rebellion against God has affected every single human heart from the beginning. Where the first human being said, no God, we don't want you. We want to be like you.

And so our natural inclination is to rebel against God. To reject him. To reject his will. To choose to live for ourselves instead of living for him.

Sin has stained humanity. And so we, an unholy people, cannot come into the presence of a holy God. And the focus of verse 4 isn't on ceremonial acts that a person can do to make them clean. Religiosity won't help you get into the presence of God. But David is focusing on the adherence to God's law. Clean hands means blameless conduct.

A pure heart means having thoughts and motives that are always honest and innocent. And not trusting in idols or having falsehood or swearing by falsehoods is about the worshiper not having any form of deception in them.

[11 : 54] In relation to God or in relation to their fellow human beings. Now as you hear that, maybe your heart sank.

Because you know that's not you. You know you're not pure. You know that your intentions aren't always right. You know that you are not morally perfect.

You know that deception and lying are not completely foreign to you. For us you this morning then, you are in good company with the rest of the entire population of this world.

We all know that we're not clean. We know that our motives are warped and our hearts are eager to sin. Prone to wonder, don't we feel it?

And because of our sin and our natural spiritual state, we are the ones that should be ringing that bell shouting unclean like the lepers did in Jesus' day.

[13 : 01] Warning everyone that we are coming. We are not clean and we are not pure. But there is good news. Because there was one person who fulfilled these criteria perfectly.

And not only did that person make it possible, not only that, but this person made it possible in verse 5. As verse 5 tells us, for us to be able to seek God.

Friends, Jesus has made it possible for people to receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from God. That is possible because Jesus lived the perfect life in absolute obedience to God's law. Untouched by sin. Not sin-stained like the rest of humanity. And yet he willingly went to the cross. Luke's gospel says he set his face like flint to go to Jerusalem.

He bore the wrath of God against the sins of the world so that all who seek him, so that all who put their trust in him are forgiven of their sins and what?

[14 : 19] They are made pure. They are made clean. And can enter into the presence of a holy God. And at that moment, the Son of God hang, dying on a cross for the sins of the world.

The curtain of the temple was torn. That physical reminder of the separation between a holy God and an unholy people, gone. Torn to shreds.

Meaning that through Jesus, now people can draw near to God. Naturally, on our own merit, we cannot draw near to God. But through Jesus, we can be seen as pure and holy.

Because Jesus took our sin and in the place of our sin gave us his righteousness. His right standing before God. And see, this is where this psalm points us beyond David.

Beyond the tabernacle and to the true King of glory, Jesus Christ. As Hebrews 10 says, verses that Archie read out to us earlier on in the service. Hebrews 10, verses 19 to 22.

[15 : 31] Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the most holy place by the blood of Jesus. By a new and living way opened for us through the curtain that is his body.

And since we have a great high priest over the house of God. Let us draw near to God. With a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings.

Having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience. And having our bodies washed with pure water. Now for the Christian, as we stand on this side of the cross.

As we look back and see Jesus' death and resurrection. As we look back and see the moment that the innocent one died for us, the guilty. We look back and see the Son of God dying in our place. We need to remember that we look back and we see the moment that that great exchange happened. That moment where Jesus took our sin and our punishment and gave us his forgiveness and his right standing with God.

[16 : 44] Something that we're going to come and celebrate later on in our service as we take communion together. Because of what Jesus has done, we can draw near to God with confidence as Hebrews 10 says.

We can come into the very throne room of this gracious God who is enthroned on high with splendor and majesty. And the great news is that we do not walk in as guests.

We don't sit on the edges of the room dodging the gaze of this King and this holy Creator God.

Because we feel like we don't fit there. But we can walk in boldly to the throne room of God and we are beckoned in as sons and daughters.

Called to sit at the table of this King and to feast in his presence. This is who Jesus has made us.

This is the identity of every single Christian. No longer seen as someone with dirty hands and an impure heart. But now seen as a new creation.

[17 : 54] New citizens. Transformed by the gospel. Sons and daughters of the glorious King. Once we were alienated from God. Unable to worship him.

Unable to come into his presence. Unable to seek his face. Because of the sin that entangled our hearts and corrupted his minds. But now only by the grace of God and through Jesus' death.

Those who trust in him have been made alive in Christ. It is no longer I who lives, but Christ in me. No longer under the wrath of God, but free from the wages of sin.

Unable to boldly come into the throne room of this King and call him Father. The intimacy of that relationship is magnificent. Brothers and sisters, as we read Psalm 24 verse 4.

We read Psalm 24 verse 4.

[19 : 24] Draw near to him through Jesus and worship him. Spend your life in his service and glorify him in every way you can. And maybe this isn't you.

Maybe you're sitting on the fence about Jesus and what significance he has in your life. Maybe you still have questions about whether any of this is true. Maybe you're doubting.

Whether or not you're worthy to come into the presence of God because of your past. You think you've done too much. You've gone too far. You can never.

You can never out-sin the glory of God. You can never out-sin his grace. And you can never go beyond what Jesus has already paid for your sins.

There will be a day when all of humanity will stand before God and he will be the judge. The question won't be, what have you done?

[20 : 24] How sketchy has your past been? How sketchy is your life? The question will be, are you forgiven by Jesus? Did you respond to him with faith in this life?

And if the answer is no, then the opposite of verse 4 is true of you. You will not be able to enter into the presence of God and draw near to him. And yet the invitation is still there.

While you live and breathe, will you draw near to God? Put your trust in Jesus. Because only in him will you find the blessing and vindication from God that verse 6 talks about.

Selah. And the second thing we see in this psalm is that God will draw near to you.

In verses 7 to 10, God will draw near to you. Do you remember the Jubilee weekend earlier on this year? In London to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, the main procession had a total of 1,500 parading soldiers.

[21 : 37] 250 horses, 400 musicians and 70 aircraft flying overhead. Crowds lined the streets to celebrate. We should have a similar image in our minds as we read these verses.

But instead of a parade celebrating the Queen or even the King of Israel, David, this psalm uses the language of procession, a parade, to celebrate God as he enters Jerusalem.

The second half of this psalm talks about God drawing near to us. Read verse 7 with me. Lift up your heads, you gates. Be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.

Now this is military language of a victorious King returning from battle. With a parade to show his splendor and his glory. All the spoils of war.

This song uses the imagery of gates and ancient doors open and ready to receive this victorious King in all of his glory as he draws near.

[22 : 46] It's an image of God. The King of glory coming into Jerusalem to dwell with his people and make his home among them. Possibly in the first instance when the Ark of the Covenant arrived in Jerusalem.

A great day of celebration for the worshippers of God. Verse 7 is repeated in verse 9 exactly to show the prominence of the person coming in.

But who is this person? Who is this King? Read verse 8 with me. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty.

The Lord mighty in battle. And verse 10. Who is he this King of glory? The Lord Almighty. He is the King of glory. Now at this point David the King of Israel is standing with the rest of the population on the sidewalk.

Shouting with joy as the Ark of the Covenant goes forward. And he is pointing people to God. To the greater King of more splendor and glory. Of more honor and power.

[23 : 52] Who alone is worthy of all praise. David is saying don't look at me. Look at the true King. Look at the one who should be worshipped. He is the one who makes his dwelling among his people.

Now there is an element where that happened in the Old Testament. In the Ark of the Covenant. And after David's reign when the temple was built. The Lord's presence was there. But the Ark of the Covenant was stolen and lost.

The temple was destroyed. Because they are but shadows of a future day. Mere glimpses of the glorious future that would come.

And is still to come. And even now we see that in two parts. We see the now and not yet a little bit similar to what we were thinking about last week. Because this psalm finds its partial fulfillment. After Jesus rose victorious from the grave. Defeating sin. Defeating death. And then in Acts the risen Jesus went back into heaven. Into the presence of God.

[25 : 02] And Jesus promised that he would send the helper. God the Holy Spirit to do what? To dwell with his people. That is how the earthly realm and the heavenly realm connect every single day.

As the Lord's people. Have the very presence of God within them. As the Holy Spirit guides us to live the life that we were created to live. To make us more like Jesus every single day.

Empowering us to live a life of holiness. And communion with God. So Psalm 24 verses 7 to 10 are fulfilled in part now.

As God dwells with his people through the Holy Spirit. But there's an element where this promise of God drawing near to us is yet to be fulfilled. Because the day is yet to come when God the ruling and reigning king.

The victorious king. Will come. And establish his kingdom on earth. The Lord will come in judgment on all those who have rejected him.

[26 : 10] And he will not draw near to them. They will not draw near to him either. But he will draw near to all those who have drawn near to him already in this life.

Psalm 24 verses 7 to 10 will ultimately find their fulfillment in the new creation. The new heavens and the new earth is described for us in Revelation 21 verses 1 to 4.

Where it says this. Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. And there was no longer any sea. I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem. Coming down out of heaven from God. Prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Look, God's dwelling place is now among his people.

And he will dwell with them. They will be his people and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain.

[27 : 20] For the old order of things has passed away. Now on that glorious day when we will spend, on that day we will spend eternity in the presence of God in his kingdom.

He will come like a victorious king for all to see. And will make his dwelling among his people. See the focus of the new creation isn't on new bodies.

It isn't even the absence of sin and the absence of pain and the absence of death. As great as those things are. The most amazing thing of the new creation is that we will dwell in the presence of this glorious king forever.

Psalm 24 is all about entering into the presence of God. It's about how the normal lives of the Lord's people intersect with the spiritual world as we draw near to God and we worship him.

And the promise, friends, is that whilst he is with us now by his spirit, one day he will draw near to us completely in the new creation. And that will make the jubilee celebrations of earlier this year look like a toddler's birthday party.

[28 : 38] Because God is the king of true splendor. Of true majesty. He is the almighty creator God, the holy God, the saving God. Who invites us to draw near to him through his son.

And who promises that if we do that, he will draw near to us. Psalm 24 and this whole summer series was designed to help us take a step back.

To behold our God. To see him in all of his glory and be amazed that we get to call him father. Each of these psalms points us to the person of Jesus through whom we have access to the glory of God. We can come into his presence. Anytime we want. Because he is with us. And he will be with us finally in the end.

Let us pray together. Heavenly Father, we thank you for the immense privilege it is to be able to come into your presence.

[29 : 44] Lord, we recognize that we are sinful human beings who cannot do that on our own merit. But we need to come in through Jesus Christ.

Trusting in his death and resurrection. Trusting in his righteousness. Which means that we can enter boldly into the throne room. And call you father. Father, we pray that you would help us not to take that truth lightly.

But to remember the weight of the crucifixion of Jesus. But the glorious truth that that points us to as well.

An eternal life spent in your presence. Father, I pray that if we don't. If there is anyone here who doesn't know that reality. That by your spirit you would do a work in their heart.

And that they would draw near to you. So that they can have hope and true life. And you would draw near to them. Amen. In Jesus name we pray.

[30 : 51] Amen.