

God's Kind of King

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning, everyone. Great to see you. Why don't we just pause for a moment and let's just still our hearts as we come before God's word this morning and let's just have a moment of prayer together.

The words of Psalm 119. And let's make this our prayers we head into today. Be good to your servant while I live, that I may obey your word. Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law. And so, Heavenly Father, we ask that you be so gracious to us now.

Lord, as we turn to your inspired and your life-giving words, that you would help us to see something more of your beauty. And we pray these things, asking that you would give us your spirit and that he would lead us. And we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Well, what for you, given everything that's gone on this week, what for you was the word of the week? Okay, just take a second and think about it. What for you was the word of the week? The word of the week for me was undoubtedly the word dude.

Anyone else enjoy seeing dude come back into fashion this week? It was great. It felt like we were back in the 90s. I was waiting for a cowabunga and the likes to come, but they didn't. In case you're wondering about dude, here it was. It was the word that Boris Johnson used in his commissioning speech. And it was an acronym for his campaign promises. And he turned it on his head, those who kind of used it against him. And he said, dude, we are going to energize this country. This is what he was telling us as our new prime minister, as we were introduced to our new leader this week. He was promising that we as a country are now about to enter a golden age.

[1 : 44] And so he joins a long list of leaders, doesn't he, who have appeared in our world, who have told us all sorts of things about the kind of leader that they are going to be. They've made all sorts of promises about their leadership, and they've told us all sorts of things about the legacy that they are going to leave. So dude was my words of this week. I really enjoyed him when he used it.

But let me ask you, whoever you are here today, whether or not you'd call yourself a Christian, what is it that you're looking for in a leader? What is it that you're looking for in a leader? What would that person have to be?

What would they have to do? What would they have to say and address? What are you looking for in a leader? What would they have to do in a leader?

When I come to preach it, it astounds me, and it really shouldn't, but it astounds me, always amazes me. How often, when I'm preparing it, I look at what we're going to look at this week, and I think about the events that happen in life, unbeknown to me at the time of putting it together, and I think to myself, boy, that is the message we needed to hear this week.

It's almost like someone out with me is in sovereign control over this thing, I tell you. And it's amazing because this week is one of those weeks. I have been astounded as I've read this psalm just how timely it is, because as we have been introduced this week to our new leader, this psalm is going to get us to the heart of God's kind of leader, God's kind of king.

[3 : 43] And it's not just about God's kind of king. It's from the pen of God's king. And in this psalm, he tells us what kind of leader he wants to be.

It's amazing. And he too makes some whoppers of statements about his leadership. I mean, there are some big ones in there when you look at it. And so we have to ask the same question of this king that we did of our new leader this week.

And if you look at the promises that God's king makes here, we need to ask ourselves, can he deliver on his promises? Can he be the kind of leader that he wants to be?

So this is Psalm 101. Come with me to Psalm 101. And you'll see the introduction that this king, the author of this psalm, is King David.

And his slogan, right, the catchphrase, the one that he has got over every bumper sticker, he's got on every fridge magnet, he's got on every cuddly toy, he's got on every giant foam finger, he's got on every personalized bit of stationery.

[4 : 54] The one that captures his campaign, the very essence of his rule, you'll see it there in verse 1. Do you see it? He is the singing king. Do you see it?

He is the singing king. And his reign will be about singing of what? Of the steadfast love and justice of the Lord.

This is the slogan that captures this king. This is God's king. And it's amazing that he goes for that, if you think about it. Doesn't go for, let's make Israel great again.

Would have been a lot catchier. But he doesn't do that because this is not first and foremost about him as the king. And he doesn't go for Israel, yes we can. Trying to drum up the people to kind of unleash some kind of inner potential.

Because this is not first and foremost about them. This is about the Lord. It's always about the Lord. This is about who he is.

[5 : 52] This is about what he has promised. And this is about his ability to do what he said he would do. David makes this his catchphrase, his slogan, because this is about the Lord.

This is about him. Now if you grew up in Scotland, like me you might remember going to see the singing kettle. For those of you who don't know what I'm talking about, you can Google it later and you will not thank me.

But the singing kettle, this is what we grew up with. And do you remember the song that used to go with it? Do you remember it? Spout, handle, lid of metal.

What's inside the singing kettle? Okay, it's in my head. 30 years later, it's there. And what they used to do is they just used to get the kettle and they used to open it up.

And they just used to look at what was going on inside that kettle. And let me just steal and rework that phrase and ask of this psalm. What's inside the singing king?

[6 : 58] Okay, if we were to take the lid off of his life, what would we find is going on inside? What's he made of? What's going on inside the singing king? Because I don't know about you, but so much of the discussion about the leadership campaign that we've just had is about whether somebody's private life should affect the way that they're able to govern the country.

Should their private life or should it just be all about their public life? Okay? But when it comes to God's leader, as far as God is concerned, what's going on in the king's heart, what's going on in the heart of his leader is absolutely critical.

And so when David says that he will make singing of the steadfast love and justice of the Lord, when he says he will make that his priority, it's his way of telling us that as king, he will be about delighting in and devoting himself to Yahweh, the Lord.

That's what's going on inside the singing king. That's his prayer. And everything else will stem from that relationship that he has as the king with the Lord. Again, do you notice that word in the psalm? The Lord. Capital L. Capital O. Capital R. Capital D. Remember we thought about this word, this name for God. Last Sunday at Psalm 100, it's the covenant name of God.

[8 : 11] It's the name of God that tells us, and this is the psalm that David as king is picturing, that he is the never-changing, promise-making, word-keeping, ever-faithful God who says to his people, I will be your God and you will be my people.

And God has promised great things to his people Israel. But the thing for us to see here, the backdrop to this psalm, is that God hasn't just made promises to his people. God has made promises to his king.

And you'll read those promises, and you can do this in your own time when you go home, you'll find them in 2 Samuel chapter 7, when God makes those promises to David as the first Davidic king. Big promises.

You'll see them in 2 Samuel chapter 7. That God will give David a great name. And from his kingly line will come a king whose reign and whose kingdom God will make sure that it lasts forever.

And God will give him rest from his enemies. And God will be a father to this king. And this king will be a son to the Lord.

[9 : 20] You see, that's the relationship that the Lord wants with his king. They are to be inseparably one. And the king is to be the very embodiment of what a life of covenant faithfulness, of what all-out worship and obedience looks like when it comes to the Lord.

You know, I remember growing up, harbouring ambitions of being a professional footballer. Okay, a few of you laughed, that's okay. But I used to ask my dad, Dad, what does it take, what does a professional look like?

What does a professional footballer look like? And he used to take me to games. And we used to go right up close, going for autographs, used to see the players warm up.

He used to buy me videos, well, they were videos, VHS, back in those days. And I remember I used to go to football summer camps, and it was run by this guy at the top of the chain, the model professional called Ian St. John.

Some of you might have known him, played for Liverpool and Scotland. Ian St. John, that was the guy. That's what a model professional looked like. And so my dad said, it's him.

[10:29] And you've got to think about it, in this psalm, if you were a father in Israel, and your son runs up to you and asks, Hey Dad, what does a life of covenant faithfulness look like?

What does a life of all-out worship and adoration of our God, what does it look like? Then the father was supposed to be able to point to the king and say, see him.

See the way he lives his life. See the way he conducts himself. You want to know what all-out worship looks like? It looks like him. Looks like him. See, this is what David wants to do.

He wants to be this king. He's vowing to be this kind of king. And if you come with me to verses 1 to 4, you'll see that David wants this more than anything else. He desires to be a king who takes his cue from the Lord.

Now let me just pick out, for the sake of time, one word for us here that he repeats twice at verse 2. And it's the word blameless. Do you see it?

[11:29] Or some of your translations might go for integrity there. Blameless integrity. It's the same thing. So this is what he wants his life to be about. What a wonderful word, is it not?

Integrity. Do you see from the lips, from the pen of God's king, that there's a desire deep down in his gut to be the same in the bedroom as he is in the boardroom.

Do you see it? To have insides that match up to his outsides. He wants to be like a stick of, I remember again this from my childhood, a stick of Blackpool rock. Do you remember that? Stick of Blackpool rock.

You cut that anywhere. And it's the same. This is what David wants for his life as king. Integrity. Blamelessness. And if that's what he's going to do, do you also see what he's not going to do? Verse 3, he won't sit before his eyes. So in other words, he won't get involved in anything that's worthless. He will stay away from those who would lead him astray. That is those who would say, don't bother with the Lord.

[12:34] Saying, why don't you use your position as king to your advantage? And verse 4, he will know nothing of evil. So these are the things. These are the things that David is devoting himself to as God's king, as the one who's supposed to embody covenant faithfulness.

And his prayer here is that God would help him. Do you see it? Be the king that he's called him to be. This is the king. Right? The one who will ensure that the most vulnerable in society, the widow, the orphan, that they're cared for and valued.

The one who will ensure that the outsider, or as we see it there, that the foreigner will be welcomed in. The one who will ensure that justice is fully done in the courts of the land.

The one who will expose hypocrisy. And the one who will fight oppression. And ultimately, be the one who won't just ensure that the worship of Yahweh is central.

Who won't just ensure that the worship of Yahweh is biblical. In other words, it's the way that God prescribed it to be. But he will be the one who is at front of the queue, setting the pace in the all-out worship of Yahweh.

[13:48] Okay. Now, friends, let me just pause there and bring all that data together, okay? Bring it all together. And would you agree with me?

What a king. What a king. Would you want to have this guy leading you? Would this guy get your vote? Absolutely get mine.

If he could be this kind of king. If he turned out to be this kind of king, friends, let me tell you, I wouldn't just follow him on Instagram. I wouldn't just like his photos. I wouldn't just leave comments. Hashtag, what a king. I would follow this guy with my life. What a king. God says, here is my king. And what happens next is that David, you can picture him, he's moving from his private chamber.

He walks out to his public balcony, if you like. Okay. And he looks out on Jerusalem. And he claps eyes on the people that walk the streets every day.

[14:46] It's people. And verses five to eight, he looks on them. And if he desires to be a king who takes his cue from the Lord, he wants his people to be a people who take their cue from the king.

And he looks out and he sees two different types of people living in Israel. Two different types of people who look the same on the outside. But when it comes to the Lord, they have hearts that are in two very different places.

Now see if you can spot them in these verses. The two types of people. Right? The descriptions he gives. Do you see the first group of people? They are those who care little for the Lord and his ways.

He's not interested in covenant faithfulness. He's not interested in being God's kind of people. He's not interested in being a light to the nations. He's not interested in welcoming the forwarder. He's not interested in justice being done. And the king loathes the people of this group.

And do you see how they are those who, verse 5, who slander, who give haughty looks. Now haughty, they look down on people. Those who are arrogant, that's kind of the opposite, they build themselves up.

[15:54] Those who utter lies. And I don't think these are kind of one-off things. Right? This is a heart attitude that says, I'm not going God's way, I'm going my way. And I'll trample over whoever I need to trample over to get there.

And the warning the king gives them, do you see at verse 5, and this is really strikingly strong language, this king, he says, I will destroy them. And I will not endure them.

And verse 7, they will not continue before my eyes. So the king is warning this group of people that if they do not stop in their tracks and turn around, the biblical word for that is just repent, stop going your way, going God's way, go God's way.

If they don't do that and bow to the king, then one day they will have to face his judgment as God's king. That's one group in Israel. But do you see how there's another group?

And Paul picked this out straight off the bat, which is great. The king loves this group. They are the people, verse 6, who are marked by faithfulness.

[17:02] That's a lovely description, is it not, of God's people? Faithfulness. Just sticking it out with obedience. They are, do you see, passionate about holiness.

These people are serious about obedience. These people are real in their love for the Lord. And see the three promises that this king makes them at verse 6.

Firstly, that he will show them favor. Do you see it? Secondly, that they will dwell with him. And thirdly, that they will minister to him. These are the promises God's king makes to God's faithful people.

And let me just say, if you bring those three together, the promise from the king to his faithful people is that all those who look to him and trust him, they will be his.

They will be his. And he will take responsibility for them. And he will love them. And he will be the king that they need to be, that they need him to be.

[18:11] What a king. What a king. This is God's kind of king. Isn't it a wonderful picture of everything that we'd ever want in a leader? This is God's kind of king.

But here's the newsflash of this psalm. David's not this kind of king. Oh, listen. He was a wonderful leader. He was a great king.

He is described in the Bible as a man after God's own heart. And he becomes almost the benchmark king by which all subsequent kings in Israel are judged. But David failed to be this kind of king.

And at times in his life, spectacularly so. But remember what we said at verse one. This is not first and foremost about the king. This is not first and foremost about the people.

Who is this primarily about? This is about the Lord. This is about him who despite David's failings was faithful to his promise to David that from his line he would raise up a faithful king who would be this kind of king.

[19:12] The one that God's people need. And the newsflash of this psalm, friends, is that God's got a king like this. And his name is Jesus.

And no matter how you are feeling this morning, if you are a Christian, if you are feeling down in the dumps, if life has been horrible this week, if there's an uncertain future ahead of you, this psalm

invites you to look to your king.

Look to the Lord and find in this king one who loves you and one who died for you. His name is Jesus. The king who, and think about his life, right?

What do we read in the gospels? The king who made his life about serving, not about lording. The king who healed the sick. The king who welcomed the vulnerable.

The king who valued the outsider. The king who flipped the tables when hypocrisy was going, sweeping under the carpet, when injustice was being, was rife in the temple.

[20 : 18] And the king who perfectly modeled radical obedience to God's law. He loved his father. And the king who set the pace when it came to the all-out worship of the Lord.

And most importantly of all, he's the king who didn't just sing about God's steadfast love and justice. Friends, wonderfully, he is the king who demonstrated it.

As he gave his life, as he died on the cross, the place where God's perfect love, seen in the sending of his one and only son, seen in the son, Jesus, who was willing to go to the cross to buy the freedom, pay the penalty for his people's sin, where God's perfect love and the place where God's perfect justice, where sin isn't just swept onto the carpet, but is atoned for by his blood, where they meet, where they kiss.

Do you see how this king did not just sing about God's steadfast love and justice? He modelled it. He exemplified it. What a king. What a king. And so let me ask you, let me ask all of us from this psalm today that this king Jesus would look out in all of us today.

Friends, what would he find? How would he find you? Would he find fault with you as the king does here?

[21 : 46] In which case, you need to think seriously about who this king is and the warning he gives you? Or because of your faith in him, would you find favour with him?

Again, you see, this is not our ability to be a perfect people, first and foremost. This is about his ability to be this king. He is this king. And let me just ask us, particularly as a church, are we being faithful to this king?

You know, are we as those saved by him, as those who have been shown grace, as those who have received forgiveness, are we taking our cue as God's people here at Bruntsfield, as an outpost of the kingdom here, are we taking our cue off of our king?

Because this king loves faithfulness in his people. He loves it. He loves faithfulness in his people. And so friends, the question we need to ask is, are we being a faithful people to him?

You know, I often take the girls into town on the bus. And it's always a double-decker bus that comes past our way. And they love to pick the seats that are every parent's worst nightmare.

[22 : 58] You know, the ones that are up the stairs and right at the front? Love to pick those seats. And they love to sit there. And one of their favourite things is just to point stuff out.

Okay? So they sit there and they go, there's a seagull. They sit there and they go, there's a cafe. They sit there and they go, there's a swing. And I like to joke with people around about us that this is the alternative Edinburgh bus tour.

But do you know what one of their favourite things to spot is on our trip into town? It's the wee dog. It's the wee dog. It's Gravefire's Bobby.

Who, as the story goes, after his master died, sat on his master's grave for 14 years. Right? I'm putting words in the dog's mouth here, but I love my master.

And I'm sitting right here and I'm staying. And he came to mind this week as I was thinking about the words of Jesus. And how often he holds up faithfulness in the Gospels from his people as the thing that he wants to see from us.

[24 : 05] Okay? That, you can read them in your time, the faithful servant. Well done, good and faithful servant. The faithful master. I love how much Jesus loves faithfulness. And as we sit here today, maybe just in our context, let me just maybe find two ways that we can think about our faithfulness to our King.

Firstly, by being faithful to his word. By our radical obedience to what he has said. Right? Our dogged determination to carry out the will of the Lord.

Regardless of whether that puts us at odds with the way in which society tells us we should think and act. You know, it was John Bunyan, the man who wrote Pilgrim's Progress, whose peers used to joke about him.

Right? Used to give him a nickname of the Bible bleeder. Right? That any time you pricked him, what would come out would be Bible.

This is what they used to say of him. And they used to nickname him the Bible bleeder. Now what a nickname that is to have. Just seeing just utter faithfulness and devotion to God's word in somebody.

[25 : 14] Made me think this week, what would people nickname, what nickname would they give me if they saw my life? Isn't it? Here is Jesus' call to be brave for him and to take our stand and his word.

Let me just say that friends, that we will be brave enough when our view of this king is big enough. And secondly, it will show ourselves in our faithfulness to his work.

To be that people, and we've loved going through this in the evening series over the last few weeks. We've gone through the Sermon on the Mount and I'd really encourage you to come along. These have been really special times for us as a church.

Loved going through it, but that call that we saw last week from Jesus to his people. To be a city on a hill. To be a light in the world. To be a people who are salt.

Right? There's so many ways that the word salt is used there, but just adding flavor. Right? Just being a blessing and distinct in the world in which we live.

[26 : 16] To be a people who shine like stars in the darkness. And to be a people who are committed to playing our part in fulfilling the great commission of making disciples of the Lord Jesus the world over.

And teaching them what it means to obey this king and to know this king. Because the promises that our king makes here to us of his favor, do you see it?

His favor, his presence and his service. The full fulfillment of those promises will happen when he comes. And as we were singing at the start, he brings the heavenly city.

Do you see that? The word city there right at the end of this psalm. This city where no light is needed because God is its light. And this place where sin is a distant memory where all tears are wiped away, where God's enemies are banished and where God lives with his people in his city.

And it can't be Jerusalem, can it here? It's going to be the new Jerusalem. And so friends, here as we bring this to a close, here is God's king. Here is David.

[27 : 28] Here is the fulfillment, Jesus. Here is God's king. So what are you looking for in a leader? What are you looking for in a leader? Our world, let me just make an observation, our world is full of leaders.

Some have lots of power, but the problem is that they have absolutely no love or compassion for people, the people under their power. And then you've got the other extreme, don't you?

Those who've got all out love for people, but they've got no power to do anything about it. Their problems, fix their problems. Friends, this is not a wonderful truth that is this, God's king has held up to us today.

And as we see the fulfillment in the Lord Jesus, crucified, resurrected, risen, ascended, in glory, one day we'll return. In him we have one gloriously who has both.

He has all the love and all the power in absolute abundance. And this king this morning says, look to me, here is God's kind of king.

[28 : 35] Crown him with many crowns, the lamb upon his throne. Hark how the heavenly anthem drowns, all music but its own. Awake my soul and sing of him who died for thee and hail him as thy matchless king through all eternity.

Let me just take a moment and be quiet and then I'll pray and we'll close our service together. And so, heavenly Father, we thank you so much that we have your word in our language that we can read about the promises that you have made over the years and we can sing and know and testify to your faithfulness in so many ways.

But thank you, Lord, so much that we see your faithfulness, the fact that you never change, that you keep your promises. We can see it fully in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so, Lord, I pray that you would help us all look to him today as our great high king and that we would be a people, his people, saved by his grace, purchased by his blood, who take our cue off of him.

Lord, would you help us to do that this week? Thank you, Lord, that you're such a good God and we pray these things in our king's name. Amen. Amen. Amen.