

prosperity for the people, and the hills in righteousness.

May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the children of the needy, and crush the oppressor.

May they fear you while the sun endures, as long as the moon

peace abound till the moon is no more.

May he have dominion from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth.

May desert tribes bow down before him and his enemies lick the dust.

May the kings of Tarshish and the coastlands render him tribute.

May the king of Sheba and Seba bring gifts.

May all kings fall down

when he calls the poor and him who has no helper.

He has pity on the weak and the needy and saves the lives of the needy.

From oppression and violence he redeems their life and precious is their blood in his sight.

Long may he live, may gold of Sheba be given to him.

May prayer be made for him continually and blessings invoked for him all the day.

May there be abundance of grain in the land.

On the tops of the mountains may it lay.

May its fruit be like Lebanon and may people blossom in the cities like the grass on the fields.

May his name endure forever, his fame continue as long as the sun.

Israel who alone does wondrous things blessed be his glorious name forever may the whole earth be filled with his glory amen and amen the prayers of David the son of Jesus are ended thanks buddy let's ask for the Lord's help this morning one more time

Heavenly Father, we do ask for your help.

We ask that as we open your word, you'll give us eyes to see, ears to hear what your spirit has put there for us.

Lord, we ask that as we hear the truth of your word, that you would work it down into our hearts, that you would change us from the inside out.

Lord, would you help us to see King Jesus in all of his beauty and majesty this morning.

We pray all this in his name.

Amen.

All right.

One thing I don't miss when they're gone is election years.

You know, it's usually a lot of fun.

Especially when we went to visit my in-laws during an election year one year, and we were kind of in the Iowa area.

We got an Airbnb outside of Nebraska in Iowa.

And I'm glad we're, you know, I'm not glad

I'm going to say some things I probably shouldn't say.

It's nice being in a state that's decided already because you don't get the ads constantly.

Because we were in Iowa and it was just, I don't think there was one ad for Charmin toilet paper or anything.

It was just constant political ads the whole time.

And I could see why those people are stressed out every year.

But every presidential election cycle, I'm reminded that we have a deep longing for a king.

We may hold no kings rallies.

We might even make thus always the tyrants or six emperor Tyrannus our state motto.

But even with tyranny as a dangerous possibility, we'd still gravitate to strong leaders.

I mean, you can even look at the trajectory of this country from the time it was founded until now.

We had more and more power has been consolidated at the federal level.

We just tend to want to see a strong leader calling the shots and navigating things.

We long for someone to rule, but we really long for someone to rule righteously and justly and to facilitate prosperity for all people, especially us, right?

I mean, that's what we're most concerned about, that he would facilitate prosperity for us.

The scriptures in history have shown that no one sinful, fallen human being can do that.

I mean, I think that's how we ended up with the system of government that we're in.

Every human king, every authority will fall short of fulfilling this deep longing that we have for a leader that will rule justly and righteously.

Well, in Psalm 72 here, King David prays for his son Solomon.

And he's looking ahead as he prays for Solomon to the one perfect king who would sit upon his throne.

I say David here because the last verse of Psalm 72 seems to indicate that this is one of David's psalms.

Therefore, the title, which could be and I think should be translated for Solomon.

So David's prayer or David's song for Solomon.

And in this psalm, David tells us that God blesses his people and he blesses the nations through his king who delivers the needy and the oppressed.

God blesses his people through his king who delivers the needy and oppressed.

All right, so we're going to look today at the king's natural authority, the king's strong authority, and the king's blessed authority.

So all about the king, specifically King Jesus.

All right, so first off, this psalm starts out pointing to and directing us to the king's natural authority.

It's kind of a weird phrase that I've used, but you'll see why I've used it in a second.

I'll explain.

Look at verses one to four.

Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the royal son.

May he judge your people with righteousness and your poor with justice.

Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people and the hills in righteousness.

May he defend the cause of the poor of the people and give deliverance to the children of the needy and crush the oppressor.

All right, so first thing we see here is David praying for the king to have and to judge with righteousness and justice.

It's his first desire that he expresses.

In particular, in verse 1, his desire is that the king would have God's righteousness and justice.

Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the royal son.

Justice, when we're seeing it here in the Old Testament especially, has to do with fair and equal enforcement of the law for all people.

Fair and equal enforcement of the law for all people, regardless of socioeconomic status or anything else.

So in other words, the king doesn't show partiality.

He's not looking for a bribe.

He's not looking for somebody that's able to do something for him in order for him to render fair judgment.

Jim Hamilton puts it this way, equality before the law

without regard for social standing or the capacity to pay bribes is precisely what establishes true justice.

So if justice is given in upholding the law, righteousness here, so he's praying for righteousness and justice for the king's son, then righteousness is God's moral character expressed more positively.

So justice is when punishment is needed, punishment is given fairly and equitably.

Righteousness is more kind of a positive.

It's both that, but also the king acting positively

justly, positively.

In other words, the king doesn't just keep the letter of the law while manipulating the system to his own benefit.

He's not like, okay, where are the loopholes?

How can I benefit myself with the power that I have?

He gladly upholds the letter and the spirit of God's law for the good of the people.

And he does this, he upholds both the letter and the spirit of God's law for the good of the people.

He does this as an act of God's providence.

Or, another way to put it, is that he does it and he gains his authority as a part of God's creation order.

We see this in all of the creation language that the psalmist uses, that David uses here.

Look at verses 5 to 7.

May they fear you while the sun endures and as long as the moon throughout the generations.

May he be like the rain that falls on the mown grass like showers that water the earth.

In his days, may the righteous flourish and peace abound till the moon be no more.

So providence is a word that we use to describe God's sovereign provision

See the word in its own definition there.

God's sovereign provision for his creation and his people through natural means.

So when God directly intervenes supernaturally, we often call that sovereignty or God's direct hand.

But providence is more God's mediatorial sovereignty where he's working through natural means to provide.

So when the psalmist says that he feeds the oxen, he's feeding the oxen through the process of rain and grass growing and all that stuff.

He's feeding it through his providence.

So the king's authority here is like that providence, or is that providence, but it's like the rain on the mountains.

David is saying, just like God provides for the plants and the animals and people by bringing the rain, he provides for mankind, and especially for his people, for God's people, through his king.

And so specifically what he's providing through his king is peace and prosperity for the people by, so the king is bringing about peace and prosperity for his people by ensuring justice and righteousness among the people as they live and engage with one another.

All right, so what God is giving to his people through his king is peace and prosperity, but he's giving it by, so the thing that the king is doing is ensuring justice and righteousness.

Now, as we'll see throughout the Psalm, David is constantly referring in the Psalm back to creation and to the book of Genesis.

One of the unique things about the Psalm and one of the beautiful things about the Psalm is that David is linking his promise, the promise that God made to David that his throne would endure forever

the promise that he made that the Messiah would come and sit on his throne forever, he's connecting that promise to the Davidic covenant back to Genesis, back to the creation mandate, Genesis 1, 2, and 3.

So David understands himself and this promise that God has made to him to be a part of this bigger story that started in Genesis and that is continuing to this day.

So in other words, the Messiah, God's perfect king, would enable mankind to be fruitful, which was one of the commands in Genesis 1,

The Messiah would allow mankind to exercise dominion rightly over all creation, and also he will reverse the effects of the fall in Genesis 3.

Genesis 128, again, we see God bless them.

And God said to them, be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

So David's referring back to this mandate, back to Genesis.

And as we'll see here, he's also referring a little bit to Romans 13 that hasn't been written yet, but he's referring to that concept that Paul's picking up on where governing authorities are instituted and given by God to punish the evildoer and to promote righteousness.

So if you go to Romans 13, Paul says the government's been given to punish evil and to promote righteousness.

And this part of the psalm reflects those ideas, but also reflects the last words of David or last recorded words of David in Samuel 23, three to four.

David puts it this way.

The God of Israel has spoken.

The rock of Israel has said to me, when one rules justly over men, ruling in the fear of God, he dawns on them like the morning light.

like the sun shining forth on a cloudless morning, like rain that makes grass to sprout from the earth.

The them there is in the plural, right?

The them is referring to his people, right?

Not just the king, but the king and the people that he's over.

So leaders ruling justly here, using their authority righteously to enable flourishing for their people is as much a common grace

It's as much an act of providence as the rain.

So when leadership is good and things are going, there's a providence by God for our good and for our flourishing.

However,

Every merely human king and government will fall short of perfect justice and righteousness.

And don't we know that, right?

And therefore, we look forward with David and Solomon to that final and perfect king that will sit on David's throne.

And David's alluding to this because not only will that king's authority, not only will Jesus' authority be natural and providential, but it will be a strong authority.

We see this in the fact that the nations will serve him in verses 8 to 14.

May he have dominion from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth.

May desert tribes bow down before him and his enemies lick the dust.

May the kings of Tarshish and the coastlands render him tribute.

May the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts.

May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him.

For he delivers the needy when he calls, the poor and him who has no helper.

He has pity on the weak and the needy and saves the lives of the needy.

From oppression and violence, he redeems their life and precious is their blood in his sight.

See, this whole section here is calling for the day when God's perfect king rules the whole world.

The kingdoms mentioned, if you were to plot them out on the map, represent like the four corners of the known world at that time.

It's the farthest reaches of the known world.

And David prays that they would bring tribute to God's king and recognize his majesty and his authority.

He's calling all of those that recognize his majesty and authority to come and to honor him and to serve him.

But he's also calling for those who deny his authority, who have set themselves up as his enemies, to be defeated and to lick the dust, which is a very specific phrase referring back to Genesis 3.14.

The Lord God said to the serpent, because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field.

On your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat or lick all the days of your life.

So from the fall, there's been this ongoing struggle between the seed or the offspring of the serpent and the seed of the woman.

But in Psalm 72, David tells us, and we see that the one who was predicted in Genesis 3 that would come and crush the serpent's head is the Messiah.

That's God's perfect king that would one day sit on David's throne forever.

So one day Jesus will return and he'll utterly defeat his enemies and establish his just and righteous rule, right?

It's finished.

The serpent has been crushed.

The effects of that and the reality of that is being worked out in real time.

And we sing in the meantime with Isaac Watts, Jesus shall reign where the sun, doth his successive journeys run, his kingdom stretch from shore to shore till moons shall wax and wane no more.

But his rule's not just marked by power, right?

We saw that in verses 12 to 14.

His rule is almost justified and supported by the fact that he serves the needy and the oppressed.

Look at verses 12 to 14.

He's like, David says, everybody's going to come.

Everybody will come or be defeated from the four corners of the earth to worship Jesus because he delivers the needy when he calls, the poor and him who has no helper.

He has pity on the weak and the needy and saves the lives of the needy.

From oppression and violence, he redeems their life and precious is their blood in his sight.

In the original context of the Psalm, without the New Testament in mind, David is again here praying for impartiality that Israel's king and their kings in succession would not favor the rich and the powerful, but would give justice and righteousness to those who are wronged and who don't have anything to offer as a bribe.

But this language goes beyond just impartial judgments.

Just like the language describing the vastness of King Jesus's territory here goes beyond Israel's borders.

So what he's describing here is not just the nation in Israel.

It's not just the river to the sea.

It's from sea to sea.

It's from the four corners of the earth.

And David never ruled over that, right?

So just like that is beyond the scope of David's rule.

This language here and the extent that the king shows pity for the poor and saves the needy is equally as beyond anything that the kings of Israel had shown to their people.

David is describing a king who actively cares for, who redeems, and saves the needy.

He's pointing ahead to Jesus, who would do this not just politically, but who would do this spiritually for his people.

Jesus is the great king that will silence all opposition with just a word, but he's also the great king who loves those who have no helper.

You and I are the poor and the needy here in this song.



Though we can't...

usually stand to see ourselves that way, right?

We are dead, we're dead in our sins and transgressions until he rescued and redeemed us.

Our king saw us and came to our rescue.

We can go to him, right?

You can go to him now.

You can go to him with your need and he will meet you there.

But not only will he meet you there, right?

He brings us, as we see at the end of the Psalm, he brings us through his strong authority into his blessed authority.

Let's look at verses 15 to 19.

Long may he live.

May gold of Sheba be given to him.

May prayer be made for him continually and blessings invoke for him all the day.

May there be abundance of grain in the land.

On the tops of the mountains may it wave.

May its fruit be like Lebanon.

And may people blossom in the cities like the grass of the field.

May his name endure forever.

His fame continue as long as the sun.

May people be blessed in him.

All nations call him blessed.

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things.

Blessed be his glorious name forever.

May the whole earth be filled with his glory.

Amen and amen.

So David ends the Psalm with a prayer of blessing upon the king.

And his central desire, you see in this prayer, is that the people will flourish under the king's authority.

It's a little bit of a chiasm.

So that center verse there in verse 16 is giving us the main thrust of this last blessing.

And notice that the king, I just want to point out, that the king isn't directly causing the people to flourish.

He doesn't wave a magic wand and boom, flourishing happens.

He doesn't pass a law stating that you'll flourish or else jail.

He doesn't directly cause the flourishing.

David doesn't even pray that the king would flourish.

He prays that the people would flourish under the king's just and righteous rule.

He prays that the king would reflect God's justice and righteousness in his judgment.

And then he prays that the people will flourish under the righteous rule.

That's what we ought to expect from government.

This is my little sidebar.

We expect justice and righteousness from our government.

We ought to expect laws and the enforcement of the laws equitably and fairly and that reflect God's righteousness.

We don't expect the government to cause us to flourish or to directly bring about our flourishing.

The government brings about flourishing by enforcing rules and laws that reflect God's righteousness.

What that means, though, is that the main impediment to human flourishing is sin.

What David's communicating is that the main impediment to human flourishing is sin, your sin and my sin.

And God's king is given to his people to deal with sin.

So humans flourishing isn't this thing that's really hard to get.

People doing well and succeeding and living beautifully isn't really hard to get, except for sin is pervasive and we're all completely sinful, utterly sinful.

Not as simple as we can be, but sinful to our core.

So God's given to his people to deal with sin, and lesser kings and governments are ordained by God to restrain and to punish sin.

That's what Paul tells us in Romans 13.

The governor's given to punish sin.

But ultimately, Jesus came to atone for his people's sin.

Jesus came to take our sin away as far as the east is from the west, and he will one day bring final judgment on his enemies, and sin will be no more, and people will flourish.

We will flourish, not just for a time, but for forever, because Jesus' authority is eternal.

Verses 15 and 17.

There will be no end to Jesus' just and righteous reign and no end, therefore, no end to the flourishing of his people.

This is what all of history has been moving towards, what God has been revealing century by century.

David reaches all the way back to Genesis one last time here at the end of the psalm when he says...

May people be blessed in him.

All nations call him blessed.

Echoing Genesis 12, 3, I will bless those who bless you and him who dishonors you, I will curse.

And in you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

So what do we need to see in this psalm?

We need to see the main idea.

God blesses his people and the nations through his king who delivers the needy.

and the oppressed.

We need to see that, one, authority is a gift from God for our good.

It's just commonplace today to be suspect of and to despise authority.

David tells us over and over and over again, Samuel tells us in Samuel, David tells us throughout the Psalms, authority is a gift from God for our good.

A good leader is like the refreshing rain and the rising sun.

So if you've been under bad leadership and authority, which I think most of us have, some of us worse than others, don't throw the baby out with the bathwater.

Don't despise authority.

Embrace God's good gift and pray for better leadership or become better leadership.

All government authority this side of heaven, as we've seen and talked about, is a distorted shadow of Christ's just and righteous reign.

And that's where our eyes ought to be fixed, right?

Jesus's reign has already begun in the church and in the hearts of his people.

That final reign that David is looking forward to, that he's praying for here in Psalm 72, has already begun in the church, in the hearts of his people.

And one day, his reign will stretch from shore to shore, and every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord.

James Johnston, in recalling David,

an incident or just something that happened, I can't think of the word right now, around the time of Ronald Reagan wrote this.

He says, in 1983, Ronald Reagan addressed the National Association of Evangelicals.

The delegates were impressed and cheering wildly across the convention hall.

A few minutes later, Charles Coulson, who if you don't know who he is, was put in prison for involvement in the Watergate scandal, got saved in prison,

came out, and the Chuck Colson Center is actually doing a lot of good these days.

Yeah, Chuck Colson's a good guy.

You should look him up.

He got up to address the assembly, and he reminded the delegates, the kingdom of God does not arrive on Air Force One.

God's kingdom arrives with God's king, and God's king is Jesus.

We've been tasked with bringing this good news of Christ's reign and his authority of his kingdom over the nations to the nations.

So God has included us, his people, the church, to spread Christ's reign from shore to shore.

And it's our privilege to join him in sending ambassadors and to be ambassadors for that good and gracious king.

All right, my voice is given out.

It's time to close our Bibles and go to the Lord in prayer one more time.

Heavenly Father, you have given us and provided for us a good and gracious king.

Lord, we ask that his name would be lifted high.

Lord, we ask that his authority would be respected and feared even amongst our own government here.

Lord, we ask that his name would be lifted high, not just here in our town, in our state, and in our country, Lord, but that his name would be lifted high and feared and respected and honored throughout the world.

Because, Lord, we know that if our good king who gives us and provides perfect justice and righteousness is feared and honored, Lord, that it will lead to your glory

to your fame and also our good and flourishing.

So Lord, would you bring that day soon?

Lord, would you send him to bring us home and to welcome us in to that eternal kingdom soon?

And Lord, we look forward to the day, hopefully today, when his reign will stretch from shore to shore.

We pray all this in Jesus' name.

Amen.