

Summer In The Psalms - Psalm 45

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I. OVERVIEW OF THE PSALM

A. To rightly understand Psalm 45, it is important to take note of the note made in the heading—Psalm 45 is a wedding psalm.

B. I like to think of Psalm 45 as an AI summary of Song of Solomon because many of the same themes found in that book are also found in this psalm. What makes Psalm 45 really unique though is that, whereas Song of Solomon can be read as a typology speaking of Jesus as the Bridegroom and His Church as His Bride, the writer of Hebrews makes it clear that Psalm 45 was literally written about Jesus and His Bride.

C. Heb 1:8-9 (NIV) ... about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom. [9] You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy."

D. That's the beautiful thing about this Psalm—it puts the attributes of Jesus on display. It can be broken down into seven sections:

1. Jesus the Bridegroom
2. Jesus the Just Judge
3. Jesus the Established King
4. Jesus the Joyful God
5. Jesus the Suffering Servant
6. Consider Who He is and Respond
7. The Bride's Inheritance in Jesus

E. Now if you are person who likes really practical messages that can be applied to your life this week, you might be asking how this psalm that was written roughly 3000 years ago matters to you today.

F. While this psalm does not give step-by-step instructions like “5 steps to raising godly children” or “4 keys to getting along better with your coworkers,” it nonetheless can absolutely reshape the way you live your life this week. The psalm itself actually encourages you to do just that—consider who He is and respond.

G. Diving into Psalm 45 gives us the opportunity to actually put into practice what we talked about last week from Psalm 27. We can get in God’s presence, then meditate on the beauty of Jesus’ various attributes that are revealed throughout the psalm.

H. The practical result of considering the attributes of Jesus that are revealed in Psalm 45 is described in 2Co 3:18 (NIV) And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. As we take the time to slow down and meditate on the glorious attributes of Jesus, we will be transformed more and more into His image. If you’re anything like me, I’m guessing that your family members and coworkers would really like it if you became a little more like Jesus every day!

I. Not only can meditating on the attributes of Jesus that are revealed in this Psalm change your outward interactions with others, it can reshape and rewire you internally—changing what you value, what you desire, the way you think about God, and your perception of how God feels about you. It can help you become literally a different person than the person you are right now!

J. We will take a brief look at the various sections of the psalm now, knowing that there is far more to be said about each section than can be covered here. In fact, Psalm 45 is worth revisiting on a regular basis for the rest of your life!

II. JESUS THE BRIDEGROOM (verses 1-2)

A. Psa 45:1-2 (NIV) My heart is stirred by a noble theme as I recite my verses for the king; my tongue is the pen of a skillful writer. [2] You are the most excellent of men and your lips have been anointed with grace, since God has blessed you forever.

B. The theme that the psalmist has been meditating on is that of the

great Bridegroom and His wedding with His Bride. His heart is so moved by this theme that he cannot contain his words any longer.

C. Is your heart moved by this theme? Have you taken enough time sitting and meditating on Jesus as the Bridegroom and His desire to be united with His church forever as His bride to the point that you can't help but talking about it? If not, I'd encourage you to do so! The psalmist is saying, "This is a theme worth spending a lot of time thinking about!"

D. Let me pause and address the struggle that some people face when considering the idea of the marriage of Jesus to His church. In using this imagery, God is not telling men that He wants them to become more feminine or that they are going to be walking around Heaven in a white dress and high heels.

1. It's important to realize that God didn't look down on the human institution of marriage and think, "Wow, mankind had a great idea with this marriage thing—I should do something like that for my Son."
2. Instead, God instituted human marriage as a picture of what He had planned all along for His Son—to be united with His church in a level of intimacy that is deeper than that found in any other relationship. It's not about femininity; it's about closeness and intimacy!
3. That's the idea that we want to lock onto—the God of the Universe desires to have an intimate relationship with you!

E. In particular, the psalmist's heart is moved by who Jesus is as the Bridegroom—He's the most excellent of men. The NKJV says that He is fairer than the sons of men. The idea is that Jesus is the most excellent, most flawless human who has ever lived.

F. Every other person you have ever known is deeply marred by sin. Their thoughts, emotions, and actions are all tainted and shaped by sin. But not so with Jesus. His thoughts toward you are 100% pure. His emotions toward you are 100% pure. His motives are 100% pure. And His actions are 100% pure.

G. It greatly damages our relationship with God when we think of Jesus simply as a little bit better version of the nicest guy we've ever met. He's a completely different version altogether!

H. It's hard for us to grasp how much sin shapes the motives and interactions of every human we have ever encountered. But Jesus is completely different. His interactions with you are never distorted by envy, pride, greed, lust, selfish ambition, or unrighteous anger. He is fairer than all the other sons of men!

III. JESUS THE JUST JUDGE (verses 3-6)

A. Psa 45:3-6 (NIV) Gird your sword on your side, you mighty one; clothe yourself with splendor and majesty. [4] In your majesty ride forth victoriously in the cause of truth, humility and justice... [6] ...a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom.

B. If you have ever raised children, been around children, or been a child yourself, there is a phrase that you are certain to have heard: "That's not fair!" And just as certainly you have heard the common response: "Life's not fair."

C. There is something on the inside of us that cries out for justice. We want life to be fair. But at the same time our experiences in life scream that life most certainly is not fair.

D. The good news is this—that internal cry for justice will not go unanswered forever. In fact, though life in this age is most certainly not fair, Jesus the just Judge is going to usher in a Kingdom in which all will be fair for the rest of eternity!

E. He is coming back to make all the wrongs thing right! When we are faced with injustice in our own nation, our own city, or our own life, we can take comfort in this, that Jesus will come and ride forth victoriously in the cause of truth, humility, and justice.

1. Have you been wounded by lies that have been told to you or about you? He's bringing a Kingdom in which lies will cease to exist.
2. Have you been taken advantage of by arrogant ones who think they can get away with anything? He's bringing a Kingdom in

which arrogance will no longer be rewarded or even tolerated.

F. We have never known a world that is free of injustice.

1. What does justice look like for those suffering from illness? It looks like complete healing.
2. What does justice look like for those suffering from anxiety? It looks like complete perfect peace.
3. What does justice look like for those oppressed by demons? It looks like complete deliverance.
4. What does justice look like for those trapped in poverty and lack? It looks like complete, abundant provision.

IV. JESUS THE ESTABLISHED KING (verse 6)

A. Psa 45:6 (NIV) Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom.

B. This verse clearly echoes Psalm 2:6 (NKJV) "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion." Though His throne is not yet here on the earth, it is a settled matter in reality—it is already established in the providence of God. And once it comes, it will remain for the rest of eternity!

C. The great news is that the justice that Jesus is going to bring is not a temporary, fleeting thing—it will last forever and ever!

D. In this age, we always have in the back of our mind that whatever is good in our life at present could be gone tomorrow. Wherever there is justice in our lives, we live with the constant awareness that it could be replaced by injustice in a moment. But the day is coming when that will no longer be the case. We will experience absolute justice that is completely untainted by the fear that it might someday cease to be.

E. Though it may feel like we only ever get short tastes of justice interspersed between long periods of "life isn't fair," the reality is that all the injustice you will ever experience is only the blink of an eye in the light of eternity. Not only is that the case, but Jesus will also reward you eternally for every injustice that you ever experienced as a result

of your love for Him!

F. Not only will His justice last forever, but every aspect of His Kingdom will be eternal because His throne will last forever and ever. There is nothing and no one that can displace Him from His throne.

V. JESUS THE JOYFUL GOD (verses 6-7)

A. Psa 45:6-7 (NKJV) Your throne, O God, is forever and ever... [7] You love righteousness and hate wickedness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.

B. The first point that we cannot miss about this section of the psalm is that it declares Jesus to be God. That very point is made by the writer of Hebrews in Hebrews 1:8 (NIV) But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom.

C. This stunning verse makes it clear that Psalm 45 actually prophesied—nearly a thousand years before Jesus was born—that there was coming a Bridegroom who is the Son of God and is also fully man and fully God!

D. The other stunning revelation from this portion of the Psalm is that Jesus is the most joyful man who has ever lived! God has anointed Jesus with a measure of joy that is greater than any of his companions amongst all of humanity.

E. Is this the way you think of Jesus? We do a great disservice to Him—and to ourselves—when we imagine Him to be mostly grumpy, disappointed, and in a bad mood.

F. If you are worshiping a Jesus who is mostly grumpy and unhappy, you are not worshiping the Jesus of the Bible!

G. This one truth of Jesus the joyful God can completely transform your relationship with Him. Who wants to spend time with someone who's mostly grumpy? But when we realize that Jesus is more joyful than anyone we've ever met, it draws us to Him like a magnet.

VI. JESUS THE SUFFERING SERVANT (verses 8-9)

A. Psa 45:8-9 (NIV) All your robes are fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia; from palaces adorned with ivory the music of the strings makes you glad. [9] Daughters of kings are among your honored women; at your right hand is the royal bride in gold of Ophir.

B. Though the meaning of this language can be a bit unclear at first, the truth that it reveals is wonderful.

C. Myrrh, aloe, and cassia are all burial spices.

1. Myrrh is obtained by making an incision in the bark of the tree from which it comes.
2. Aloe is obtained by crushing the leaves of the aloe plant.
3. Cassia is obtained by scraping the bark off the tree.
4. Consider these facts in light of the following verses:
 - Isa 53:5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.
 - Psa 129:3 Plowmen have plowed my back and made their furrows long.
5. Jesus' robes being fragrant with myrrh, aloes, and cassia therefore speaks of His death through suffering on the cross.

D. But there in the midst of His suffering, something is making His heart glad—it's the music of the strings coming from palaces adorned with ivory.

1. The white ivory speaks of complete purity and the palaces speak of the heavenly realm.
2. What music are the heavenly strings playing? The wedding song! In the midst of His suffering on the cross, there is something that is sustaining the heart of Jesus—it's the fact that He knows that He will have a pure and spotless Bride who will love Him completely.

E. This truth is echoed in the New Testament in Hebrews 12:2 Let us fix

our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

F. This is another transformational truth about Jesus that is revealed through Psalm 45—that you were the joy set before Him while He was on the cross!

G. The saints of old have placed great emphasis on the benefits of meditating much upon the cross:

1. St. Paul of the Cross: "Do not pass one day without devoting a half hour, or at least a quarter of an hour, to meditation on the sorrowful Passion of your Saviour. Have a continual remembrance of the agonies of your crucified Love, and know that the greatest saints, who now, in heaven, triumph in holy love, arrived at perfection in this way."
2. St. Clare of Assisi: "Never let the thought of Jesus leave your mind but meditate constantly on the mysteries of the cross..."
3. St. Augustine: "There is no spiritual exercise more fruitful or more useful than the daily reflection on the Passion of Christ."
4. St. Albert the Great: "A simple meditation on the Passion of Christ is worth more than a year of fasting on bread and water."

VII. CONSIDER WHO HE IS AND RESPOND (verses 10-11)

A. Psa 45:10-11 (NKJV) Listen, O daughter, Consider and incline your ear; Forget your own people also, and your father's house; [11] So the King will greatly desire your beauty; Because He is your Lord, worship Him.

B. This is the Holy Spirit's invitation to the Church: in light of considering all that has been revealed to be true about Jesus in the preceding verses, leave everything else behind and give your full "yes" to His invitation to be fully united to Him and rule by His side forever.

C. Just as a bride leaves behind her father and mother and her

previous way of life to be united to her husband, you are being invited to lay it all down and give your life fully to Jesus—because He is more than worth it.

D. The crux of the invitation is to let the revelation of the beauty of who Jesus is to cause all of the things of this present life to lose their luster. As the stars completely disappear when the sun comes fully into view, become so enthralled with the glory of Jesus that everything of this world that used to hold your attention is completely forgotten!

E. As you fix your gaze upon His beauty and are transformed into His image, the very God of the universe, though He needs absolutely nothing, will actually desire your beauty!

VIII. THE BRIDE'S INHERITANCE IN JESUS (verses 12-17)

A. Psa 45:12-17 (NIV) The city of Tyre will come with a gift, people of wealth will seek your favor. [13] All glorious is the princess within her chamber; her gown is interwoven with gold. [14] In embroidered garments she is led to the king; her virgin companions follow her—those brought to be with her. [15] Led in with joy and gladness, they enter the palace of the king. [16] Your sons will take the place of your fathers; you will make them princes throughout the land. [17] I will perpetuate your memory through all generations; therefore the nations will praise you for ever and ever.

B. The Psalm ends with a description of the Bride's inheritance in Jesus. This passage invites us to embrace an eternal perspective—to live our life with our eyes fixed firmly upon the ages to come and all that God has in store for us as a result of your union with Jesus.

C. One of the most powerful ways to free your heart from the pull of the fading things of the world is to place your focus beyond the end of this age, when worldly things will pass away, and look to the promises of God related to your eternal inheritance in Him.