

## **Embracing the Might and Majesty of God**

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Shaped by the Psalms / Psalm 93

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### **Introduction:**

If you missed last week, or are a guest with us today, we are in a new series titled “Shaped by the Psalms,” looking at 6 common types of Psalms to see how they shape our responses to God. Last week, we looked at Psalm 1 as part of the Wisdom Psalms that taught us the wisdom of proper delight. This week, we turn our attention to Psalm 93, which is part of what are commonly called Royal or Kingship Psalms. Kingship psalms celebrate and draw attention to the Lord’s reign, often declaring God’s might and majesty through proclamation and praise. Psalm 93 begins a group of this type of psalm that continues to Psalm 99. Some other kingship psalms are Psalm 24 and 47. One commentator says, “These psalms form the heart of the book of Psalms with their affirmation that the Lord reigns over the world that he has made” (Mark D. Futato, “The Book of Psalms,” 302). Another suggests, “These psalms furnish the context for learning all that the psalmic understanding of the LORD’s reign involves” (James Luther Mays, *Psalms, Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, 30). Their decisive proclamation of God’s rule and reign gives us a glimpse into the understanding God wants us to have of His sovereignty. I have heard Biblical counselors suggest that one of the biggest helps for our struggles and despair is a rightful understanding of God’s sovereignty, wisdom, and goodness, and our hearts embracing truth of these characteristics of God will provide a steady anchor for our souls in any season of life. Therefore, these kingship psalms hold immense value for us today and my encouragement is to lean in with me, letting this psalm shape your response to God. Psalm 93 gives our hearts three truths to embrace in all seasons of life. First, in verses 1-2, that,

### **The Lord’s Reign is Firmly Established**

Verse 1 opens with a decisive statement in the original language, that could almost call for an exclamation mark at the end of it. Look at verse 1 with me, “The Lord reigns.” The term for “reigns” means to reign as king. These words should be sweet to the heart of all of God’s people, but we may need to take off our democracy glasses for a moment to appreciate it. You see, in wisdom, our country is not run by a monarch. It is a democracy, where the people’s voices are heard and make an impact. This is helpful because, outside of Jesus, no human ruler can ever be perfect. However, God rules as King, and that is the greatest thing imaginable for us, because His rule is always perfect. Always perfectly just and perfectly benevolent. Isaiah 52:7 parallels this emphatic proclamation saying, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns.’” The apostle Paul later quotes this verse in Romans 10:15 to connect this good news with the gospel of Jesus Christ for all who believe. Church, the Lord reigning as Christ our King is one aspect of the good news of the gospel that our hearts need to hear. “The Lord reigns.” Continue with me in verse 1, “The Lord reigns; he is robed in majesty; the Lord is robed; he has put on strength as his belt. Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved.” The imagery of verse 1 points to God’s reign being displayed in immovable strength. The psalmist speaks in double expression, mentioning the Lord being robed twice to highlight the Lord as being arrayed in full splendor for battle. Human kings would often dress in elaborate clothing when going off to war, carrying ornamental weapons with them to show their glory. Like this ornamental dress and weaponry, God’s glory is displayed for all to see, through His strength and majesty. The conclusion of verse 1 points to the firm establishment of the world by Him as one example of that strength and majesty on display. Notice the conclusion of this stanza in verse 2, “Your throne is established from of old; you are from everlasting.” The same term for established was used for the world being established, connecting the two together. We understand the fixed nature of the physical world as we see the ways it has been established and understand that certain things will not be moved. In the same way, God’s throne has been a fixed establishment. However, where the world had an establishment date, when it was spoken into existence by God, God’s throne is established of old as He is from everlasting.

There is no beginning or end to the throne of God over everything. It is only because God's throne is firmly established that the world became established and shall never be moved. Church, God's rule and reign, His sovereignty, has a stability that can never be shaken. Nothing, and no one will ever find full success in trying to break free from the rule of God. The proclamation of God's reign doesn't only point to His rule but also His assured victory over every enemy, because, as the people of Israel sang after watching God's victory over the Egyptians at the Red Sea, in Exodus 15:18, "The Lord will reign forever and ever." Psalm 93 begins by teaching our hearts to embrace the firm establishment of the Lord's reign over everything. The second truth our hearts are given to embrace is in verses 3-4, that,

### **The Lord Reigns in Unparalleled Might**

Verses 3-4 speak in powerfully pointed imagery that draw our hearts to the unparalleled might of God. Notice the imagery presented in verse 3, "The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their roaring." Three parallel lines speak of chaos coming from creation. They picture the ferocity of the raging sea and waves in a flood. Three times the floods are depicted as having lifted up their voice, roaring as though they are calling out with battle cries in rebellion against the Lord's rule. Picture the moments we have seen when watching the devastation of flooding and violent winds from hurricanes, affecting many parts of our country. This imagery is often connected to the nations' rebellion against Yahweh in scripture. Isaiah 17:12 speaks in this imagery, proclaiming, "Ah, the thunder of many peoples; they thunder like the thundering of the sea! Ah, the roar of nations; they roar like the roaring of mighty waters!" The imagery of verse 3 is one of chaos and turmoil, pointing to both creation and the nations, as though they are rebelling against their creator's reign. Yet, verse 4 shows the futility of that rebellion. Look there with me, "Mightier than the thunders of many waters, mightier than the waves of the sea, the Lord on high is mighty!" As the floods were spoken of three times as being lifted up against the Lord, the Lord's might is now proclaimed three times showing He is mightier than the strength of the floods. It's worth noting at this point that the term for "majesty" in verse 1 is actually used only two other times in the Psalms. In Psalm 17:10, it is translated as the "arrogance" of the wicked, and in Psalm 89:9 the "raging" of the sea. God's majesty in verse 1 is His outstanding brilliance shown as He rules over and above the raging of the wicked and the waters. Note again the ending of verse 3, "the Lord on high is mighty!" "On high" represents the exalted place of our God, seated on His throne over and above all things, reigning with His might. Our God is always exalted on high, ruling over all of creation with an unparalleled might and strength. Were you with us when we saw Jesus calming the sea in Mark 4:39 as He said "'Peace! Be still!' And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm"? That moment points back to this declaration in Psalm 93:3-4 to show that Jesus Christ is the same God who is mightier than the thundering and roar of the seas, and the same God of Psalm 65:7, "who stills the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, the tumult of the peoples." This is what makes the life and death of Jesus so astonishing. He is the same God spoken of here in Psalm 93. This God took on the frailty of our human flesh, walked among His people, and gave His life as a ransom for their sin so that His death might bring eternal life. But His death was not the end. Jesus Christ, God the Son, rose victorious over death and has been given "all authority in heaven and on earth," and this psalm teaches us that no chaos or turmoil can ever overcome His might and overthrow His reign. Church, that is the good news of the gospel that we cling to. This leads to the final truth Psalm 93 calls for our hearts to embrace in verse 5, that,

### **The Lord Should be Trusted and Pursued**

The final verse makes a declaration that naturally proceeds from the heart of all who truly know the Lord. Look at verse 5 with me, "Your decrees are very trustworthy; holiness befits your house, O Lord, forevermore." The might and strength of the Lord would be troublesome if not for the consistent character of our God. If He was a God with this kind of might whose decrees were not trustworthy, then we would stand in constant fear of what He might do.

But, as Derek Kidner appropriately comments, “Here is God’s true glory, not of mere strength but of character: wholly reassuring, wholly demanding. Thy decrees are literally ‘thy testimonies’ or ‘affirmations’, a term which emphasizes that Scripture rests on the integrity of God who vouches for its statements, promises, warnings and commands” (Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73–150: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 16, 371–372). God rules over His people through all His statements, promises, warnings and commands in His Word that are “very trustworthy.” And the declaration that holiness befits His house is a recognition that our God is perfectly holy, and holiness is appropriate for those who live in His presence and under His reign. His rule isn’t distant and burdensome, but near and life giving. The character of God points to the trustworthy nature of His decrees, showing this holiness is worth pursuing because it places us rightly under the reign our hearts so desperately need. And, further, He is the Lord, “forevermore,” showing that His reign, the trustworthy nature of His decrees, and the truth that holiness befits His house will always be true. I don’t think it is a coincidence that this is the same word used at the end of Psalm 23:6 which says, “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” God’s reign over those who belong to Him in Christ is depicted in Psalm 23 as a loving shepherd who, in verse 6, causes His goodness and mercy to follow them throughout life to the point of a perfect holiness as they dwell in the house of the Lord forevermore. Church, think of the permanence of the Lord’s good and merciful reign over your life and let it move you to trust and pursue Him. Embracing this mighty and majestic God, trusting in His decrees, and pursuing holiness will bring the greatest joy, peace, comfort, and security that you could ever imagine. Because the goal of this series is to allow the psalms to shape our thoughts, prayers, and actions, I would like to share some practical ways that we can encourage our hearts to trust and pursue the Lord in all seasons of life. I see Psalm 93 teaching us two things to do. First,

### **1) Reflect on the Security of God’s Sovereignty**

It seems like the church today spends so much time debating the details of God’s sovereignty that we forget to see the security and comfort found in it. We don’t have to know all the details of how God’s sovereignty works to take immense comfort in the security it provides. As James Limburg observes, “Whatever the occasion for this psalm, it is clear that it addresses those who are concerned about the stability of the world and their government as they experience it” (James Limburg, *Psalms*, 318). Think of the world around us. There are wars and rumors of wars, lies, confusion, and all kinds of evil. Yet, even in all of this, God’s people can find comfort and security in knowing that the Lord reigns in might and majesty overall. And, though we will not understand His ways in our finite minds, we can take comfort in knowing that nothing ever catches Him by surprise. I shared a portion of these verses with the students on Wednesday. In Isaiah 46:8-11, the Lord says, “Remember this and stand firm, recall it to mind, you transgressors, remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,’ calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country. I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it.” Church, notice it doesn’t say God knows the end from the beginning, it says He declares it. Reflect on that and let the security of God’s sovereignty comfort your heart. This leads to the comfort of Romans 8:28-30 that says, “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.” God is sovereignly working all things for the good of those who are called according to His purposes, because He intimately knows them, predestined them, called them, justified them, and will glorify them. While there is some mystery in the details of these truths, we can find great security in knowing they are true. These truths should lead us to the same conclusion as Paul in Romans 8:31-32, which says, “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?”

He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?” God is for us, and “The Lord reigns,” therefore nothing can stand against us. Kingship Psalms, like Psalm 93, encourage our hearts to reflect on the security of God’s sovereignty. The second thing we can do to encourage our hearts to trust and pursue the Lord in all seasons of life is to,

## **2) Recount Moments where God’s Power has been Displayed**

That is ultimately what Psalm 93 is doing. Sometimes it can be hard in discouraging or particularly difficult seasons to see the Lord’s reign over everything. In those times, one helpful tool is to recount moments where we have seen God’s power on display. It is recounting the might and majesty of God on display. This could be something from your own life, something from church history, or something from Biblical history. Recounting moments where you have seen God’s power reminds you that He has been and always will be reigning over everything, which helps your heart know that He is working all things for your good, even the difficulty you may be facing. I will always remember a particularly difficult season when Holly and I were in Boston. We went there to plant a church, and thought our faith was strong enough to face anything. In that season, Holly became pregnant with Rosie, and it quickly became a high-risk pregnancy with Holly spending the months in the hospital every weekend to essentially keep her and Rosie alive. By God’s grace, Rosie was born healthy, but shortly she after had another scare that put her back in the hospital. I was working full-time in banking, and part-time as a worship pastor, stretched to my limit, and not functioning well as a husband and father. Candidly, our marriage suffered because of me, and some pastoral counsel led me to see a need to leave that church plant to focus on our marriage. I wrestled for many years over whether I was in rebellion against God, and outside of His will when we moved to Boston, until I began to recount how His power had been displayed in that time and the ways in which that season of life helped me become more conformed into the image of Christ, which is the primary good Romans 8:28-29 is speaking about. Over the years, recounting God’s power from that time has helped me through other difficult seasons in my life. And that is just one story from my life. Church, consider all the things we can use from church history and biblical history. Think of God’s power in the exodus. Think of His power in establishing, preserving, and refining the church over generations like we heard about this morning through the life of Jan Hus. Think of His power on display when He raised Christ from the dead. Ephesians 1:19-20 tells is that same power is working toward us. When you are in discouraging or difficult seasons of life, run to Psalm 93, reflect on the security of God’s sovereignty, and then recount moments when you have seen God’s power on display.

Conclusion:

As the choir and worship team are preparing to lead us in an extended time of response to God’s word today, how are you called to respond? The truths of Psalm 93 could lead you to confess a lack of trust in the might and majesty of God. Maybe you are here, and you have yet to bow the knee to the Lord of all creation. The response for you may be to see that the Lord reigns and know that without a trust in the death and resurrection of Jesus, that truth does not provide security for you. If that is you, embrace the might and majesty of God today by turning from your rebellion and sin, and turning to Christ. Pray and ask God to forgive your sin and find grace this morning. These truths could give words to pray for those who may to find a renewed desire to embrace God’s might and majesty more fully. They could also lead you to respond by reflecting on the comfort of God’s sovereignty or ways you have seen His power displayed to comfort your heart in a current difficult. However the Lord may lead you by His Spirit, my encouragement is to respond to the grace of His Word. You are welcome to come and kneel before the Lord in humility, stand and sing as you are ready, or remain seated and reflect as long as needed. We also always have a team of people ready to pray with you and for you if desire who you will find worshipping on the front rows or at the bottom of the stairs in the back.

Let’s pray as we seek God’s grace in this time.