

## THE TRUE ONCE AND FUTURE KING

Good morning church I hope you all are well today. As we open to Psalm 72, I think the first thing that comes to mind is that this psalm is clearly about a King. Right away we see very clearly this is a Kingly verse. But the question then becomes, what king is this psalm about?

Well the author of the psalm seems to be stated as Solomon, as the note before verse 1 says. There is some slight debate, however, that this was actually written by David for Solomon, that the "of" should be understood more as David's prayer for Solomon, often using verse 20 as a defense for this. Solomon is the most commonly held author so I may refer to him, but the truth is that both of these are somewhat interchangeable for our purposes of understanding the psalm. Whether the words of David, Solomon, or David recorded by Solomon, the king in question is clearly the Davidic monarch. In fact, this psalm could be understood as a prayer not for a particular king, but for the entire Davidic line. The line of Kings, including David, Solomon, and all who would come after him. Just as we have legendary Kings like King Arthur or stories like Lord of the Rings built around a special line that will always be the Rightful King, the Bible shows that for Israel, for God's people, the line of Kings is always the line of David. So this is where we start. This is a prayer for the Davidic line.

But then we say wait, hold on. Isn't the psalmist himself, most likely Solomon, the King? So is his prayer simply for himself? Well to some extent yes. He does want to be a Godly ruler, but this psalm is not limited to themselves. What was the purpose of the Davidic line of Kings? What did God promise David about his dynasty? About his line? 1 Samuel 7:12-13 says "I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever." He promises David a future king, from his line, who will rule forever! This offspring of the line of David, this true once and future King, was not a mere man, but is Jesus! Jesus our true king!

And so first and foremost, this psalm is a psalm about Jesus our King. It is about who he is in his kingship. And so as you read this psalm, keep Jesus in mind. Keep him in mind as our true King. He is not only our savior, he is our king, and so this Kingly prayer shows us three distinct elements of Christ as our King. We see a desire for a Godly king, we see a description of a Godly king, and we see delight in a Godly king.

So first, we see a desire for a Godly King. This theme is woven throughout the psalm but we see this explicitly in verse 1 and verses 8-11. The opening verse makes it clear that this is a thematic point of this text, as it says so clearly, "Give the King your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the royal son!" You see, at this point in history, Israel had already experienced earthly Kingship and seen its limitations.

Israel's first king, Saul, was anointed by God initially, but he was not a Godly king. 1 Samuel 15:23 makes it clear, as Samuel tells Saul, "Because you have rejected the Word of the Lord, he has rejected you from being King." So we understand that just because a ruler is in power, does not make him Godly, and therefore the psalmist declares his desire for a Godly king, not even just a good man. Notice the author asks for the King to be given God's justice! Given God's righteousness! He recognizes the limits of an earthly king, even of the line of David! Was it just for David to send Uriah to his death so that he could have Bathsheba as his wife?? No! and so he says a good king does not merely come up with these things by himself,

but he is granted God's! He gets good and true justice and righteousness from God alone. His desire is for a king who would be filled with God's true and perfect attributes. His desire is for a king like Jesus.

And if this king is perfect, he wants him to reign, not only over Israel, but everywhere, as verses 8-11 show us. The psalmist wants a Godly king so badly that he desires his reign to extend everywhere! The phrase, "May he have dominion from Sea to Sea", should not be understood as limiting the rule of the King, as some have tried to interpret it, but rather demonstrates a Kingdom that stretches far and wide! This is made abundantly clear in the next several verses, as the psalmist asks that his kingdom stretches to the ends of the earth and that foreign rulers would serve under him! Desert tribes, the Kings of Tarshish, of Sheba and Seba, may they all be under the Godly king! In so many of our stories and legends of Kings, the country is fractured, disunified, at war with itself, until the true King such as King Arthur takes over and brings a unified, peaceful, prosperous Kingdom. And this is exactly what the Psalmist prays for the kingdom of God's people! May they be unified, stretching over all the world, may they be peaceful and prosperous!

This desire is not just for the sake of the King, but it is for his kingdom. It is for the sake of the King's people that Solomon desires this!

Just as a ruler shapes the people under him, we should desire that the kingdom itself and the people in it are Godly. So we, along with the Scripture, deeply desire a King, or ruler, who does not rule according to his own whims and desires, who rules according to his own sense of justice and righteousness, but God's. We desire to have a King, Jesus, who perfectly reflects the attributes of God. That rules in perfection over every inch of his kingdom. We desire to have a king like this, for it is for our good. We desire Jesus to be our Godly King.

Now we've said this phrase a lot. Godly king, ruler. But what does this phrase mean? What does a Godly ruler look like? Clearly, it means to be more like God, but the text gives us three specific attributes in verses 2-7 and 12-17. In these verses, we are given a description of a Godly King, and so we are given a description of Jesus himself. In this psalm, we see more of who our precious savior truly is. So look with me at the three attributes of Jesus our king highlighted in this psalm.

First, a Godly king is just. Verse 2 asks for right judgements and justice for the poor. Verse 4 calls out for the king to deliver the needy and crush the oppressor. In verse 14 he stops oppression and violence. He rules justly! A Godly king is one who delivers a fair verdict. We all have an inherent sense of fairness. Of Justice. We see someone treated poorly, or especially ourselves treated poorly, and we are quick to cry, "That's not fair!" We see this if unjust actions are ignored, but also if they seem to be punished insufficiently.

I have a younger brother. And when we were growing up we argued quite a bit, as brothers do. Whenever we would get into a fight, our parents would make us stop, but then often they would separate us and come to talk to us about what we did wrong. And I always struggled with this. Because any time they talked to me about what I did wrong and how I was being punished, I wanted to know how my younger brother was being punished. What I desperately wanted as a kid was to make sure that I felt my brother's punishment fit his role in our argument. Whether it is something small like this, or something much larger, like seeing

murderers uncharged because of racial injustice or legalized abortions, we have this innate desire for things to be fair, just.

And what this psalm promises us is that Jesus, as our true Godly King, is just. He sees the poor being oppressed, he sees violence being done to others, and he steps in. He causes the violence to cease and he gives the appropriate judgement. The king Jesus does this because God does this! In Isaiah 61, one of several chapters of Isaiah this psalm thematically echoes, verse 8 says, "For I the Lord love justice; I hate robbery and wrong; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them." Likewise Deuteronomy 32:4 declares, "The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he."

Who God is is a just God. Whether we always understand it or not, whether in this life or in the age to come, God is a God who is perfectly fair and just. There is no violence, no oppression, no taking advantage of another, that goes unpunished with the perfect punishment. And so a Godly king is just. Godly people are just. He always rules fairly.

And only Jesus can be a truly just King. While we seek to be just and ask our leaders to uphold justice, only the God-man Jesus perfectly fulfills these requirements. He punishes all sin rightly. No sin is unseen. No punishment is too light or too harsh. He will punish all sin correctly and banish all injustice! Whether he punishes that sin in this age or the one to come, whether the sin of an unbeliever paid for by hell or the sin of a believer paid for by Jesus EVERY SIN and injustice shall be paid for, and they will be no more. The oppression and violence will cease when God casts Satan into the lake of fire and remakes the heavens and earth. It WILL happen! There will be perfect justice as Jesus reigns! But not only is Jesus our King perfectly just, he is perfectly compassionate.

Second, a Godly King is compassionate. We see this so clearly in verses 12-14. The justice of a Godly King is not merely a robotic formula. It is not simply a blank weighing of the scales, devoid of emotion and personality, but it is also a compassionate justice! The Godly King Jesus looks down and sees those who are in need and his heart is deeply moved towards them! Verse 12 says he delivers the needy and the one who has no helper. It says he has pity on them. And this is not the condescending pity so many of us are so good at. It is not merely saying "oh bless your heart" because you aren't smart enough or lucky enough to have what I have.

No this is a pity that takes hold of the heart, brings to compassion, and then is shown in action. It is a pity that leads the king to save the lives of the needy and be a helper to him who has no helper. The person no one else stands up for. Verse 14 says their blood is precious to him! The Godly king cares for his people. He cares for his people and he especially cares for his people who are in need. Oppressed. Down-trodden. And once again, the Godly king Jesus is compassionate because God is compassionate! When God talks to Moses through the burning bush in Exodus 3, why does he proclaim he will free his people from Egypt? Verse 7 "I have surely *seen the affliction* of my people who are in Egypt *and have heard their cry* because of their taskmasters." He hears their cry. He hears the cry of the needy of his people and he has compassion. He has pity on them. He cares for them, and so he comes down to deliver them. And Just as God heard the cries of the Israelites in Egypt and had compassion on them,

delivered them from Egypt, what greater compassion could there be than Jesus hearing the cries of sinners, rejecting him, spitting on him, and coming down, humbling himself to be born as a man, live as a man, and though lay down his life, despite never having sinned once in his life?

Do not for a second think that Jesus did this simply because it was the transaction required to save those who believe! It was not "just business". No, for even as he was tormented, dying on the cross, Jesus breathed, "Father, forgive them. For they know not what they do." His heart was full of compassion and mercy, just as God's is. He saw the ultimate poor in need! Not simply the materially poor but the poor in spirit! The poverty that damns to hell for eternity! And when he sees this his heart is moved with compassion and pity for his people! To come down to them, to make a way for their salvation, and to open their eyes and soften their hearts to turn to him! To make sure that every single one of his people repents and turns to him.

If you want to be one of his people, if you are afraid you are not part of the kingdom of God, repent and believe today! You feel his compassion stirring your heart toward him, forsake your sins and trust that Christ is your king and savior! Believe in your heart and confess it with your mouth, and his compassion is so great that there is no type of person who cannot be saved. This compassion is inseparable from who he is! A Just. Compassionate King.

Third, a Godly ruler is a blessing. This theme of a Godly ruler blessing the realm is repeated in verse 3, where the hills bear prosperity for the people, in verses 6 and 7, where the king is compared to the water that causes grass to grow and the righteous flourish and peace abound, and again in verses 15-17, as there are gifts of gold given to him, an abundance of grain and fruit so that all the people are blessed. This picture is so strong in these verses, that you would look at the mountains and they would seem to move like water because of the abundance of food growing there. A king who is Godly is wise, and therefore there is food for the people. They are prosperous. Other nations see their wisdom and might and bless them, as verse 15 says.

And indeed 1 Kings chapter 10 shows this is true, as it describes the queen of Sheba paying great tribute to Solomon and the King of Tarshish bringing a fleet carrying great wealth of gold to the King of Israel! Solomon blessed his nation. But he also failed to bless his people. By the time he died, his people told Solomon's son that his father's yoke had been heavy and he punished them with whips. He had become a burden, a curse, to his people. Not a nourishment or soothing balm like verse 6 describes, but a curse.

And so once again, we remember that we need our true Godly King Jesus, who is a blessing to us because God is. What does God promise his people, beginning with Abraham in Genesis 12? In verse 2 of Genesis 12 God promises Abraham, "I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing." God blesses his people. He is a God who blesses, and therefore a Godly king should as well.

The best thing about our faith. The best thing about Christianity, is not that we are simply saved from hell. The best thing is that we are saved to Christ! As his blood pays for our trespasses, it also cleanses us to save us to our king, uniting us with Christ, who is the ultimate blessing to his people. I love the image of verse 6. Like rain on freshly cut grass. Not only is it functional, rain causing the grass to grow, but it gives us this mental image, what poetry is best at right, of cool, refreshing water. You could even take this one step further and see the cut grass as wounded. The tops cut off and wounds laid bare, but the true king is like the water that

soothes and heals. Bathing the wounds. Jesus is our best, true blessing. He always provides for us, whether physically on this earth or, for all believers he provides for all time in eternity! He has given us the best blessing! That by his blood shed on the cross, he took the punishment that we deserve, cleansing us with his blood that we might be united to him forever! United with him! That he would be with us in all of life. He gives us an abundance of mercies. Joys we do not deserve. And he is there with us in it all. Our friend. Our bosom companion. That by the Spirit in us we might feel his presence. We might rejoice with him in the good times and be given a comforting embrace by him in hardship. Christ our king is not only just and compassionate, he is our greatest blessing.

And so this is what we long for! This is what we pray for! And yes we pray and desire for our earthly leaders to reflect this. We hope that we reflect these attributes, but at the same time, we must admit that none of our rulers are like this and none of us are like this. Even the Earthly line of David was not like this. In Jeremiah 22, part of what we read in our confession, starting in verse 11, the Lord says this concerning the King of Israel, the descendent of David.

“He shall return here no more, but in the place where they have carried him captive, there shall he die, and he shall never see this land again.” Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness, and his upper rooms by injustice, who makes his neighbor serve him for nothing and does not give him his wages... Do you think you are a king because you compete in cedar?...You have eyes and heart only for your dishonest gain, for shedding innocent blood, and for practicing oppression and violence.”

Therefore thus says the Lord concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah: “They shall not lament for him, saying, ‘Ah, my brother!’ or ‘Ah, sister!’ They shall not lament for him, saying, ‘Ah, lord!’ or ‘Ah, his majesty!’ With the burial of a donkey he shall be buried, dragged and dumped beyond the gates of Jerusalem.”

There is no earthly ruler who has always judged justly. Made the absolute perfect decision. There is no ruler who has never failed to have compassion. There is no ruler who has perfectly been a blessing to his people. Even the earthly line of David built his house on unrighteousness, shed innocent blood and practiced oppression. And you and I have done this in our personal lives as well. We have been unjust, judging based on our own benefit instead of fairness. We have failed to have compassion, witnessing oppression and violence and being quick to justify it or forget it. We have failed to be a blessing. We have been a burden to others. We have hurt those we wanted to bless and care for.

But this does not leave us in a place of hopelessness, for the point of this psalm is not simply desire a king like Jesus and be like Jesus. Those are good, true things. But Jeremiah 23:5-6 says, “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: ‘The Lord is our righteousness.’”

And so even as we hope and pray for these kinds of rulers and to be just, compassionate, and bless others in our own lives, this psalm ultimately leads us to the truth that there is no true Godly King save one. There is no Godly King save the King of all Kings Jesus

Christ. And so we, along with verses 18-19, do not despair that we are not like this, but delight in the one true King. We delight in the one true King.

As we desire to be just, compassionate, and bless others, in our own lives, while we pray for our leaders to rule and lead in this way, do not forget in all of this to delight in our true Godly King! Delight in Jesus! Rejoice in him! Dwell on these aspects of who he is until you cannot help but should along with the psalmist, "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!"

The Psalmist, just like all who believe in Jesus, cry out in praise because they cannot help it! There is no other reaction to such a great and glorious king. And so we delight in him, intertwining with our desire to culminate in this prayer! "May the whole earth be filled with his glory." (Repeat). We take this delight and this desire and we proclaim it to others! We do not only think this, but we boldly preach it to all people, that Blessed be the Lord who alone does wondrous things, that his rule might extend far and wide! We seek to find people who are not part of his kingdom, and in our delight in our King we seek to draw them into his Kingdom! And so this delight and desire come together for this outward declaration, and they also come together for the same prayer, may the whole earth be filled with his Glory, in our own lives.

We see brokenness in the world. Racial injustice, hatred and division, and we pray that good King Jesus would rule over the world. Would bring his perfect justice to make it right. You are hurting and in pain, maybe physically, disease and sickness, or emotionally from an argument with your spouse or close friend. May Good King Jesus reign in this argument and his perfect compassion see me and move him to comfort me. May his perfect compassion reign that I might show compassion towards the other person in our argument. Does your job feel pointless? You wake up and feel you just go through the motions. Without passion or desire. May Good King Jesus be the refreshing water to your soul. May he reign and bless you in your job, to feel his nourishment and passion as you continue in your job to the Glory of God.

Verse 20 notes that the prayers of David are ended, as this marks a transition to the next book of the psalms written primarily by others besides David, but the work of Jesus has not ended, and our prayers have not ended. We desire him to come and reign over all areas of life, and we delight that he does! We continue to praise him as we go out into the world which he rules. We praise him as we pray for our earthly leaders and we praise him as we seek to image him in justice, compassion, and blessing others as citizens of his rule. We praise him when we do this well, and we praise him when we fail to do it well, because of who. He. is.

When we actually think about who our King Jesus is, when we actually stop and think about it, we cannot help but praise him! We cannot help but desire that he would be praised forever! Jesus! Our King who is just. Who is compassionate. Who is a blessing to his people. Whose reign encompasses truly the ends of the earth and will never end! May we bring him honor and glory and praise amen!