

PSALMS

songs for all of life

PSALMS: DECLARING DEPENDENCE ON GOD

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Psalms 2

The Psalms of the Bible are a collection of songs from different writers, functioning like a hymnal for the full expression of human emotion. There are Psalms of joy and Psalms of pain, Psalms of anger, and Psalms of peace. Join us for our third installment, asking the Psalms to teach us about God's heart, the heart of the scriptures, and the heart inside you and I. Visit doxa-church.com for service times or more details on how we make disciples in the everyday stuff of life.

Good morning, Doxa. Today we'll be reading Psalm 2.

"Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying, 'Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.' He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, 'As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.' I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, 'You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.' Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him."

This is the word of the Lord. You may be seated.

Thank you, Hilda. Well, this is the last week in our Psalm series where we've been having some guest lead teachers from other churches come and join us and preach one of their favorite Psalms. Have you, has this been enjoyable for you? Have you guys enjoyed the series at all? Okay, great. We've loved having different lead pastors from other churches join us and give their Psalms, and it's been beneficial for me to get to sit underneath that. And as you know, I've traveled around and done some of the, the Psalms at other, of some of their churches as well. Well, today I have a special guest for you all. So our special guest here is a friend of mine. He comes from Mercy Fellowship way up in the elephant graveyard of Marysville, Washington. Just kidding. And he, he comes from up there. He's a great guy. They're part, their church is a part of the Acts 29 network. He's led in various capacities. He's been the pastor there for 10 years. More importantly and more impressively, he's been married for 18 years and he has six children. So would you give a warm round of applause for my friend pastor Chris Rich? Come on, Chris. You mind if I pray for you? Yeah, man. Please do. Alright, well Lord, I pray for Pastor Chris, that you would show up for him, Lord, that the Spirit would be present on this stage in the audience with my friends in the crowd here at Doxa, but more importantly that everything he says, Lord God, would the word of God be proclaimed and proclaimed well, and would you be glorified in his teaching? And would we be grown by the word that you've given him? In Jesus' name, amen.

Amen. Alright, well, guys, it is a joy to be with you. Elephant graveyard of Marysville? While that is we, we actually have that just kinda like listed on the town right when you come in there. And so, no, I like I said, been married for 18 years to my wife Tara. We've got six kids, four of them are teenagers. Two of them can drive. And so their full-time job is just being Uber for the other kids. And if you don't know Marysville, it is a little bit different than Redmond. So in Marysville we have three Walmarts that guard the city, like the city gates to let you know that you're there. And y'all are fancy down here. I got off 520 and I was like, what a nice tree. And I was like, wait, that's a cell phone tower. In Marysville we have a water tower and it looks like a water tower. And so, yeah, just kind of a different deal up there. But it's a joy to get together with you guys. And like Eddie said, you guys have been in this series in the book of the Psalms, and if you don't know if you're coming in today, don't know anything about the Psalms. They are a rich anthology, a collection of songs gathered together so that you can have a realistic and authentic voice for understanding complex relationships between God and between his people. And so sometimes we sing songs very individualistically. And that's okay. There's songs that are written just for your soul. And there's other songs that are written for more of a collective voice, right? Like college football fight songs, right? I went to UW. Heaven help the foes of Washington, who tremble at the feet of mighty Washington. The boys are there with bells, they're fighting. I don't know the rest of it. I know there's a line that I'm not allowed to say in church with a rah rah rah wazoo thing. That's, it's just bad. You can Google it. Alright? But with that, the Psalms while they're not a systematic theology, they absolutely do teach things that are true about God. You can get some doctrine in a poetic voice about what's true about God and his people. That God is a creator who created everything good. That God is a redeemer who pursues and loves his people. That God is a sustainer and provider and protector in the midst of whatever trials you may be suffering. But one of the key truths about the Psalms is the identity of who God is. He's called many things, but we sing to God as a warrior. We sing to God

as a king, as a father, as a teacher, sometimes even appeal to him as a judge. But there's one thing I want you to know about the Psalms. It's what Jesus said about them in, in Luke 24. And it's all of the Psalms are about Jesus. So when we sing about God as a king, or when we sing about God as a redeemer, we are singing about Jesus Christ who showed up into history. And one of the big mega themes of the Psalms is these kingship Psalms. And that kinda leads us here into Psalm chapter two that we're gonna spend our time in this morning. The kingship, who is king, who is on the throne, is a mega theme throughout the Psalms that, that David as a king writes about kind of two levels. What does it mean to be a king and what does it mean to be under the king? And like I said, the Psalms are about Jesus so when we talk about being under the king, we're talking about Jesus' rule and reign. And so if you don't know, Psalm 2 is one of the most quoted Psalms in the New Testament quoted more than any other of them. But it's also kind of different in that Psalm 1 and Psalm 2 actually pair together as one big intro Psalm to this entire anthology. So if you're a little older like me and you're a fan of Queen, right? You know, we will rock you, right? Anybody know that? You don't have to chant it. It's the 9:30. I get it. Right. We will rock you. And if you ever hear that on the radio or you listen to it on a record, we actually have records at my house, not 'cause we're in Marysville, Lake Stevens, Snohomish, but like, like, I got Spotify, it's okay. But like if you know, you know, that song goes, we will rock you, we'll rock you into we are the champions. And so Psalm one very individualistic about the nature of sin and wisdom and a path of righteousness and a path of life, then fades right into Psalm two here that I'm gonna read a little bit for you. So we've broken it up into three parts, starting with verses one and two. If you have your Bibles, you can turn there, sorry. Verses one through three says this in Psalm chapter 2.

"Why do the nation's rage and the people's plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying, 'Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.'"

So if you're thinking about that in context of Psalm 1, fading into Psalm 2, we could back up a bit in verse 6 of Psalm 1, and it says,

"For the Lord knows the way of the righteous,"
so that there's a way that is wise, there's a way that is good, there's a way that leads to life and.

"The way of the wicked will perish."

There actually are ways of being opposed to God that don't lead to life and flourishing, but lead to death and destruction. So Psalm 1 ends with, hey, two paths, righteous or wicked beat drop, key change, right in the Psalm 2. So why do the nations rage? Why do the people plot in vain? The Psalmist is actually like putting a pretty clear, like binary dichotomy. You had two paths, righteous, wicked, life, death. So then why do the collective wisdom of the nations come together to rage and revolt? The choice'd be so clear? And yet, I do believe that we understand this choice. I believe that all of us have a conscience and an understanding that there is a God who created us. And if there's a God who created us, then you and me, we are created for a purpose, not just our own, but a purpose that throughout scripture and throughout church

history says simply that we were made for worship. That you and I were made to reflect God's glory and to respond to his leadership in our lives. And yet, from the beginning of the Bible, the first command in the garden we rejected in the wilderness, God's people revolted. And then in the New Testament, we actually see the regicide of king Jesus on the cross. You and I, and we and all of humanity, has consistently chosen to respond to God's good provision, to his good purposes, with rage over worship. Like I said, this has happened from the beginning. The disposition towards God as king has always been one that we're not, we're not quite sure about. And so the first vote ever made as humanity, that the issue on the table was will we or will we not submit to God? And humanity counseled with satan himself and they came up with something that might sound familiar to you, a declaration of independence. We, the people of the garden in an effort to form a more perfect union, declare our independence from our creator. And in doing so, we cast off the totalitarian restraints of his one oppressive law of refraining from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And from that time, we've set up systems and structures and nations and governments all opposed to God's rule and reign to break those bonds of tyranny from God. And with that, there's like, we're not just like, we're not all idiots, but like we're doing so because we believe a promise that it'll actually lead to more freedom and flourishing, right? It says here in Psalm 2, they're breaking bondage, right? They're overcoming injustice, they want flourishing. And so the nations plot to overthrow the true source of life. And I think, you know, I mean, I'm from Snohomish county, so I know you think that's basically Tennessee or Texas, like yeah, I see some flags every now and then, and they're like, American ones, like not the pride ones. We got both. But like, I think we get this idea as Americans at times that like when we read the nations rage, we're like, oh yeah, I got some nations raging. Oh yeah, Russia, man, Russia, Ukraine, that's raging. Oh, China and the communist part that's raging France, not so much more of a weak surrender most of the time, if you know your world history, okay, but who does he say rages? The nations? That literally means all the nations. I mean, I love that this is a diverse church. We live in a diverse region where we've got people from every tribe, tongue, and nation, and all of them are worthy of dignity, honor and respect as image bearers of God and all of us from nations who have raged against God. Yes, Canada, even you. And so there's great intentionality of nations working together to overthrow God, right? They've got kinda like their UN general assembly. And what they're saying is, we are gonna cast off these totalitarian restraints from the God of the Bible. There's great unity. They're holding hands, they're making joint pronouncements, they're passing down joint mandates. And so it begs the question, if you're the Psalmist, like when you're looking at a world that's all unified, but it's not aligned with the purposes of God, then you've got to see that they're in opposition to God. That actually times when we see like the world in great unity as Christians maybe should cause us a bit of a pause to ask, what's the agenda behind this? What's the purpose behind this? And so for these nations gathering together, there's this false comfort that comes from them all plotting together, right?

If it's you alone against God, you're kinda like, I, oh man, I for sure don't stand a chance. But now you get a bunch of people together, you get a bunch of nations together, you get a bunch of resources together. You're like, I think we can take him. That, that's what the nations are saying here. And the psalmist is saying, why would you bother to overthrow God? Don't you understand all that you're doing is in vain, there is hope, right in the first verse of this Psalm,

the plot of the world against God to cast off those restraints for evil is going to fail. But he goes on to say they're not just opposed to God. Verse 2 says, they're also against his anointed. Again, we as Christians, we read this the way Jesus told us to read it. And so when we read his anointed, we are reading about Jesus Christ. That anointed word is where we get that concept Messiah. It's where we get that concept of Christ, of savior, king of God's people. And see, we don't really like the idea of anointed. We don't like Jesus as king. Jesus can be just about anything the world says, He just can't be king. He can't be God. He can't be the one in charge. See, if I had more time, I'd go into all the ways that different political systems all kind of have their version of Jesus, their socialist Jesus and patriotic Jesus and all of that. And we like to co-op Jesus for our political lens. But at the end of the day, Jesus is saying, no, I am king. I am the ruler. I am the authority over you. And so it begs the question, why, what's driving their rebellion and rage? Like what's, what's driving it? Cause again, it seems foolish to try to put yourself against God. Well, the challenge has been is that reason for rebellion is a wrong understanding of God. They have a wrong understanding of who God is and what he wants for them and who we are. They and we often believe this lie that we can do it better than God. That's actually the nature of sin. That's when sin twists our view of who God is and his character. Is to somehow be under the authority of God is to somehow be in some sort of bondage, to be cast off. God is so restrictive. God isn't very inclusive. God is so repressive. And so it says in these verses, they want the bonds burst apart and the cords cast away.

See the people in the Psalm, they see the challenges we have in this world. Like it's okay to look at the world and say there's evil. It's okay to look at the world and say there's sin, there's injustice. The challenge is who you pinning in that on, because for them, they're seeing the injustice and the brokenness in this world, and they're saying, God must be the source of it. God must be the problem. And so they blame God and they cast that burden on God rather than recognizing it's our sin that enslaves us. Like God's hope and desire for you is not greater bondage. It is always greater freedom. Freedom and flourishing under his rule and reign. And so they have a misunderstanding of God's character. How have you misunderstood God's character? And then how does an inaccurate understanding of God lead you to wrong conclusions about God? Maybe who he is, what his motives are? And then how does that impact your actions and responses to God? See, God's not the one that puts you in bondage. God's not the one that put us in bondage. He's the one who brings freedom. I know this because he's promised it over and over again in God's word. But here's one section that maybe you haven't read for a while. Hosea chapter 11, verse 4 says this, talking about bondage and cords and all that.

"I led them with cords of kindness, with the bands of love, and I became to them as one who eases the yoke on their jaws, and I bent down to them and fed them."

This is God saying, "Hey, I brought freedom, I brought flourishing. I have condescended down to you. You don't have to earn your way up to me. I'm coming to you. And when I do, I'm bringing provision. I'm bringing flourishing. I'm bringing life. You wanna know what my cords of oppression are? Kindness and love, freedom and forgiveness. That's the Old Testament God from like an angry prophet."

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ doubles down on this in Matthew 11 verses 28 through 30. You've probably heard this one says this,

"Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you."

All right? Here's the burden.

"And learn from me, for I'm gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

This is who God is. This is what God's intentions are for our freedom and for our flourishing. And so while the nation's plot in vain, like you already, like, it's like watching Titanic, you're like, it's not gonna go well, right? If you haven't seen Titanic, it's a movie about a really spoiled girl who never learns how to share. And so her boyfriend dies at the end and the ship sinks, right? I mean, a few other things happen too. Okay? All right, back on track. We've seen their counsel, okay, there's a response coming though. The nations get a word, but the God gets a response. Here we are, verses four through nine says this,

"He who sits in heaven," or in the heavens rather, so they're on earth, he's in heaven. He laughs. "The Lord holds them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury saying, 'As for me, I've set my king on Zion, my holy hill.' I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, 'You are my Son; today I've begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.'" Verse nine, "You shall break," Or some translations actually say, rule. ""You shall break or rule them with a rod of iron and dash them into pieces like a potter's vessel.""

Like I said, part of the reason that we get God wrong is because we've cast him wrongly in the play. My family and I are huge fans of the musical Hamilton. You guys seen that? Anybody seen Hamilton? I figure on the east side. Most of you guys can afford to go see it. I saw it like once or twice or okay, it was three times when it was in town. That was our tithe that month. And so in Hamilton, if you know right, American Revolution, rap battles, it's great. At one point King George shows up, right? And he's like, no, I'm here because I, to remind you of my love. I sent you a fully armed battalion to remind you of my love. I killed your friends and family to remind you of my love. I think that's how we think about God. That he's somehow the evil dictator. He's the despot. He's the one that's, oh, no, I love you, but I'm bringing wrath and fury to show you. We get the plot wrong. And so God's here and he's ready to respond. And what's interesting is all the nations plot together, we already know it's in vain. So God himself is not in this Trinitarian council in heaven. Like, oh, shoot, those people I made are thinking about revolting. I totally need a backup plan for that. No, he's like, he's like, wait, they're what? They're plot. What? Wait, what? What are they doing? Their plot to overthrow, like his response is not fear. His response is laughter. That word derision also means mocking. Like the CEO of of Babylon Bee, it's a satire site. He says that sometimes the reason bad ideas flourish is

because they haven't been sufficiently mocked. And God's here saying, you're so stupid. Like, you're, he's mocking not because he doesn't love them, not because he doesn't care about the condition of their heart or your heart, not because he knows that ultimately it's going to fail. He's mocking because he wants to undermine their plans and their premises. So their premises are just false from the beginning. He's like, your plans what now, overthrow his authority. All of you created beings are gonna get together to overthrow the creator. So is your plan to use things that I also created? Right? It's like you, if you've got toddlers or a little kid and they like threaten to like run away, maybe that's never happened to you. I don't know that my kids did that, but like you, they're like threatened to run away. And they're like, yeah, could you make me like a peanut butter and jelly sandwich first? And like maybe, you know, I don't know, like gimme an iPhone with like Apple Pay or something like, just like, you know, but I just need to cast off restraints from you. You say, this is ridiculous. He's like, you wanna wage a battle against somebody that controls your breath and heartbeat? That at any moment can just like, nope, go to the backend software and just, boop. I can't say that in Marysville, we don't have software engineers up there, okay. We got the Amazon, but it's like the big one that the stuff comes out of, not the like where you guys design stuff, okay. He's like, your premise is absurd. You can't overthrow me. I'm the creator. And he goes, furthermore, your plan, your plan is ridiculously foolish. You're like, yeah, we wanna declare independent from you, God, source of life, joy, flourishing, and purpose, because we're hoping that's gonna lead to greater life, joy, flourishing and purpose for us. And so you're like, wait, you wanna declare independence from the God who made sex, chocolate and sunsets because he's so mean and so horrible. That's your plan. So he mocks them rightly. He's calling, he's calling them to remember who they are, his purposes for them. And then furthermore, he's saying, Hey, you want to be king? He's like, I hate to break it to you, that role's already taken, that seat's already filled. This isn't Game of Thrones where everybody's trying to jockey for position. He's like, no, I've already got the king seated on the throne. He's there. And in the perspective of Psalm two, he's gonna come down off that throne, dwell with his people, condescend, live with the poorest of the poor and the marginalized, and live a life of perfect obedience. And then he is gonna die, rise again. And he's still seated on that throne today. And so I want you to ask yourself, where does your plan or plot for your life need to be interrupted by God in a way that disrupts you to lead you from a place of pride. That's why God's mocking them. He's mocking their pride. To draw you into a place of humility. Don't hear me wrongly, not humiliation, but humility so that you can now walk a new path of life and love and ultimately to glory.

See verses seven through nine, God's already laid out the identity of that king. Now he's gonna lay out a bit of the commission, the decree there, he's like, I'm gonna carry out this plan personally. The king, he says, is gonna be his own Son. In the context that David would've been writing this and God had given him a covenant, a promise that that nobody or his throne rather, would never be empty. And so David's saying, yeah, I know the throne's gonna be filled. That was fulfilled through Jesus, who was born from the line of David, who is born from the city of David, which is what we celebrate right in the incarnation during Advent and during Christmas. And then when Jesus goes through his life for a few decades in obscurity and then begins his public ministry he begins it with being baptized, identifying with the rebels and the revolters and saying, you need to be made clean. You need to pledge allegiance to a new king. And then

in doing so, at that moment that he's baptized, God, the Father speaks and says like Psalm two, this is my Son with whom I'm well pleased. And then Jesus is anointed by, commissioned by the Holy Spirit, whole trinity working together to remind us who our God and king is. And so we get the opportunity and the world had the opportunity to respond either with reception and worship and pledging of allegiance or rage and rejection and opposition. And so in the life and ministry of Jesus, we actually see Psalm two lived out. Nations actually unifying. Nations who had been opposed to one another, unifying to overthrow the king. You see the Jewish religious leaders that are like, wait, hold up. He said he was God. He said he could forgive sin if he's the one that forgives sin. We can't forgive sin because people will like, they won't have their shame anymore. And we're religious people. Shame is all we got. And then Herod, puppet king Herod, who just wants power, is like, oh gosh, I want Jesus to like do some, some cool miracles for me. I want Jesus to dance a little dance for me. And then Pilate, the Roman governor, just doing his job, doing what Caesar says, keeping the boot down on the smaller nations, the three of them conspire together to overthrow and reject Jesus, to rage against Jesus. And before you think it's, oh, it's just that little Kabbalah people. Oh no, the whole crowd's chanted out, crucify him, crucify him, crucify him. So when met with King Jesus, the world's reaction, and sometimes our reaction is rejection and rebellion. Jesus Christ beaten, crucified on the cross, dead, buried plot over, never have to hear that guy's name again. Rome and Israel can roll on and on and on. Their words were rejection and rebellion. But God's words was resurrection. God's word was, no, my king will rise God's word. My king is on the throne. God's word is resurrection. God's word is redemption. I will purchase people from the slavery of their sin. I will cast away their bonds of sin. I will forgive them and lead them to greater freedom and flourishing. God's word was full redemption and full restoration. He promises his return. No more sin, no more suffering, no more tears. Perfect unity, nations unified. Tribes, tongues and nations. God likes that. He's for nations being unified together as long as it's under the banner of king Jesus. And that is what eternity holds. It says here that Jesus is a strong king. It's okay that Jesus is gentle and lowly. So yes, God is gracious and merciful to us. But let's not mistake that for a lack of strength. It is strength under control. He's a strong king. We need a strong king because he says, Hey, I'm gonna go ahead and burst some bonds. I'm gonna go ahead and overcome injustice. I'm gonna go ahead and overcome evil. You need a strong king that can defeat evil. And in Jesus' resurrection, we can see that he's strong enough to defeat Satan, sin, and death. Mercy and grace are not a display of God's weakness 'cause he's soft. They're the unifying force that draws us to him as our king. See, the promise of God is to restore proper rule and reign of Jesus. That it will come to fruition. And so if you're a disciple of Jesus, you have also been commissioned and you've been commissioned to what? To go into all the nations making disciples of all the nations. And if we're disciples of Jesus, we deeply desire to see kingdom agenda happening. Almost as if we're called to pray on earth as it is in heaven. It's okay. And not more than just, okay, we're commanded to, to pray for and work towards justice and freedom and flourishing and holiness and faithfulness until that time that he returns. So we pray your kingdom come, your will be done. Not my kingdom come or our will be done.

Okay, last two verses as we close. There's been a few scenes that we've seen. We've seen you know, kinda that UN general assembly. We've seen the throne room in heaven. We've seen that Jesus has come to earth. But there's one more room, one more scene I want us to be

thinking about and what's gonna happen that moment when you are summoned before the king says this verses 10 through 12.

"Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned. O rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all those who take refuge in him."

There's some rough words in there. But to be wise and be warned, the Bible says that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. That fear is not a terror, it is a reverence. It is a recognizing of how good and great and strong God is, how small and weak and dependent we are. And it leads us to a right orientation from pride to humility, from certain failure to faithfulness and flourishing. So there is a moment that you and I when we die or when Jesus comes back where we will be not invited, but summoned before the king. And when he says, O kings, you can hear kings and queens, not just of nations, but the one that you and I look at in the mirror each morning, be wise, be warned, this is God being gracious to us to help us be prepared for that moment where we'll see him face to face. A gift to us for repentance, to turn from being the kings and queens of our own little kingdoms to actually pledge allegiance. You guys are gonna do baptisms next week, which is awesome. The baptisms are a public pledge of allegiance to Jesus as king, to be invited into his kingdom and to have the promise of new life now and forever. There's this scene in Hamilton where George Washington is ending his reign as president. And he sings this song one last time and he quotes scripture from Micah 4:4 and a few other places in the Old Testament. He says, everyone to their own vine and fig tree. And it's that desire to be home, to be under the good, kind, provision of our king. To be in a place of safety and security and flourishing and justice and holiness. And he's saying your path to that is to kiss the Son, like kiss the ring. To be reminded of who your savior king is. That your king died for you so that you could have new life with him now forever. To acknowledge who Jesus is.

And just like Psalm one, there's two paths, he says. There is a path that leads to destruction and there's a path that leads to life. And so just as this song began with why choose the path in vain, it ends with, hey, there's two paths. Today you have an opportunity to either reorient your heart to the path that you've already been called to or for the first time to repent of and cast down your crown and to serve and love and pledge allegiance to a God who loves you so much that he sent Jesus Christ to die for your sins, to live the life you couldn't live, to die the death you deserve and to rise against so you can have new life now and forever. A life of blessing. Of independence, no, but freedom, yes, when we are dependent on our God and king. And that happens when we simply trust Jesus. Let's pray.

God, you are good to us. God, you're good for us. Lord, I thank you for your word. God, I thank you for your good and kind warning. Lord, I thank you for the perfect life of your Son Jesus in our place. I thank you God that your desire for us is freedom and life and that that comes through repentance and faith. Lord, that you're not waiting for us to achieve freedom. But God, you've come to break those bonds of sin that hold us together so closely and tightly so that we can live new lives with you. God, thank you for your word. Holy Spirit, I pray you would do your work in and through the hearts of your people.

