

Psalm 72

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[0 : 00] One of the most amazing books in the Bible for me is the book of Psalms. There really is no book to compare with it in the Old Testament.

It's the way in which it deals with the lives of ordinary people, lives of those who are great and mighty, those who are going through struggles, those who are hardly able to keep the joy inside them to themselves, and they're just ready to ooze it out.

And it's also to do with the more humble people, but also to do with the kings, and our relationship with the king, with God, with the Lord, with the servant.

One of the Psalms that is particularly prominent, perhaps in the free church as well, and I remember often singing it up in Bunnacord when I lived there. Psalm 72.

Psalm 72. The whole of this psalm is a brilliant psalm. Here we are told it's about Solomon, and it is about him, and I believe that's when it was originally composed.

[1 : 06] But it applies so beautifully, not just to him, and not only to those who generally rule under God, seeking to bring glory to him. It, of course, also applies to the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

Let's go through this psalm and just see briefly what this king is like, what our Lord Jesus is like. So first of all, then, what is the king like?

You see it there in Psalm 72.1. 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.

Notice what it says there. This king, he's not there to build up an empire for himself. He's not there thinking solely of himself.

He is very much in line with God and with God's character. So the psalmist is saying, Give the king, i.e., in our case, the Lord Jesus, your justice, O God.

[2 : 10] Your righteousness may be given to the royal son. That's what you want, you see. You want that God's righteousness, God's justice, would be exercised in and through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ultimately, he is the link to God's blessings for each one of us. We never relate to God directly. We always go through Jesus Christ.

And what does this king actually do when he exercises God's judgment and God's righteousness? Sometimes we tend to think of justice and righteousness as very negative terms, but actually that's not the way they're set forth in Scripture at all.

Look at what it says. Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people, the hills and righteousness. May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the children of the needy, and crush the oppressor.

So what will he actually do? He will defend his people, he will deliver his people, and he will crush their enemies. He's ready there to defend them because he knows that they're under attack.

[3 : 22] He's able to deliver them from the situations that may really crush them. And if there are individuals who rise up against them, he is more than ready and more than able to deal with each one of these.

And the Lord has done this down through the generations. He has defended his people, delivered his people, and crushed their enemies. We've seen one empire after another that has set itself against the Lord and God and his people, and they have been brought down.

It will always be the case. And how long will this king do this kind of work? Well, look at verse 5 there.

May the fear you while the sun endures, and as long as the moon throughout all generations. Isn't that an amazing way to put it? We fear the king.

We don't just want him to reign long. We want to fear him. We want to respect him. We want to honour him. We want to listen to what he commands.

[4 : 35] We want to abide by his teachings. And that's what the Great Commission is, that we are to teach everything that he has commanded us. Why? When we disciple people, we want them to come to acknowledge him, to fear him, to respect him, to revere him, to revere his law, to revere his will, to revere his character, to revere his people.

May they fear you. But for how long? As long as the sun endures. And then when the sun goes down, as long as the moon. In other words, throughout all generations.

You see, for those who are accustomed to looking at the sky, they're accustomed to seeing the sun rise and the sun set. And then if they're awake in the night, they're accustomed to seeing, at times of the month, the sun rising and the sun setting.

And it's this idea of continuity, unending. The sun rises and sets, and then the moon rises and sets, and just goes round and round.

And now there's no end. So we fear him, this king, always. We never want it to stop. And what will the impact of the reign of this amazing king be?

[5 : 55] I love the metaphor here. May he be like rain that falls from 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.

Isn't that beautiful? Isn't that beautiful? This is a picture of the renewal. If we need renewal, we need to be under the reign, under the lordship of this king.

And he brings the kind of renewal that is here described as rain coming down on mown grass. The grass has been shorn, and it seems so low.

And then what happens? The rain comes on, and you almost smell the renewal. Rain on mown grass, showers that water the earth. How often we've said ourselves, isn't that a beautiful smell?

And you know that it's actually the smell of life. It's a smell of grass, as it were, not just having been cut, but ready to grow again.

[7 : 03] Well, here in his days, may the righteous flourish, peace abound, till the moon be no more. See, the kind of renewal we're wanting is for the righteous to actually flourish, to prosper, to know what it is to be able to go through life and live that life to the glory of God.

To know that kind of peace, perhaps even in trouble, peace abounding, even in trouble. The older I get, the more I realize just how precious that is.

The more things you go through, the more difficulties you have, the more dark things that you have to face in God's loving providence.

You realize that the kind of peace that comes, it's not necessarily to do with feelings, but to do with a loving contentment with God's will.

Not in and of itself, but because he has willed it, he has a reason for it. And he brings us just to trust in him as we go through these things.

[8 : 18] It's that kind of peace that we have in the midst of tribulation. In this world, you will have trouble. You will have tribulations. But be of good cheer, said Jesus.

I have overcome the world. Well, we want to flourish. We want that peace to abound till the moon be no more. Just, why the moon?

Possibly because it's at night time that you actually sense that sense of difficulty. How often things trouble us in the night.

And yet, it's then that we really want to know that peace and that flourishing and that renewal. It's not bound to time.

And how wide should the reign of this king be? Well, can you think of anywhere on earth where you would not wish his reign to be exerted?

[9 : 19] Can you think of anywhere in all of creation where you would not wish his reign to be exerted? Of course not. May he have dominion from sea to sea, from the river to the ends of the earth.

May desert tribes bow before him and his enemies leak the dust. May the kings of Tarshish and the coastlands render him tribute. May the kings of Sheba and Sheba bring gifts.

May all kings fall down before him and all nations serve him. We want his kingdom to come.

May your kingdom come. Here, the picture in the Middle East from river to river. From the Euphrates right through to the Mediterranean. We want to be from the river to the ends of the earth.

We don't see boundaries. That was just such a huge spread of land from one river to the other. Very few human beings would have gone to both rivers.

[10:26] It was just this sense of vastness. As somebody wisely wrote, when you're when you're small and young, especially before the internet age, your world is as vast as you could walk before lunch and come back again.

It would be huge. But then as you grew older and you realise you can actually cover the world in a lifetime. You think, wow, that's amazing.

Well, in this ancient world here, from river to river, the whole, as it were, of the universe, you want people to actually come under his reign, to come and enjoy life under him.

may he have dominion from sea to sea, from the river to the ends of the earth. The richer nations and the desert tribes, you want them all to come and bow before him, the kings of Tarshish and those in the coastlands, all bringing him tribute, just like the kings of Sheba and the kings of Sheba, just nations plucked out, bringing their gifts and their tribute and their desire to honour him.

Kings from other nations falling down before him because ultimately all nations serve him. That's what we want. When we pray the Lord's Prayer, may your kingdom come.

[11:59] We do want that the Lord's kingdom be extended right across the globe in every age, from river to river, from river to the ends of the earth, from sea to sea.

The kings and everyone. We want nobody to be left. And the remarkable thing is why on earth would his kingdom extend in such a vast way?

Well, the remarkable thing is it's not to do with power. It's not to do with power. Do you see the little word for in verse 12 there? May all kings fall down before him, all nations say him.

Why? For he delivers the needy when he calls, the poor and him who is no helper. He has pity and 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, that's the thing, you see. It's not power that they're attracted to.

[13:08] They actually come to experience his grace, his compassion, his love, his love for the needy and for the poor. Because ultimately power never stops you from being needy.

And these kings despite their rank they can be needy. And he delivers the needy, he delivers the poor, the one who is no helper, the one who is weak, he has pity on them, he saves the lives of the needy, those who are facing oppression and violence, he redeems their life.

Why? Because he knows the value of every human life. Precious is their blood in his sight.

See, that's the beautiful thing, you see. Our Lord, our King, Jesus, he rescues spiritually. Why?

Because he genuinely cares. It's not put on, sometimes people put on a show for the media, for the camera, sometimes celebrities will do that to gain a hearing, an audience, a following.

[14:22] that's not the way the Lord Jesus does it. He genuinely cares. In fact, every single time he helps, he does it, not because he has to, but because he cares.

He has a heart full of love. I have come, he says, John 10, that they might have life more abundant. He wants to give. He wants to give daily bread. He wants to deliver them from evil. He wants to protect his people. He wants to help.

And even in his ministry on earth, he helped people, perhaps some who never even came to faith in him. And that's what the king does.

He actually pours rain on the just and the unjust. The sun shines, as it does today, in Bathgate, on the just and the unjust.

[15:26] So his reign is wide. It reaches to the ends of the earth. Not people being drawn by power, but by this amazing, unique king who really does show mercy and love and kindness and compassion like no other.

power. And how should we respond to this kind of king? Well, this will you come to verse 15 there. Long may he live.

May gold of Sheba be given to him. May prayer be made for him continually and blessings invoked for him day by day. How long may he live?

We want him to live forever. long may he live. In fact, isn't it the truth? We cannot imagine life without the king.

We just cannot. There's no abdication in our mindset, in our world view with regard to Jesus Christ. He's always to be there.

[16 : 42] Remember what Jesus said, because I live, you also will live. if he doesn't live and reign as king, we have no life.

But he does live. And for us, for our part, we want him to live. Long may he live, because we couldn't find a better king.

We couldn't be given a better king. As Thomas Goethrie said about him, less could not satisfy. more could not be desired. We couldn't add to him, we couldn't take away from him.

He's just perfect. And the older I grow as a Christian, the more I realise just how true that is. Less could not satisfy, more could not be desired.

Our lives are bound up with his life, so we cry out, long may he live, not just for us, but for all our brothers and sisters in Christ.

[17 : 52] He gives eternal life. His life brings life to us. As long as he lives, we are renewed. As long as he lives, then we know the impact of his life giving.

That's the beauty of it. He gives eternal life. Our lives are hidden with him in the presence of God. And we always want others to benefit. We want the gold of Sheba to be given to him. We want the queen of Sheba, just like Solomon did, wanted the queen of Sheba to come and worship God. Long may he live. May prayer be made for him continually and blessings invoked for him all the day. Isn't that a strange thing? Pray for the king.

Remember when Jesus was in the garden of Gethsemane, he, in his weakness, with a sense of dependency, he asked his disciples, watch and pray with me.

[19 : 08] And that prayer with him was essentially also a prayer for him. Watch and pray with me in the garden of Gethsemane. That's where that happened.

Now you might think that now that Jesus is no longer in that humiliation and that weakness, but that he's been ascended up to the heights of the universe, that he's seated at the right hand of God, you might say, well, that's it.

We don't need to pray for him now. interesting though. May prayer be made for him continually. You may think that all you ever need to do is pray to Jesus. The reality is you also need to pray for Jesus.

He is not only God on the throne of the universe. He is God and man. There's a human being on the throne of the universe.

[20 : 14] His mother was Mary. He is human DNA. Yes, death has been reversed in him, but he bears all the government of the universe endlessly on his shoulders.

And we are to pray. pray for God to reign through the Son and through the Spirit that the Son poured out and the Father poured out upon the church as they go out into the world with the gospel. We pray to God to reign through his Son. We ask God to do that. Jesus, when he said, Father, glorify your Son that your Son may glorify you.

We should be praying the same thing. Continue, Father, to glorify your Son so that he may glorify you. long that he may continue to live, long may he live, we not only pray for the King, but we also appreciate his blessings.

Here the blessings are the blessings of harvest, blessings invoked for him all the day. May there be abundance of grain in the land, tops of the mountains, may they be waving as it were with the corn, may its fruit be like Lebanon, may people blossom in the cities like the grass of the field.

[21 : 53] See, that's the beauty. The king, as it were, feeding his people. It's not so much the crops growing so that we can see just how beautifully alive the planet is.

No, no, the picture is of the crops being produced under his rain so that we his people can enjoy blessings and be fed.

That's what we want. We want to appreciate all the blessings that he gives. The grain in the land, the crops waving on the hills, the fruit carried in Lebanon.

Look for blessings to appreciate. Long may he live, pray for the king, appreciate his blessings. And then, may his name endure forever.

Markably, in the title you've got Solomon, but in the psalm itself you don't have a name. Now, we may give this king the name Jesus.

[23 : 03] You will call him Jesus, in fact, Matthew 1, because he will save his people from their sins. That's true. That is his name, because that ultimately is what he does.

He saves his people, God's people and his people, from their sins. But sometimes the name is not enough.

The name needs to be spelt out. So we don't just think of a name, we think of a character. We think of the kind of things that this king does, the kind of things that he's known for.

And that's what this psalm has done. It's gone through, in verses 1, right through to verse 16, describing what life under the king is like, his character, what he does in defending, delivering, and crushing, what he does in bringing renewal, and refreshment, and life to his people, showing grace, compassion to the needy, and love.

That's his name. That's his name. That's the kind of king we want to see endure forever. His fame continue as long as the sun.

[24 : 23] Notice how the sun-moon language keeps coming in here. This writer of the psalm clearly observed the sun and the moon, and it was continuity that he thought of.

He wants his name to continue. He doesn't want this king, that sort of king, that sort of name ever to go out of existence, because our lives are intertwined with him.

So we consider the blessings that we have received from him. May people be blessed in him. May all nations call him blessed in return. him. We are blessed by him, so he acknowledges us and gives to us what we need in our terrible weakness.

But we bless him by acknowledging him as the one who has given these things, and we appreciate him. All nations call him blessed.

The universality of this. I mean, you could never be content with just a handful of people worshipping, honouring this Christ.

[25 : 39] We want all nations, nothing less than that. The Great Commission must drive your expectation, your life, the way you raised your children.

You seek in some way to be involved in bringing him to your local people and to all the nations of the world. And then finally, who crowned such a king?

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. See, this king was given by God, the Lord, the Lord, the God of Israel.

He is the one who has done this wondrous thing. He has given this king to us. And this king doesn't reign to establish his own glory, but so that the glorious name of his father would be known throughout the universe and for all time.

[26 : 54] Blessed be his glorious name forever. May the whole earth be filled with his glory. Father, glorify your son.

And once he's glorified, what will he do? He will glorify you. How? He will give eternal life to everyone that you have given to him.

God fills the heart of Jesus Christ on the throne of the universe. That's why he reigns. and God reigns through him and he brings people to the footstool of Jesus.

And Jesus exercises his reign over them, caring for them, feeding them, renewing them, enabling them to flourish to no peace and trouble.

And then at the end when his kingdom is built, he will present it all back to God again. so that together, along with Jesus, we will actually bless the name of God forever.

[28 : 05] Imagine singing these words along with Jesus. 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. Imagine saying that, praying that, singing that.

We call it the free church doxology. Imagine doing that with Jesus. Next time you sing it, ensure that you actually do that.

Amen and Amen. May the Lord bless that word. Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, we are thankful for that most beautiful psalm and for the way it opens up to us, the Lord Jesus in his amazing glory. Help us, Lord, to appreciate him. Help us to appreciate what you are doing through him. Help us to enjoy the life that he gives and the peace that abounds.

[29 : 10] Oh, how thankful we are for such a one. Life without him would not be worth living, but life with him, even with all the tribulations, is a life that overcomes.

We know, Lord, that we will be at your right hand. Keep us, Lord, and keep all your people who at this time are struggling in any way and take us day by day to your own throne to bow before you and to seek your blessing.

