

Christ the Priestly King

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[0 : 00] My Savior and my God. Now, if you would, let's turn in our Bibles to the book of Psalms, Psalm 110, which will be our sermon text for this evening, Psalm 110.

It's on page 613 on the Bibles in the back. Hear now the word of God. Of David, a psalm. The Lord says to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.

The Lord will extend your mighty scepter from Zion, saying, rule in the midst of your enemies. Your troops will be willing on your day of battle, arrayed in a holy splendor.

Your young people will come to you like dew from the morning's womb. The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind. You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.

The Lord is at your right hand. He will crush kings on the day of his wrath. He will judge nations heaping up the dead and crushing the rulers of all the earth.

[1 : 26] He will drink from the brook along the way. So he will lift his head high. Amen. Let us now pray.

Most gracious and loving Heavenly Father, Lord, we are thankful for your word. We are thankful that you have given us your word and that it is sharper than any two-edged sword able to cut through bone and marrow into the very heart, into our very souls.

And Lord, we ask that you would speak to us today and that you would use your word as a scalpel upon our hearts to conform us more and more into the image of Christ, our faithful Savior.

Lord, we ask that you would speak to us. For Lord, your servants are listening. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Now, between 1971 and 1973, President Richard Nixon operated a tape recording system inside the White House, which resulted in what we now call the Nixon tapes.

And for the most part, only Nixon knew that this tape system was operating throughout those years. And he intended to keep it that way. And those tapes later came to light in something called the Watergate Commission.

[2 : 42] They came to light and eventually led to a move to impeach Nixon and it led to his subsequent resignation. But you can still listen to over 3,000 hours of those tapes.

They're free online. They are in the public domain. You can go home tonight. You can type it into Google and you can go pull up any file you want and listen to one of those tapes from the White House.

And what makes listening to those recordings so fascinating is that they give you an inside glimpse of what it is like to hear candid conversations between some of the most powerful people of the day.

You can listen to Nixon and his closest advisors talk about foreign policy with the Soviet Union and China. Their election policies, the Vietnam War, the most important topics of the day are right there for you to listen to.

And that is a type of access that few of us can even imagine having today. Being a fly on the wall as the most powerful people discuss the most important topics.

[3 : 53] But that type of access is how I want you to think about this psalm, Psalm 110. This is a passage that gives us access and allows us to listen in on a conversation.

But it is a conversation that is far greater and it is far greater access than anything in the Nixon tapes. What we are listening to here is David's report of what is happening not in the White House but in the throne room of God.

And we have a chance to read and hear a conversation between God the Father and God the Son. Now that's a pretty dramatic claim but Jesus says you can't get out of the first verse of this psalm without dealing with that reality.

This psalm is one of Jesus' favorites. It's his go-to passage for stumping the Pharisees. He asks them, how is this second Lord in Psalm 110 David's Lord?

Because everyone understood that the first Lord in this psalm, the Lord in all caps, that's God. The word behind there, the Hebrew word is Yahweh. It is the covenantal name of God.

[5 : 04] But there's this second Lord. And in this second Lord is one that everyone believes is the Messiah. Messiah. But somehow this Messiah who is the son of David is also David's Lord.

And how is that possible? Because it's not possible for a child to be greater than his parents. It's a very simple question that the Pharisees are confronted with but they're utterly stumped by it.

And the reason Jesus asked that question is because he is the answer. He was the one who both knit David together in his mother's womb and was also born of the line of David all at once at the same time.

And the marvelous thing about this passage is that we have a chance to hear Jesus Christ, the son of God, the Lord of David, being spoken to by his heavenly father.

And we see this exact same claim in Acts 2, specifically Acts 2, 34 to 36, which says this, For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool.

[6 : 19] Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.

Now what's happening there? In those verses we get to see the climax of the greatest sermon Peter ever preached in his life. The sermon that happened on Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples as tongues of fire and Peter goes out and he preaches a sermon that converts 3,000 people.

And he finishes that sermon off by pointing to Psalm 110 and saying, This is fulfilled by Jesus when he ascended into heaven and when he sat down at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

That is both when and where this psalm finds its fulfillment. Now the reason I'm trying to hammer home the importance of this psalm is because the Bible itself hammers it home.

This psalm is the most quoted psalm in the entire New Testament. And that is not accidental. That is because the claims of this psalm are incredibly important.

[7 : 36] because they are claims about Jesus Christ himself. And we have to grapple with them. Now when we go through this psalm today we're going to have three points. But the first one I want you to see is in verses 1 to 3.

I want you to see that Christ is a king. Christ is a king. Notice that in these verses Jesus has everything that a king has.

Look at verse 1. It says, Sit at my right hand. Jesus is in heaven and his father is telling him to sit at his right hand. And what is at God's right hand?

A throne. Jesus Christ is being placed on a heavenly throne at the right hand of God the Father. Now let's quickly look at verse 2 which says this, The Lord, all caps, will extend your mighty scepter from Zion.

Now Jesus is on a throne but he also has a scepter. He is a symbol of his authority and of his rule. And that scepter is being sent out into the world not by himself but by his father.

[8 : 42] His father is the one who is going to make sure that this scepter is recognized by everyone in this entire world. That scepter is sent out by God himself. And then finally let's look at verse 3.

It says, Your troops will be willing on the day of battle arrayed in holy splendor. Your young men will come to you like dew from the morning's womb.

Jesus has a throne. He has a scepter. But he also has a people. His people is an army arrayed before him for battle. And you need a people to rule as a king.

And Jesus has it. And it's a king that has his people offer themselves freely for service. So Jesus is a king but I want you to notice how firmly established his kingdom is.

How firmly established his rule is. There is no one who can challenge him. No one who can stand against him. Because he is enthroned by God himself.

[9 : 47] It is God who places Jesus upon the throne. It is God who sends forth the scepter from Zion. And it is God who guarantees that Jesus will have a people who will freely offer themselves.

Psalms 110 is a dramatic fulfillment of 2 Samuel 7. Now what is 2 Samuel 7? 2 Samuel 7 is the most important chapter in your Bibles that you probably don't just instantly know off the top of your head.

Chapter 7 of 2 Samuel. That is where the promises of the Davidic covenant are given. And so much of the Old Testament revolves around those promises.

Where God promises to establish one of David's descendants forever. He promises to be to him a father. And he promises his love upon this descendant for all time.

And here in Psalm 110 you get to see what those Davidic promises mean. It means God establishes the kingdom so well that not one of his enemies can touch his anointed one.

[10 : 56] I want you to think about all the enemies of God. Whatever comes to mind. Realize that no matter what they do. Nothing can possibly take Christ from the right hand of God.

It is a place not one of them can touch. It is a place that they can only mock in the feeblest of ways. Christ is a king and he is established forever at the right hand of God the Father.

And this establishing of Jesus' kingdom is so powerful that it's almost offhandedly thrown out in verse 2. Rule in the midst of your enemies. Realize what's being said there.

Jesus the king will have enemies. They will abide for a time until they are conquered. But their rebellion will not for one moment interrupt his reign.

He will still rule in their very midst even as they are rebelling. Jesus will not rule later after he's conquered his enemies. But he will fully rule right now even as they are rebelling against him.

[12 : 07] He will rule over everyone and everything. Now do you realize how incredibly exhausting and demoralizing it must be to be Satan? To realize that no matter what you do, God the Father and King Jesus will inevitably take that and redirect it to solidify that kingdom even more.

It doesn't matter how evil or cunning your plan is as Satan. It doesn't matter. God will turn it to good in the very end.

I love that quote from Martin Luther. Even the devil is God's devil. And that's true. Even the devil is ruled over by God and Jesus Christ.

And that is tremendously discouraging for Satan. But it is a tremendous encouragement for us tonight. No matter what happens, you can still confess that Jesus Christ, the Almighty, reigns.

And is that sometimes hard to confess? Absolutely. But we trust in a king who rules all things by his power and who will use even the grief we feel for his own glory and for our own good.

[13 : 26] This is who we believe in. We believe in a sovereign God and a sovereign Christ. And when you face a trial or tribulation, understand that Jesus still rules.

He still rules despite his enemies. The plan hasn't changed. Not in 3,000 years. Not since David wrote this psalm. It has never changed. And it still doesn't need to change.

All is under Jesus. This incredible power and authority that works all things together for good is why the Messianic King's people offer themselves freely in verse 3.

Now you may not realize it, but that third verse, that verse there, that is actually one of the most difficult to translate passages in your entire Bibles. Depending on what Bible translation you have, you will have a number of footnotes there offering alternative translations.

And in my ESV, there are three different footnotes for that passage. And the last one is just, the Hebrew is unclear, which is just a giant shrug.

[14 : 32] Scholars just aren't really sure what's happening there. But it's like the language that, the language David is using is so high that gravity and grammar kind of disappear.

It kind of breaks down. So this is debated, but here's what I think this verse roughly means. Jesus' people will rise. They will offer themselves up for battle freely, just like the dew.

They will rise up from everywhere, from every tribe and tongue and nation. And they will arise in a sight that is both beautiful because of their holy garments and is a testimony of Jesus' own youthful strength.

This army simply arises and offers itself in service to its king. And brothers and sisters, that's you. That's where you are in this psalm.

You are the people of Christ. You have been conformed into the image of Christ, clothed by the Spirit and the righteousness of Christ. And it is your duty to arise and fight the spiritual battle that is before you.

[15 : 39] Whenever you fight a temptation, you are fighting it as one of Christ's people. And whenever you triumph over a temptation, you are a testimony of Christ's power.

A power that is living and active, that can change hearts of stone into hearts of flesh. A power that is very active in this world. And if you want to see the kingship of Christ, really what you need to look to most is the church.

The church is where you should look. It is in the church where you see the Spirit move most clearly. Because here today, we are the assembled people of God. We are coming together as the people of God.

To worship Him. And it is in the church, especially in the church-enclosed persecuting nations, where you get to see the meaning of that verse, where it says He will rule in the midst of His enemies.

No matter what happens there, no matter what those countries do persecuting the church, it will be turned around for good. It doesn't matter. Christ will triumph.

[16 : 45] And He will use their opposition for His own glory, no matter how fierce it is. Christ is a king in verses 1 to 3.

But the second thing I want you to see is that Christ is a priest in verse 4. Christ is a priest. Christ is a priest. The most unusual thing about this passage is the last word here in verse 4.

It's the word Melchizedek. Now, this is a bizarre character. He appears once in Genesis 14. He's the king and priest of Salem. He has a brief interaction with Abraham.

He appears once in Psalm 110. And he appears a bunch in the book of Hebrews. And Melchizedek, he's just this strange character.

But I think he's purposefully strange. He just pops up out of nowhere. And he is a king and a priest of God. You don't know where he's from. You don't know his lineage.

[17 : 42] And that's actually the entire point. He just pops up out of nowhere. You're not supposed to know the answers to those questions. You know, he's actually such a confusing figure that many in the early church thought he was actually Jesus.

They thought the only person this could possibly be was a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus in the Old Testament. Now, I disagree with that. But if I can put it this way, it's a very pious mistake to make.

You're supposed to make that connection. Melchizedek is a picture of what will eventually come with Jesus. Just as Melchizedek is a king and a priest, so is Jesus.

Just as Melchizedek's name literally means king of righteousness, so too Jesus is a king, the king of righteousness. And we, his people, have his righteousness by faith.

Just as Melchizedek seems to appear out of nowhere with no father nor mother, so too does Jesus arrive. And even though he had an earthly mother, he himself is the eternally begotten son of God, and he knit together Mary in her mother's womb.

[18 : 54] The book of Hebrews loves harping on this, loves harping on who Melchizedek is and how Jesus has come as a priest after the order of Melchizedek.

And if I can just summarize all of that down for you, it just means this. Brothers and sisters, it's not possible for you to have a better priestly mediator than Jesus. It's not possible.

What better mediator is there than one who has eternally communed in perfect bliss and happiness with God the Father and God the Spirit? What better sacrifice for your sins could you ask for than the Son of God freely offering himself in your place?

And what better assurance can you have that Christ's sacrifice was accepted other than that Jesus is greeted by his Father, promised an eternal priesthood, and told to sit down?

Have you ever noticed that in your Bible reading plans, when you suddenly get to the book of Exodus, to that particular section where it's just chapter after chapter after chapter about the construction of the tabernacle, chairs are never mentioned, not once.

[20 : 04] It goes into exhaustive detail about curtains, about veils, tables, lampstands, the Ark of the Covenant, basins, altars, clothes, all sorts of various instruments and implements.

There's not a single chair anywhere in the tabernacle. That is not because the Levites were big fans of standing desks. It's because when the Levites were going about their day, there was never one moment when they would have the chance to sit down.

They were always doing something. They were always offering sacrifices day after day after day. But Jesus is an eternal priest who eternally sits because his work is eternally finished.

He is an enthroned king, but he's also an enthroned priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. And what does that mean? It means when you sin, you can always come to him and ask for forgiveness.

When you sin and you feel the guilt and the shame of doing something, you know it is not possible for you to make right. You can come before God and not hide like Adam and Eve, even though we all instinctively want to hide.

[21 : 24] Instead, you get to come before Jesus, your great high priest at the right hand of God, and you can know, no matter what, that his blood is sufficient for your sin.

No other sacrifice is necessary. I said earlier that not one of Jesus' enemies can remove him from his throne, but not one of your sins can either.

Not one of your sins can ever make Jesus stand up again and say, I have to offer another sacrifice. His sacrifice is sufficient.

His work is finished. And if you doubt that, if you say, you have no idea what I have done, you have no idea the sin that I have committed, Jesus himself, he just points you here to verse 4.

And he says, My Father has sworn he will not change his mind. At the right hand of God the Father, there is power, but there is also forgiveness.

[22 : 26] And it is upon our faith in a sitting Savior that we enter the throne room of God, boldly offering our praises and prayers and confessing our sins.

If you come to him and you kneel before his throne, you will have forgiveness, and you will be clothed in the white robes of the saints, washed in the blood of the Lamb.

It is something that is promised by God. It is certain. He has sworn it, and he will not change his mind. Now finally, I want us to look here at verses 5 to 7.

Christ is a king. Christ is a priest. But here in verses 5 to 7, we see here that Christ is victorious. In these three verses, we see a dramatic battle, and we see a rout.

But I want you to think about who is doing this. I want you to listen to the constant drumbeat of he in these verses. The Lord is at your right hand.

[23 : 37] He will crush kings on the day of his wrath. He will judge nations, heaping up the dead, and crushing the rulers of the whole earth.

He will drink from a brook along the way, so he will lift up his head. Now if I can just ask you one question, who is this he?

I want you to notice the Lord here in verse 5. It is not in all caps. The word there can be translated either as God or as the Messiah.

It works either way. It could be either one. And the problem is that this verse is debated, as most of this psalm is. And it's debated because it is confusing.

But I believe that you're actually supposed to get confused in these verses. Whenever we see the Father act, we see the Son act. And wherever we see the Son act, we see the Father act.

[24 : 37] And as we've already seen in verses 1 to 3, God has promised his Son that he will establish his kingdom. And so we should expect to see both God conquering his Son's enemies and the Son's standing in triumph on the day of battle.

And that's just simply because if you mess with one, you mess with both. Where the Father is, there the Son is. And where the Son is, there the Father is. And so what do we have here?

We have a vivid image of a battle. We see here that enemy kings are destroyed on the field. Their armies are destroyed. And the bodies litter the ground. There is this massive rout that is taking place.

Everyone is fleeing. And the leaders of all the nations are fleeing to every corner of the earth. This is not just victory. It is total victory. It is victory that ensures there is never another battle.

It is complete. Jesus pursues. He pursues his enemies. He stops only to drink water from the brook as he pursues them.

[25 : 46] He's not stopping to sleep. He's not stopping to get a full course meal. He is only stopping to get water so that he can dash off after them once again.

Everyone in this battle who is an enemy is absolutely destroyed. It is a total victory. These are the same types of images that we get to see in the New Testament.

In Revelation 19, when Christ enters the wedding feast of the Lamb, he enters with a robe dipped in blood, and he's triumphed over his enemies after conquering the earth. And that's a terrifying image.

We see destruction. Destruction of evil should be terrifying, but it is good. You know, this is quite an image. It's an image of a battle.

We're just not used to battles these days. Most of us have probably never seen war. Some of us don't even like watching violence on movies. And so we don't like the thought of being in a battle of all, but this is what a realistic battle looks like.

[26 : 49] Battles involve someone winning, and it involves the destruction of the enemy. That is a good thing for the people of God. It is a hard thing for those who are God's enemies, but it is still good because who is winning?

God is victorious here. Jesus is victorious here. He is completely victorious, and there should be no one that we should want to see more victorious in a battle than Jesus.

The reason we get so squeamish when we see routes is because we are concerned that horrible things are going to happen, evil things are going to happen, but we trust Jesus because Jesus is good, and we trust him.

This is easier if you've ever come to face with something that you recognize as true evil. If you've ever come face to face with true evil, then you understand the desire for true justice.

And sometimes justice is weighty, but God's justice is always good, and we know that for certain. And this description of victory in these three verses, these are the most obvious conclusion to this entire psalm that you can imagine.

[28 : 11] These are some of the least surprising verses in all of Scripture because you are guaranteed the conclusion of this psalm from the very first verse. Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.

These last three verses are what naturally follows when God promises to conquer the sun's enemies. You can take this victory to the bank as soon as that promise is given in the very first verse.

Christ will be victorious because God has promised it. Now, if there's one thing I want you to take hold of in this sermon, it's really the main takeaway of the entire psalm, it's this, I want you to live with confidence and assurance.

Brothers and sisters, you see further than all of your non-Christian neighbors, and so you should act like it. You see further than the best projections and prognostications in the business.

It doesn't matter what graphs you see, they do not see as far as you can see. You don't merely have a vague feeling or hunch that everything's going to work out.

[29 : 25] You know it for certain. You know how it's going to end because God himself has promised it. And so we are called to live like we can see further.

We can see further because of the words of God. Now, I don't want you to misunderstand what I'm saying here. You can have confidence and assurance and you can still see the entire world is falling apart.

You can still think that. You can have confidence and assurance and you can still recognize that your life is falling apart. Matter of fact, that might be good. But you can have confidence and assurance and still look around and even wonder how all of this is going to work out for good.

How God is going to bring good out of any of this. But at the center of it, you know. You know that he will. You know because God has promised it.

Christ will be victorious. He hasn't promised that your life is going to be easy. He hasn't promised that you're going to have all the money you need. He hasn't promised that you're going to not have difficulties or pains or misfortunes.

[30 : 33] He hasn't promised any of that. But he has promised it. It will all be made right on the final day. It will be like every injustice that has ever occurred in the history of the world has never happened.

And what does that look like? I am really not entirely sure myself. But that's what biblical justice is on the final day. When even the scars of the worst sins are removed.

All is made right. And that is something that you can cling to no matter how dark the times may get. No matter how dark it gets, a Christian can always look and see there is light at the end of the tunnel.

You may not know how far away that light is. But you know this for certain that it is there. You know that it is getting closer. And you know that it will be good.

We believe the God who has worked the end has also worked the means. He knows how to get to the end. He has had the same plan since this psalm was written 3,000 years ago.

[31 : 43] He has had the same plan since before time itself began. It needs, it doesn't need to change. Because its outcome was never in doubt. God has promised it.

And so he will do it. And so we should live our lives with a quiet confidence that comes from who Christ is, what he has done, and what he will do.

All will be complete. The final day is coming. Soon all shall bow before him as king. And whatever you face, nothing can ever challenge that fact.

And you can hold to it with confidence. What do I want you to hold on to? It's very simply this. It is Jesus Christ himself. That is who we need of every moment of every day because he is our perfect prophet, priest, and king.

And he rules over all things. And he is in control. And he offers us forgiveness at the right hand of God the Father. Let us pray.

[32 : 47] Most gracious and loving Heavenly Father, Lord, we are thankful for your word. And we are thankful for Jesus Christ. We thank you that we have such a wonderful salvation in him.

And we are thankful for how you continually minister to us and you work inside us. Lord, we pray that you would give us confidence and assurance. We pray, Lord, that we would live in light of the coming victory of Christ.

And Lord, we pray that your church would expand. We pray that your kingdom would expand. And that all...