

The true king

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[0:00] That's going to be really helpful for you. A question to start with. How do you think you can find true, solid happiness?

You didn't expect me to say that this morning.

Headspace is one of them, potentially the leading app in the meditation app world. It's possible some of us have come across it, maybe even used it.

Here's some statistics for you. It's been used in over 200 countries. It has touched over 100 million lives. And it has been downloaded over 70 million times.

And one of its founders, Andy Pudokin, says that to find happiness, to seek happiness, is a natural thing for us as human beings.

[1:10] But to look for it outside of ourselves, as though it's dependent on something in the future, is one sure way never to find it.

And so he says, use Headspace to help you find true happiness within you. That's what they say. But this morning we're turning to Psalm 1. And we're going to see what the truly blessed life, that where blessed could mean truly, solidly happy, what that truly, solidly happy life looks like. It's laid out for us very clearly in this psalm. And it also gives us an alternative to the truly blessed life.

In fact, there's only two ways to live, according to this psalm, as we'll see as we go through. So I've got three twos for you.

[2:16] Firstly, two voices. Two voices. So worldly wisdom from Headspace or other sources, friends, social media, books, they may tell us to look inside ourselves to find that true blessedness.

I think the psalm tells us to look away from ourselves to find it. And there's two voices that you could listen to outside of yourself. One is the voice of the wicked.

The voice of the wicked. Have a look there in verse 1. Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked, or stand in the way that sinners take, or sit in the company of mockers.

Whose voice will you listen to? Whose voice will you listen to? Will you listen to the voice of the wicked? And notice in this verse, there's a bit of a downward trajectory, isn't there?

It goes from walking with the wicked. Then it goes to standing in the way that sinners take. That's not standing the way of people who are about to sin.

[3:38] That's standing and saying, no, I'm going to join them in their sin. That's what it means. And then sitting is the final step. So are you sitting comfortably this morning, this psalm might tell us?

Are you sitting comfortably this morning, listening to the voices of the wicked? The voices of the world around us? The voices that tell you it's okay to do this and that.

And yet, the voice of the Lord may say something different to us. Perhaps we wouldn't describe them as wicked voices.

Actually, they're the voices of human beings. Human beings who are precious in God's sight.

They're made in the image of God.

And there will be some good things that they say to us. And you might think, no, no, those meditation apps, Daniel, they're harmless. They're okay. It's good that I follow this social media influencer alongside following the Bible.

[4:53] But the wicked and sinful and mockers are people that, this psalm says, have no regard for the Lord. In fact, those who are sitting comfortably, the mockers or scoffers, perhaps would be a better translation.

They're really scoffing the maker of the world. They're saying, no, God, I don't want to listen to you. I don't want to live the way that you tell me to live. I want to live my way. The mockers are people who brag about their evil, about their sin.

They go from like Dr. Jekyll, a respected scientist, to Mr. Hyde, Dr. Jekyll's evil nature coming out and growing and living in that identity.

That's what this verse is like. Who's the other voice? The other voice is the voice of the Lord.

Verse 2. But whose delight, blessed is the one whose delight is in the law of the Lord and who meditates on his law day and night.

[6:14] Actually, the blessed one, they delight in listening to God's words. That word law literally means Torah.

That's the Jewish scriptures, the scriptures that they had at that point. The whole scriptures, not just the commands of the Lord. The blessed one, they read those words and they delight in them.

They see that they are good words. They are life-giving words. As Psalm 1, you may know, is a bit of an introduction to the whole book of the Psalms.

150 of them. Over this summer period, as Mark said, we're going to be looking at a few of them together. And the book starts off saying to us, are we going to be people who are going to delight to listen to the words of this book?

And in the Psalms, in other Psalms, it speaks of the word of the Lord in places. Psalm 19 is a psalm we'll look at in a few weeks' time.

[7:28] And in that psalm, it says that God's words are more precious than golds, than much pure golds, and they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb.

So here's some honey. Most wonderful, sweetest bit of honey you could imagine. God's word is sweeter, it's tastier than that.

And here's gold. Can you imagine many things more valuable than this? God's word is the most valuable, treasured thing that you could have.

And we have the privilege of having it in our hands this morning and opening it and reading from it. Perhaps, like me, you still get excited by sweets.

Or perhaps that's just for the children amongst us, I don't know. I love it when I get a bag of Paribou or, at the moment, Roundtree's random sweets.

[8:36] They're amazing. They're wonderful. It's wonderful to dig in and taste them, how sweet they are. But if you love sweets, know that God's word is even sweeter, it's even better.

So do we delight to turn to the life-giving words of the Lord? Do we treasure Scripture like you would treasure a bar of gold?

Or are we turning too quickly to listen to the words of the wicked, the words of sinners, those who mock God? You say, we don't need God. We have no place for him in our lives.

It's so easy, isn't it, to wake up in the morning and grab our phone or turn on the radio and hear the voice of the world instantly. This has helped me to think, maybe I need to be less quick to do that.

Find other ways to hear God's word. And it's so easy now with technology. Maybe you can find someone online reading God's words to you as you wake up in the morning.

[9:53] A chapter of God's word. Wouldn't that be good? Or a podcast I've listened to a little bit recently, Things Unseen by Sinclair Ferguson. Five minutes or so.

There's someone reading and explaining God's word to you as you start the day. What a great way that would be to begin the day. Rather than turning straight to the voices of the world around us. Voice of the Lord. The blessed one here finds such delight in them. More delight than there is in winning the lottery or eating the finest desserts.

But it's not just to fill up our minds with a whole load of knowledge. Knowledge, learning it is good. But as someone was describing to us at our prayer meeting on Wednesday, if our minds fill up with too much knowledge, we'll just flop over, wouldn't we? These words of the Lord, they need to sink right down deep into us and be changing our hearts, our characters.

[11:02] And that's what this blessed person finds in the law of the Lord. Not just delight. It goes on and says, and who meditates on his law day and night.

I've been reading a book recently and there's a chapter in it on what is biblical meditation. And here's how the author defines it.

It's taking God's word to heart. Chewing it. Pondering it. Working through its implications for every facet of life.

The knowledge is good, but we need to read it and then think through it and think about the words that we've read.

How does that work in my life? Don't do as I guess we're often tempted to do and think, I must have my quiet time.

[12:04] I must have those few minutes with the Lord and then rush on and live as if we've never read those words. Perhaps that means some of us need to read less of the Bible.

Wouldn't have thought I'd say that this morning, would you? But perhaps you're trying to read through chapters and chapters, trying to read through the Bible in a year and impress people and say, for the last five years I've read the whole Bible.

Oh, that's great. I'm not saying it's not great. But if we're just reading it through at such a pace that we're not even thinking about, how does this work in my life?

If it's not changing us, then actually that's not good. Perhaps for some of us it means we need to write down a verse that we've read in the morning and take it with us on our phone or a little note or something.

And look at it through the day to help us to chew over it, to help it work from our heads down to our hearts.

[13:09] Of course we need to pray and we need to ask God that he would be teaching us through those words. But perhaps you'll hear this morning, oh, actually to bring that off, I've got a quote on the screen.

That's why the PowerPoint's helpful. Reading brings me meat, this person said. But meditation brings sweetness. It's a full meal, meat and dessert.

Reading brings the coals to the woods. Meditation makes the flame. Reading brings me the sword of the word. Meditation sharpens.

Reading and meditation go together. Don't split them apart. But perhaps you're hearing this this morning and you're hearing a saying, listen to the words of the Lord.

But you're thinking, why would I listen to the words of the Lord? They're old. They're old. They're ancient. They've got nothing to do with me today. Or why can't I listen to both the voice of the Lord and the voice of the wicked?

[14:19] Maybe you're just thinking, the voice of the Lord is just so restrictive and oppressive. It's harmful even.

It's a list of do's and don'ts. The world around me says I can be free. I can be whoever I want to be. I can love whoever I want to love.

I can do whatever I feel like doing. And yet we see in the next couple of verses that actually the Lord's ways are so good that they lead to wonderful life.

See, there's two voices. There's two outcomes to listening to those voices. The first outcome, if you're listening to the voice of the Lord, is that you can be like this flourishing tree.

Verse 3, that person, that blessed person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither.

[15:30] Those who delight in the Lord and in his words are like this vibrant tree full of life. Life. This tree is planted by streams of water.

Water is life-giving. And the tree is an evergreen tree. It doesn't lose its leaf. It is full of life all year round.

And it bears fruit. It's a fruitful tree. This is a wonderful picture, isn't it? And the alternative outcome, though, if we're listening to the voices of the wicked, is there in verse 4.

Not so the wicked. They are like the chaff that the wind blows away. Rather than standing strong and tall like a flourishing tree, the alternative isn't being a dead tree.

It's just being blown away. See, the wicked, in verse 1, think that they stand. They think that they're sitting comfortably as they're mocking the Lord and his ways.

[16:41] But verse 4 says that they're not going to stand. They're going to be blown away. They're like chaff. A chaff, it's worthless rubbish.

The part of the wheat, apparently called the husk, which is no good to be eaten except maybe by animals. That's not saying that's a picture.

That's not saying that human beings are worthless rubbish. As I said, we're created in the image of God, aren't we? But we are fallen human beings. We've sinned against the Lord.

We've said no to God's ways. And that's a great offense before our great creator, God, who is his holy. And so when it comes to his judgment, we won't have a leg to stand on.

So the psalm exposes the emptiness of the ways of the wicked life.

[17:45] And yet this morning, you might be here thinking, this is all very well saying this. But I look at my friends that aren't here at church, that they're not following the Lord's.

And they seem to be flourishing. And I seem to not be flourishing. They seem to be prospering. And I don't feel like I'm prospering.

This is just the beginning of the book of Psalms. In other psalms, it addresses that. I think particularly of Psalm 73. Worth just turning there briefly.

Just to see a few things. Because the author of this psalm, he looks at the world around him. Are those who aren't following the Lord and thinks, hang on a minute, they're doing so well.

Why am I not? So Psalm 73, verse 2, says, But as for me, my feet had almost slipped.

[18:54] I had nearly lost my footholds. For I envied the arrogance when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. They have no struggles.

Their bodies are healthy and strong. They are free from common human burdens. They are not plagued by human ills. I don't know if this writer had read Psalm 1.

But maybe he did and thought, well, hang on a minute. No, those wicked, they're like the flourishing tree. I feel like I'm being blown away by life's troubles. But have a look at verse 12.

As he concludes his thoughts on the wicked at that point. This is what the wicked are like. They're always free of care. They go on amassing wealth.

And if the psalm ended there, we'd have a lot of questions. But praise God, it doesn't end there.

And actually, he's reminded of their eternal destiny.

[20:02] And he's reminded of what he has in the Lord. And so he says in verse 25, Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you.

My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. Those who are far from you will perish.

You destroy all who are unfaithful to you. He sees what the wicked are heading for. And yet he knows that as he knows the Lord who's been so good to his people, he takes confidence in the fact that even if my flesh and my heart may fail, even if it feels like I am not prospering, the Lord is still mine.

And in him I have a great eternity to look forward to. Amen. Amen. See, we may suffer. Our physical bodies may suffer.

People can take things from us. Maybe they might take everything from us. Our homes, our families, our friends, our reputations. But when all is stripped away, we can still say the Lord is my portion.

[21:29] The Lord is mine. And I have eternal life in him. We prosper because we know the Lord's now.

And we know our eternal destiny is secure. A life living, listening and meditating and obeying God and his words.

Life in the Bible. Life in the Bible. Of really what all of us have been made for. The blessed life in Psalm 1, it should remind us a little bit of another part of the Bible.

The beginning. Genesis 1 and 2. Where we see that the first man and the first woman are living a life full of blessing. Life in a beautiful garden.

Life with access to a tree. The tree of life. Life where they could walk with the Lord in the call of the day. Where they could hear him and his voice speaking to them clearly.

[22:40] With no wicked voices calling out to them. Until that fateful day. When a voice did come that wasn't the voice of the Lord.

It was the voice of the serpents. Who caused them to doubt God's goodness. To doubt God's voice. And listening to the serpent caused them to stand in the way of sin. And take the fruit from that tree. That one tree that God said do not take from. And so they ended up being thrown out of that life of blessing.

In the garden. Undoing the life of flourishing. And blessing that God had made them for. And that's what happens to us if we choose to listen to other voices.

If we choose not to follow the Lord. The wicked. The voice of Satan.

[23:49] It may say to us. Come over to my ways and you're going to be blessed. But human history says.

Would actually say to us no. Because of the sin of the first two. Who listened to that voice. All of us are now infected with sin.

Aren't we? All of us naturally stand in the way of sinners. We sit in the seat of mockers. And so all of us before God don't have a leg to stand on.

We should all be blown away like the chaff. And verse 5 tells us that. That sinners will not stand in the assembly of the righteous. And so how can we have any hope.

Of this blessed life. This psalm tells us that there is a blessed one. There is a truly blessed one.

[24:51] One who has never ever walked in the steps of the wicked. Or ever sinned against God. Or ever sat and mocked him.

And there is only one that fits that description. His name has probably come to your mind. It's the Lord Jesus Christ. No sin in him was ever found.

And wonderfully and graciously. He came to this world. And he said to us. I am the gate. Whoever enters through me.

Will be saved. They will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.

I have come. I have come. That they may have life to the full. That they may have life and have it to the full. So if we trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[25:56] That truly blessed one. We can find life to the full. We can find that we will flourish. And prosper like the tree of Psalm 1.

Because of the wonderful grace in him. To us wicked, fallen, sinful human beings. It's by grace that we're saved.

But we must of course continue to live in the way of this psalm. Actively be seeking to walk then in the ways of the truly blessed one. The Lord Jesus Christ.

Be actively finding delight in his words. And meditating upon it. So that we'll continue to be changed by him. And into his likeness.

Jesus said those words there on the screen in John. He said other words about another plant. That felt like my preaching would be a whole lot better if I was into gardening. He talked about the vine in John 15.

[27:06] Jesus is the vine. We're the branches connected to him. The life source. We looked at that passage just a few months ago together. We need to be connected to him and to his words.

So that we can bear fruit. So we can be like that tree. In Psalm 1. Life in Jesus means we can find true blessing.

And finally, two destinies. Verse 6. We've spoken of them a little bit. But it's made very clear in the conclusion to this psalm.

Have a look at it with me. For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous. But the way of the wicked leads to destruction. The wicked following the voice of the wicked.

The voice of evil. The many voices of the world around us that are mocking God. Those ways lead to destruction.

[28:11] They might be sitting comfortably now. But they lead to destruction. But the Lord watches over the righteous. And we will dwell with him forever in the assembly of the righteous.

But we're not there yet. This world we currently find ourselves in is so broken, isn't it? But this whole book of psalms that we're being introduced to in Psalm 1 is very real and very honest about how it is living the blessed life in this current world.

It acknowledges that sometimes we will feel like we're in the pit of despair. In fact, if you read Psalm 88, it ends with the chilling words, darkness is my closest friend.

But praise God, the book of psalms doesn't end there. The book of psalms ends in Psalm 150 with a rousing hallelujah chorus.

I've not been to a performance of Handel's Messiah, but I can imagine, I'd love to, that if I was there and heard that rousing hallelujah chorus, it'd be amazing.

[29:35] It'd feel like being in heaven, maybe. And that's Psalm 150.

That's where the blessed life leads to an eternal chorus of magnificent praise to our great creator gods.

That's the final destiny of those who find their life in the Lord Jesus Christ, who find the blessed life. And so the question is to us this morning, which way will you choose? Will you listen to his voice? Will you trust in the words of the Lord Jesus, who says, I have come that you may have life to the full? And will you say, yes, Lord Jesus, I want that. Please forgive me my sin.

Please help me to follow you. The warning is very clear if we don't. Verse 6, the Lord watches over the ways of the righteous.

[30:41] But the way of the wicked leads to destruction. Two ways to live. Two ways to respond.

Which way will we go? Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your words, your life-giving words, your words that are sweeter than the sweetest honey.

Words that are more, to be treasured more than the finest golds. Thank you that we've been able to open them and hear from them this morning.

Please help us as we respond to them, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, to help us to respond, we've got a couple of songs to sing.

This water's broken. And also the Psalms point forward to Jesus. Jesus would have used them in some way. And they point forward to him coming to fix the world.

[31:54] So those are just a few tips that pray will be helpful for us as we read through the Psalms.

And now's the time for us to read Psalms 1 and 2. I wonder, could someone volunteer to read Psalm 1 and then someone volunteer to read Psalm 2?

Psalm 1. One. Asama will read Psalm 1. Who's going to read Psalm 2? Ray's going to read Psalm 2. I'll get the microphone to you.

Thank you, Asama. Psalm 1. Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked, or stand in the way that sinners take, or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night.

That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season, and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever they do prospers.

[33:14] Not so the wicked. They are like chaff. The wind blows away. That the wind blows away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to destruction. Thank you. Thanks, Ray.

Yes, Psalm 2. Why do the nations conspire, the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand, and the rulers gather together against the Lord, and against his anointed one.

Let us break their chains, they say, and throw off their fetters. The one enthroned in heaven laughs. The Lord scoffs at them.

Then he rebukes them in his anger, and terrifies them in his wrath, saying, I have installed my king on Zion, my holy hill.

[34:21] I will proclaim the decree of the Lord. He said to me, You are my son. Today I have become your father.

Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. You will rule them with an iron scepter.

You will dash them in pieces like pottery. Therefore, you kings, be wise, be warned, you rulers of the earth.

Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the son, lest he be angry, and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment.

[44:20] Mm-hmm. I'm interested about that. How are we might envision to understand and attempt to... I'll say more in a moment about verse 9. Um...

But in terms of destruction in general here, I think it's definitely talking about eternal destruction. Yeah, I wonder what people might understand by that, you know. So... Well, then we have to take the whole Bible in view.

And the Bible very clearly warns about eternal destruction, essentially, isn't it? I mean, by destruction, how people might understand that. Mm-hmm.

I mean, the Bible says all sorts of things, as you say, but I think in this context of these psalms, Mm-hmm. It particularly implies futility, isn't it?

You're saying, you know, the plans of the wicked will lead to destruction, and the plots of the nations will lead to destruction, saying that their plans will come to nothing. Yeah, contrasted with the prosperity of the blessed one, the righteous one.

[45:24] Um... Yeah. Um... One final one is, which I think convinces me these two psalms work as a pair, at the beginning of the whole book of psalms, is verse 1, blessed is the one, and then end of verse 12, blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Um... The begin and end with blessing. Um... And, um... Someone asked me, should we look for differences as well? Um...

And I think Phil mentioned this. Sorry if I misled you. Um... Uh... Absolutely, the difference is individual and worldwide scale.

And I think psalm 1 is sort of two ways to live sort of thing, and psalm 2 is two ways to rule. Um... That's where I've got to with it. Um...

We're going to hear it preached in a moment, but firstly, let's sing it. Um... Psalms are songs as well. Poetry songs. Um... So, we've got a version, um...

[46:28] A modern version to sing. Um... Let's stand and sing when we're ready. Let's sing. their bones and from their betters all the Lord in the world by the self to love and soul in our journey with news we dropped with now so let's let's hear the Lord speak to us through it let's just say a prayer shall we heavenly father we thank you for what we've already seen just looking at this psalm looking at these psalms as a pair we pray now as we focus our attention entirely on what psalm 2 is saying to us this evening please help us we pray and we ask this in Jesus name amen if you look at the news at the moment you will find very quickly there are rulers in conflict all over the world it seems most notably

Putin and Zelensky and some in the world Putin some Zelensky or look at Israel with Netanyahu and Hamas and others and some side with one side some with another some trying to side with both in a way sometimes even leaders meant to be on the same side don't get on most famously just recently that fallout between Musk and Trump they came to oppose one another meant to be on the same side but ultimately I think Psalm 2 says to us they're actually opposed to the Lord they are united in that unless they're willing to bow the knee to King

Jesus this Psalm splits nicely maybe you notice that as you went through it nicely into four parts and so that's where we're going to go firstly the kings of the earth in verses one to three the rulers on earth we find them in verse one conspiring and plotting why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain the kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the lords and against his anointed one they're in uproar they're plotting perhaps looking at the map of the world the world that God has made and given generously to us and plotting their next move and Psalm 2 says really their next move against the Lord God Almighty and the issue is really this in verse 3 about what they say let us break their chains and throw off their shackles saying that again about the

Lord and his anointment they say I don't want to be bound to God and his words and his rule rather like those wicked and sinners and mockers in Psalm 1 verse 1 it's the way Satan deceives us isn't it follow your feelings and desires if you want to be top and actually you are top there's nobody above you Satan is saying to them so go wild one American pastor comments on Psalm 2 and gives this illustration which I'm stealing of a birthday party for a little kindergarten or reception in this country girl her mom went to town with balloons and decorations and gifts for the girl but one of the little

boys

Johnny his name was so jealous that the gifts and attention were not on him that he made a real nuisance of himself and so one of the mums went to Johnny and said this it's not your party and it sort of feels like that's what's going on in this psalm the rulers of the nations as they against the lord and against his anointed one thinking this is their world to rule and do as they please God is saying it's it's not your party we move next to verses four to six and we see the king of heaven people may scoff at God they may mock and plot against him but God will not be mocked God is the one on the seat of power have a look verse four the one enthroned he sat on a throne in heaven laughs he's enthroned in heaven we're told

[52:44] God laughs at them not like we might laugh at maybe a comedy show but laugh in the sense of ha so you think you're so clever do you looking at them with contempt their plans and plotting and conspiracies together are feeble compared to the rule of the Lord Almighty who sits enthroned in heaven how silly to think they can rival him or be above him God will have the last laugh and then we get to verse five and I think it's a good example of what parallelism looks like it says first he rebukes them in his anger and then he terrifies them in his wrath rebukes them in his anger terrifies them in his wrath the first he rebuked corrected!

No Donald Trump no Vladimir Putin no you do not reign above me I reign above ye and then in fact if they knew what God's wrath was like it should completely terrify them and how are they rebuked verse six says God says to them I have installed my king on Zion my holy mountain there's a sense in which this is non negotiable I've installed my king on my holy mountain you're not greater than him I guess we're tempted at this point in the psalm to think straight to the Lord Jesus we can get there but actually firstly think of kings like

King David who God installed as his king in Zion and in fact the book of Acts tells us David wrote this psalm and where was the place he was installed we're told it's Zion my holy mountain one writer says of Zion Zion was a puny 11 acres of real estate on the southeastern ridge of Jerusalem again sorry an American said that it's a puny 11 acres this is no worldwide empire this is tiny no wonder the rulers of the world are standing and scoffing at the lords in the book of Daniel King Nebuchadnezzar perhaps you remember dreams of this impressive statue ginormous that head of gold the chest and arms of silver thighs of brass legs of iron feet of iron and clay and they all represent different kingdoms of this world it'd be helpful just to turn there briefly to

Daniel chapter two to see what comes book of Daniel chapter two and verse 34 after the what the statue was verse 34 says while you were watching a rock was cut out but not by human hands it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them then the iron the clay the bronze the silver the gold were all broken to pieces and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer the wind swept them away without leaving a trace but the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth so what's this rock about what's this mountain about verse 44 in the time of those kings the god of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed nor will it be left to another people it will crush all those kingdoms!

and bring it will itself endure this is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain but not by human hands a rock that broke the iron the bronze the clay the silver and the gold to pieces the great god has shown the king what will take place in the future it's speaking that rock is speaking of this tiny little kingdom tiny little Zion which comes and smashes these ginormous kingdoms down they think they're so impressive do they well they're no match for this little rock which grows and becomes a mountain and will fill the whole earth so psalm 2 verse 6 Zion tiny but it's becoming a mountain a worldwide mountain this kingdom can never be destroyed the writer to the

[58:47] Hebrews puts it we come to an unshakable kingdom bow before the king enthroned in heaven worship him as the highest power that's the right response we should sing songs like praise my soul the king of heaven because he is the one who is establishing this wonderful worldwide kingdom and though as we look at the news and perhaps feel a sense of fear as we see the nations raging and conspiring and plotting perhaps more than ever in human history seeing threats to wipe out big countries and civilizations with things like nuclear weapons is it not reassuring

this evening to hear that we're part of an unshakable kingdom one that will never be destroyed our citizenship is in heaven we don't need to fear like those around us may fear in fact we need to keep our eyes more and more don't we on the throne we know that world history world leaders are all in the hands of our sovereign king so when we hear the bad and scary news we just need to keep our eyes on the throne and tell one another keep your eyes on the throne secondly we see the king's son in verse 7 to 9 i will proclaim verse 7 the lord's decree he said to me you are my son today i have become your father the one in throne in heaven he has a son a prince an heir and he is one who is eternally god the eternally begotten son of gods we know that i think by the word today today is always here isn't it yesterday was once today and tomorrow will soon be today i think this is speaking of the eternal son of god and we're let into a conversation between the eternal son of god and the eternal father god in verse eight ask me he says to his son and i will make the nations your inheritance the ends of the earth your possessions i think this conversation can only take place between god the father and god the son after the ascension jesus ascension into heaven which we saw a little bit last week in the book of acts and we saw those verses in daniel 7 we won't turn to them now only then can the nations be given to the son as his inheritance it's impressive inheritance isn't it if little micah if i died today little micah might at best get my little car which by the time he can drive it will probably be useless this is a grand inheritance for a son for a son who is worthy of it the eternal holy son of god who has been obedient to his father's plan of salvation even in suffering death on the cross and verse nine speaks about what will happen as the son gets the eternal gets his inheritance and verse nine you will break them with a rod of iron you will dash them to pieces like pottery don't mishear this as Jesus being ungrateful for his inheritance smashing it to pieces the Lord Jesus as we know from John's gospel is given the responsibility of judgment the father judges no one but has entrusted all judgment to the son those who do not bow the knee to the rule of king Jesus they will be dashed to pieces like pottery it's another image a bit like the image of the chaff being blown away there's also this rod the rod of iron verse 9 you will break them like a rod of iron the rod is mentioned definitely in a very familiar psalm to us another very familiar psalm to us psalm 23 and I think helpfully Christopher Ash makes a link between them think of this rod as a rod to break us in order to mend and remake us the gospel message the message of salvation in the name of the Lord Jesus is used to break down people's hard and stony hearts and replace them with hearts of flesh the gospel is more than enough to humble proud kings to cause them to lay down their crowns before king Jesus and so I think verse nine is really good it's a good rule where the wicked are rightly punished for their sin but where there is also grace to break us in order to mend and remake us and that leads us to the final point will you be wise with your rule I think that's the question this psalm is asking verse 10 here's the call to wisdom therefore you kings be wise be warned you rulers of the earth be wise kings hear the warnings of this psalm don't be ignorant and say let us break their chains and throw off their shackles don't believe the lie of Satan that God's rule is oppressive and that you need to break away from it rather turn to the Lord serve him with fear and celebrate his rule with trembling it's interesting it talks about serving the Lord with fear in verse 11 the call to wisdom in the book of Proverbs is that the beginning of wisdom it begins with the fear of the Lord we often rightly pray for leaders to have wisdom this is the wisdom that they need to begin with to fear the Lord to see that he reigns above them and to see that they shouldn't despise the Lord and his works they shouldn't despise the Lord's anointed one they shouldn't despise the Lord Jesus they shouldn't despise the cross this is the wisdom of God he showed it to the rulers who banded together and plotted against the Lord Jesus and put him to death and he showed the wisdom in it as the Lord Jesus rose again so there's only one thing to do leaders and that's this in verse six kiss his son or he will be angry and your way will lead to your destruction his wrath can flare up in a moment bless the rule who take refuge in him that's the big final instruction kiss his son that may

sound a bit weird kiss pay homage to bow down to that's probably what we might write if we were writing the psalm today although it made me think that when a prime minister in this country is installed they have to kiss the monarch hand don't they and that's an illustration of this of what they should do to the

[67:45] Lord Jesus Christ and finally as we mentioned earlier there's that word blessed blessed is the one in someone and blessed are all who take refuge in the son blessed are all who take refuge in the truly blessed one so looking at the news what world leaders might be up to in our world at the moment it does feel like this world is a dangerous place but these last few weeks I've been delighting in our new son Micah but also thinking why on earth have we brought him into this world it calms my soul to read that there is a place of safety for him that he can that he is invited along with all the world to take refuge in the son and that though we might and we should rightly tremble before the one enthroned in heaven for his wrath can flare up in a moment we can rejoice in his mercy to us that we can find refuge we can find a safe place in him and therefore a place in his unshakable kingdom let's respond to this by singing a song that seems appropriate and then with just a little bit of time we've got left we'll think about how to respond to this in prayer so though the nations rage kingdoms rise and fall there is still one king reigning over all that's definitely the message of

Psalm 2 so I will not fear for this truth remains that my God is the ancient of days there is none above him none before him all of time is in his hands for his throne it shall remain and ever stand all the power all the glory I will trust in his name for my God is the ancient!

of days! So stand and sing a few thoughts about how we might like to shape those prayers based on what we've seen in the psalm but you are very wise people and you may have other things that you think of so please don't find this list as an exhaustive one of authority I think even very locally here of MPs and counsellors and others pray that they would govern wisely and that begins with the fear of the

Lord doesn't it pray that they would find refuge in the sun and pray particularly where we see much conflict in the world pray for peaceful resolutions to conflicts so there's a few ideas please do lead us in some prayers do lead us off and then I'll close in a few minutes time and we'll end with a final hymn being part of your unshakable kingdom and we pray Father that as we look at our news and when we feel like despairing or whether we're feeling fearful of what we see we pray that you would help us to look up to the one who is enthroned in heaven to remember that he has installed his king on

Zion his holy mountain who is ruler over a kingdom that will never perish that will never come to an end father thank you for the security that we have as your children in that and we do pray as we have done already for all those rulers people in authority and everyone else they will hear this call of the son and would find life would find refuge in him and we ask this in Jesus name amen why don't we sing a final hymn to close a very appropriate song behold our God seated on his throne come let us adore him behold our king nothing can compare with him no ruler no one else but him come let us adore him let's stand and sing a ending a ending a ending a ending a ending a ending a ending

[73:26] Amen.