

PM Psalm 97 Who is ruler of your life?

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Preacher: Mr Thomson McKenzie

[0 : 00] Let's read together God's Word from Psalm 97, Psalm 97 verses 1 to 12. Psalm 97 verses 1 to the end of the chapter.

The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice. Let the many coastlands be glad. Clouds and thick darkness are all around him. Righteousness and justice are the foundations of his throne.

Fire goes before him and burns up his adversaries all around. His lightning light up the world. The earth sees and trembles.

The mountains melt like wax before the Lord. Before the Lord of all the earth. The heavens proclaim his righteousness and all the people see his glory.

All worshippers of images are put to shame. Who made their boast in worthless idols. Worship him all you gods.

[1 : 13] Zion hears and is glad. And the daughters of Judah rejoice. Because of your righteousness, O Lord. For you, O Lord, are most high over all the earth.

You are exalted far above all gods. O you who love the Lord hate evil. He preserves the lives of his saints. He delivers them from the hand of the wicked.

Light is sown for the righteous. And joy for the upright in heart. Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous. And give thanks to his holy name.

Thanks be to God for the reading of his holy word. And to his name be the glory and praise. Amen. Amen. So tonight we're going to continue our look at the Psalms.

We're going to look at Psalm 97. So a question to start. Who or what rules in your heart? Who or what rules in your heart?

[2 : 20] Because whatever is at the centre of your life. Whatever is at the centre will be the controlling factor of your life.

Jesus himself says in Matthew 6 and verse 24. No one can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one and love the other.

Or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. So who will we serve and who will be our master?

In the final verse of Psalm 96. The Psalmist develops the theme of the king coming to judge his enemies. And to reward his people.

And Psalm 97 develops that. Over the last two meetings we had looked at Psalm 95 with its emphasis on the people of God.

[3 : 25] And Psalm 96 focused us on the nations of the world. And how they should rise or raise a new song to the Lord.

To declare his glory and the salvation he delivers to his people. Now this Psalm combines these two themes.

As we look at the arrival of our God as king and ruler of all. Verse 9 makes clear. For you Lord are most high over all the earth.

You are exalted far above all gods. And perhaps it can be hard for us to grasp the idea of God's complete reign over all creation.

Over all humanity. And over all areas of our lives. Our family. Our work. Our leisure. Our own experiences as society.

[4 : 30] It's a long time since we had an absolute ruler. And certainly long before any of our lifetimes. Political power for example. Has passed from our kings and queens.

From our monarchs. To an elected parliament. The voting process has widened to include more and more people. And we can see changes in elected governments.

We no longer have a sense of stable, enduring, absolute authority. Centred on one person. Even when monarchs had supreme reign.

It was not always stable. Nor was it enduring. But when we look to God. Even now.

Many of us see it as a partnership. We choose to belong to him. We choose to accept Christ. We see it as a partnership.

[5 : 31] Something which we are in control of. But in reality. It is God who decided to belong to us. We are the ones who rebelled against God.

We were the ones who rejected his commands. We are the ones who are therefore deserving of his wrath. And judgment for our disobedience.

We are in no position to make a choice of entering into a relationship with God. We rejected him. But God chose to have a plan for man's salvation.

God decided to send his son to satisfy the penalty of our sin. Jesus Christ decided to obey our Heavenly Father.

Even to death on the cross. That we may be redeemed. It is his spirit which works within us. To soften our hearts.

[6 : 34] That we can accept Christ as our Saviour. So it is his work. That brings us to faith. God chooses us. Our acceptance is a response.

To the working of his Holy Spirit. A response to God's grace. To God's mercy towards us. The psalm looks at God's reign as King or Lord.

And the psalm could be seen as having two major sections. Section 1-6 would be a confession or exaltation of God as King.

And the second section, section 7-12. An exaltation of how to respond to God or King. It also mirrors the rightful place of Christ in our lives.

Verse 1 reads, The Lord reigns. Let the earth rejoice. Let the many coastlines be glad. It announces that God reigns over all the earth.

[7 : 41] No matter the circumstances which surround us. Or the feelings that we may have. No matter what we may feel. The fact is, God reigns over all the earth.

God is the ruler of all peoples. Not just of Israel. Today we see Christ as Lord of all. Not just our Christian community.

But all the world. Verse 2-6 reads, Clouds and thick darkness are all around him. Righteousness and justice are the foundations of his throne.

Fire goes before him and burns up his adversaries all around. His lightnings light up the world. The earth sees and trembles. The mountains melt like wax before the Lord.

Before the Lord of all the earth. The heavens proclaim his righteousness. And all the people see his glory. We have here an illusion of a storm.

[8 : 48] That is sweeping across the land. And destroying all that is before it. Which seems to be a bit of a theme today. And we should remember from this morning.

That in the storms of life. That we do have a refuge. We have an assurance that is sure and steadfast. In our Lord Jesus Christ. But the image of the storm and of the blackening clouds.

Give rise to two Old Testament memories. Both related to the storm. The image of the storm reminds us of God's deliverance. Of his people from Egypt.

And at Mount Sinai there were storms. To hide the purity and majesty of God. As not even his great servant Moses. Could look up on his face and live. The psalmist describes the experience.

Of the Israelites in the wilderness. In Psalm 68 verses 7 and 8. Oh God when you're out before your people. When you march through the wilderness. Selah.

[9 : 52] The earth quaked. The heavens poured down rain. Before God the one of Sinai. Before God. Before the God of Israel. When you're out before your people.

But because of our sin. Because of our transgressions. We cannot look like Moses. Upon the glory of God and live.

And because of our sin. God could not look upon us. And have communion with us. Because of our sin. We are separated from God.

God. But. The good news of the gospel. Is that that has been rectified. By his son Jesus Christ. Who died on the cross.

At Calvary. That we would be cleansed of our sin. That we may. Through the intercession of Christ. Through Jesus intervening works.

[10 : 50] We can once more. Enter his presence. And have communion with God. We no longer need a priest. As a human intercessor. To go before us.

With prayers to God. We can come. Direct ourselves. Now. We can see God. Our Heavenly Father. As Jesus shows us.

The Heavenly Father. Through Christ. We have the vision of God. As John records. In chapter 14.

Verses 5 to 7. Thomas said to him. Lord. We do not know where you are going. How can we know the way? Jesus said to him.

I am the way. And the truth. And the life. No one comes to the Father. Except through me. If you had known me. You would have known my Father also. From now on.

[11 : 46] You do know him. And you have seen him. In continuing in that passage. Philip requires more clarity. And asks in verses 8 and 9. Philip said to him.

Lord. Show us the Father. And it is enough for us. And Jesus said to him. Have I been with you so long? And you still do not know me Philip?

Whoever has seen me. Has seen the Father. How can you say. Show us the Father. Jesus is God incarnate.

He is God. Taking on the human form. So that all that is in God. Is seen in Jesus. If you have any queries. About God's nature.

It is visible. In the life. And the preachings of Jesus. He provides. He provides. And cares for his people. As Christ cared for.

[12 : 45] And served the folks. That he met. On his journeys. He cared for their physical well-being. Healing the sick. Feeding the hungry. He also cared for his spiritual well-being.

And the forgiveness of their sins. We think of the paralyzed man. In Mark 2. Jesus announces. To the horrors of the scribes. That his sin is forgiven. The woman in Luke 7.

Who anointed him with oil. And washed his feet with her tears. And Jesus replied. That her sins would be forgiven. He also showed.

His ultimate love for humanity. In being prepared. To lay his life down. For our sin. On the cross. Of Calvary. He that was pure.

And sinless. Would be sacrificed. For our sin. He became our sin. And in so doing. We are clothed. In his righteousness. By his death.

[13 : 53] We were transformed. Our sins were forgiven. And we were now clothed. With Christ. We are a new creation. And we can now have communion.

With God once more. Through Jesus Christ. But first. We must accept him. As our saviour. And lord of our life. God. And we are a new creation. The third verse.

Says that fire goes before the Lord. Destroying all his enemies. And this was true for Israel. In the exodus. And in their conquest of Canaan.

It also illustrates that. God is a God of justice. He does not act on a whim. Destroying some. And saving others. Without a purpose. Or reason.

God has given us. His law. As he did Adam. And he informed Adam. Of the consequences. Of breaking his law. And so.

[14 : 51] When he gave the law. Once more. To Moses. And the Israelites. And they again. Were aware of. They again. Were aware of the consequences. Of breaking the law. The Israelites.

Set aside. God's commandments. As they decided. They would follow. Their own path. And as a just God. He has a right. To judge us.

If we. Set aside his law. As a just God. We should have the expectation. Of facing the penalty. Of our rebellion.

The penalty. Of our sin. Which is death. And eternal. Separation from God. Now as Jesus had said.

That if we had seen him. We see. Also the father. Where is this God. In the Jesus of the gospels. Where is the.

[15 : 45] The Jesus. Where is this. God of judgment. In the Jesus of love. And humility. The Jesus who came to serve. But this is a role.

Still to be fulfilled. By Christ. One he himself. Spoke about. In fact. Going forward. To the image. In verse 4. Of lightning. Jesus uses the imagery.

Of lightning. To describe his return. Christ. First came to earth. In order to save. The world. He came to earth.

To give man. The opportunity. To be saved. To offer us. A route to salvation. Through faith. In him. Out of love. He laid down.

His life. For the forgiveness. Of our sin. God. In his second coming. In his second coming. His return. Shall be in glory.

[16 : 40] And he will bring judgment. On all the earth. We cannot proclaim. A loving and just God. Without also proclaiming judgment. For those who refuse.

To follow. God's commands. And accept. The Lord Jesus Christ. As our savior. Will face a judgment. Jesus describes his return.

By declaring to his disciples. In Luke 17. Verses 24 to 27. Luke writes. For as the lightning flashes. And lights up the sky.

From one side to the other. So will the son of man be. In his day. But first. He must suffer many things.

And be rejected. By this generation. Just as it was. In the days of Noah. So will be. In the days of the son of man. They were eating. And drinking. And marrying.

- [17 : 35] And being given in marriage. Until the day. When Noah entered the ark. And the flood came. And destroyed them all. Just as in the days of Noah. We go about.
- Our daily business. But do we give Christ his place. At the head of our lives. Or do we just go on. With the simple tasks.
- And not give him a thought. Are we too busy. With our earthly concerns. And routines in this life. Can we always go. After all.
- We can always put George Hoffman. To next week. We can always make that prayer. At meeting another month. Or have we been.
- If we are non-Christians. Have we even been putting off. The thought of making a decision for Christ. In fear that it interrupts. Our schedule of tasks.
- [18 : 30] But just as in the days of Noah. Judgment will come. When the Lord returns. And he will return. Like a thief in the night.
- When you are least. Expecting him. And when. You are ill prepared. And I would say. To anyone. Who has not made a decision.
- For the Lord. Don't be unprepared. Examine your life. See its trials. And uncertainties. See. That you cannot bring certainty. To your life.
- You can bring. No guarantees. After all. Have we learned nothing. About ourselves. And our fellow humans. In the last 18 months.
- Rather. Make a decision. Of certainty. See your need. To be saved. And come. To Christ. Asking him. For forgiveness. Come into communion.
- [19 : 28] With God. Our Heavenly Father. The ruler of all. And the provider of all. The second section. Looking at the.
- That looks at the. Appropriate response. To God. In verses 7 to 12. It reads. All worshippers. Of images. Are put to shame. Who make their boast.
- And worthless idols. Worship him. All you gods. Zion hears. And is glad. And the daughters. Of Judah. Rejoice. Because of your judgments.
- O Lord. For you. O Lord. Are most high. Over all the earth. You are exalted. Far above. All gods. O you. Who love the Lord.
- Hate evil. He preserves. The lives. Of his saints. He delivers them. From the hand. Of the wicked. Light is sown. For the righteous. And joy.
- [20 : 25] For the upright. In heart. Rejoice. In the Lord. O you righteous. And give thanks. To his holy name. The first verse. In this section. Verse 7.
- Bridges the two sections. It joins the two sections. The first two lines. Continue. In the realm. Of God's reign. Over all. All worship. Of images. Are put to shame.
- Who make their boast. In worthless. Idols. In the ancient Near East. It was often seen. That if. Two nations.
- Were at war. The victor. Had the stronger gods. Each country. Or each tribe. Would have their own gods. All gods.
- Were valid. But the victor's gods. Were the stronger. The more powerful. But not so. With the God of Israel. He is the one.
- [21 : 19] And only true God. His first commandment. To the. To the Israelites. In Exodus 20. Is simply. You shall have no other gods.
- Before me. In Old Testament. When Israel as a nation. Fell to defeat. It was not due. To the weakness. Of their God. It was due.

To their own weakness. And their reliance. Upon themselves. As men. It was due. To. Their iniquity.

It was the people. Turning away from God. And God. Therefore. Are them. Not keeping. God's commands. We read.

In the book of Judges. That the people. Would turn from God. Pursuing their own. Path in life. God. Would. Would. In turn. Withdraw. His protection. From them.

[22 : 15] And they would be oppressed. From. By their enemies. When the people. Returned to God. When they cried out. For help. The Lord. Helped them. He heard their cries.

And he would raise up. Leaders. To once more. Liberate them. From oppression. I suppose. The most memorable. Account of that. Would be. The removal. Of the fall.

Of Judah. And the removal. Of the people. To Babylon. Which you can read. In 2nd Kings. And 2nd Chronicles. But. When the people. Repented.

God. Had a plan. To bring them back. And to rebuild Jerusalem. Have we. Turned our back. On God. And replaced him. With our own.

False gods. The final line. Worship him. All you gods. Directs. Directs. All our false gods. To be directed.

[23 : 12] To God's glory. Are there things. That we need to give up. In our lives. Are there things. Which. We need to refocus. Our reasons for doing.

Or participating in. As you know. Over the weeks. I was. Keen on rugby. And certainly. When I came to faith. It was something. That I had to examine.

Not that. It was wrong. For Christians. To play rugby. But how. I could then. Use that sport. Instead of being. For me. And for my pleasure. How could it. Bring glory to God.

And that. Me then. Looking. At how I performed. On a rugby pitch. What did people see. When I played. And it's the same. For each of us. We have to look.

At the things. Which we do. The things we enjoy. And think. Are they appropriate. And if they're appropriate. How do we then use them. To bring glory to God.

[24 : 13] We need to refocus. Our minds. Not. In the way of. Modern mindfulness. With ourselves. At the centre. Not. In introspection.

Looking to. Ourselves. For our own. Peace and tranquility. How then. Do we refocus. Rather.

We need to look. Outside of ourselves. We need to look. To God. And his desires. For our lives. And through the Holy Spirit. Moving. To be more Christ like.

In our daily. Life. Through the reading. For example. Of scripture. We can learn. More about God. Each day.

And about his. The expectations. Of how we lead our lives. Scripture. Does not contain. God's word. It is. God's word. It's not part of it.

[25 : 09] His meaning. All of it. His meaning. All of it. Has something. To say to us. Even the uncomfortable. Bit. Is. Like. There will be judgment. If.

We do not. Accept Christ. As our saviour. We should look at fellowship. With other Christians. Jesus' example.

And Luke records. In chapter 4. 16. Of Jesus. And he came to Nazareth. Where he had been brought up. And as was his custom. He went to the synagogue.

On the Sabbath day. And he stood up. To read. And the writer of Hebrews. States in Hebrews 10. 24. And 25. And let us consider.

How to stir up one another. To love. And good works. Not neglecting. To meet together. As is the habit of some. But encouraging one another.

[26 : 04] And all the more. As you see. The day. As the day drawing near. So we are instructed. By the writer of Hebrews. And we have been shown.

By Christ's example. Himself. The importance. Of worshipping. And meeting together. We need to meet with each other. To grow in faith. To learn to serve.

And to come to maturity. In Christ. Through the church. We proclaim God's good news. For the world. That our God reigns.

And Christ. Came to save the world. Not to condemn it. Verses 8 and 9. Remind us. That we should. Give thanks. Both.

Individually. And as we have touched on. Together. In worship. And praise. Verse 10. Once more. Gives direction.

[26 : 59] Of becoming. More Christ-like. In our daily lives. We are to hate evil. Therefore call out. Wrongdoers. And speak out.

For the oppressed. Each of us. Have a role to play. Again. Where the unity of the church. Is important. As it gives us. A louder voice.

But each of us. Also have to look. At the practice. In the. In our own lives. About standing up. For others. Who cannot stand.

For themselves. In the final. Two lines. Of the verse. Read. He preserves. Preserves. The lives. Of his saints. He delivers them. From the hand. Of the wicked. We.

Who have accepted. Christ. Who believe. That our salvation. Comes by faith. Alone. In Christ. A part of Christ's church. We are the saints.

[27 : 55] And we have the promise. Of protection. And eternal life. We have cause. For rejoicing. For glad celebration. Keeping Christ.

At the centre. Of our lives. As verse 12 says. Rejoice in the Lord. O you righteous. And give thanks. To his holy name. Accepting Christ.

Is not. The end. Of our journey. It's not. The completion of it. It's the beginning. Of a journey. To becoming. More Christ like.

And for those. Who are still. Questioning. It's the opportunity. To. Accept.

And rejoice. In their salvation. By accepting Christ. As their saviour. Let us pray. Till a while.

[28 : 58] agreed. Thank you. Yes. Okay. Bye. I'll walk you in.

Y'all or a little. Give me a dude. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye.