

Suffering for Christ

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[0 : 00] My heart overflows with a pleasing theme. I address my verses to the King. My tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe. You are the most handsome of the sons of men.

Grace is poured upon your lips, therefore God has blessed you forever. Gird your sword on your thigh, O mighty one, in your splendor and majesty. In your majesty, ride out victoriously for the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness.

Let your right hand teach you awesome deeds. Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies. The peoples fall under you. Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.

The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore, God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.

Your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and caesia. From ivory palaces, stringed instruments make you glad. Daughters of kings are among your ladies of honor.

[1 : 11] At your right hand stands the queen in gold of Ophir. Hear, O daughter, and consider, and incline your ear. Forget your people and your father's house, and the king will desire your beauty.

Since he is your lord, bow to him. The people of Tyre will seek your favor with gifts, the richest of the people. All-glorious is the princess in her chamber, with robes interwoven with gold.

In many colored robes she is led to the king, with her virgin companions following behind her. With joy and gladness they are led along, as they enter the palace of the king.

In place of your fathers shall be your sons. You will make them princes in all the earth. I will cause your name to be remembered in all generations. Therefore, nations will praise you forever and ever. Long ago, at many times, and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets. But in these last days, he has spoken to us by his son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

[2 : 26] He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

For to which of the angels did God ever say, You are my son, today I have begotten you. Or again, I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.

And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, Let all God's angels worship him. Of the angels, he says, You are my son, today I have begotten you.

And he says, And to which of the angels has he ever said, Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet?

For the sake of those who are to inherit salvation.

[4 : 29] Well, as John said earlier, on the 19th of May, Prince Harry did indeed marry Meghan Markle at St. George's Chapel in Windsor Castle. And I don't know if you're aware, but this royal wedding was estimated to cost about £32 million.

And it was watched all over the world by hundreds of millions of people. Many of you, I'm sure, will have watched it. You'll have seen that soldiers and cavalry paraded as Meghan arrived, wearing her beautiful silk wedding dress.

She was guided up the chapel, up the aisle, to meet her prince. The great and the good gathered together to witness Meghan joining herself to the House of Windsor.

And eventually, she was given the title, Her Royal Highness, the Duchess of Sussex. Now, whatever you think of royal weddings, you have to agree that our media is absolutely obsessed with them.

They generate hundreds of pounds of income in tourism, and you get photographs printed in magazines and newspapers, and shared on the internet all over the world for everyone to see. [5 : 37] Because maybe there's a part of us, if we're honest, that would like to be royal. I mean, who wouldn't want to marry a prince? Who wouldn't want to be part of a royal dynasty that goes back centuries?

Who wouldn't want to be in line to the British throne? And if you were part of the royal family, your future would be secure. You don't like to have any financial problems.

You'd always live in beautiful houses. And I guess your children would get the best education possible. You'd have helped with pretty much anything you wanted. As long as the royal family continued, your future would be secure.

We're continuing to look at the book of Psalms at church. And today, we're looking at Psalm 45, which describes a royal wedding, the splendor of a royal wedding, to give God's people hope in difficult times.

Now, Psalm 45 may have originally been written about David, King David or King Solomon in the Old Testament. Or it might have been used of royal weddings after their time, as a reminder of the importance of the kings in David's line.

[6 : 47] Because whether things are going well for Israel in the Old Testament or badly, if their enemies were threatening to overtake them, one thing was certain. God's king on David's throne would secure their future.

Many of you may remember back in 2 Samuel 7, verse 13, God had promised King David that a descendant of him, his, would always sit on his throne forever.

And in Psalm 2, verse 6, God says that he's put a king on David's throne who will rule over the nations. So having a king in Israel, it mattered far more than having a king or queen in the house of Windsor today.

It meant that God's people would be secure forever. Which is why Psalm 45 is all about the king on David's throne. In good times and in bad, God's people were to sing this psalm to look to the king to secure their future.

Now I wonder where you look to secure your future. William and Harry have already been taken, so I'm afraid there's not much chance of marrying into the royal family anytime soon.

[8 : 00] Maybe you look to your bank balance or your career or your family to secure your future. Perhaps as you think about the next 20 or 30 years, you feel a bit worried about the future.

You're not really sure where to look. Well, Psalm 45 was written to God's people to point them to their king. And God's given it to us today, here in 2018, to point us to God's ultimate king, Jesus. As we'll see, Jesus fulfills Psalm 45 because he is the king in David's line. He secures our future. Now we often spend time, don't we, thinking about Jesus as a crucified, suffering servant. And rightly so. But I guess we spend less time thinking about him as a majestic king, reigning forever. So let's have a look at that together. Take another look at Jesus as we look at Psalm 45 together. And if you've got one of these service sheets, do follow on the back.

[9 : 06] So the first thing I want us to see from this psalm is that God's king is glorious. So turn back to Psalm 45 if you've shut your Bibles, page 565.

And have a look at verse 1 with me. Verse 1. The psalmist is absolutely enthralled with God's king. He says, My heart overflows with a pleasing theme. I address my verses to the king. My tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe. He's so eager to write about this king, isn't he?

He can't wait because of how glorious he is. He rejoices in him. His heart overflows. Imagine how much Meghan Markle's heart must have overflowed as she walked up the aisle to meet her prince. The psalmist's heart overflows even more. Verse 2. You are the most handsome of the sons of men. Grace is poured upon your lips. Therefore God has blessed you forever.

[10 : 09] The psalmist paints us a picture of the ideal king on David's throne. Someone who's handsome, full of grace in what he says. And we get a glimpse of God's promises to David that his king would be forever.

The psalmist says that God has blessed you forever. So this king is gracious in his speech. He's handsome in his appearance. But did you notice he's also a warrior?

Have a look at verse 3. Gird your sword on your thigh, O mighty one, in your splendor and majesty. In your majesty ride out victoriously.

And verse 5 as well. Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies. The people fall under you. This king is powerful to defeat his enemies.

But he doesn't use his power to serve himself, does he? He doesn't use his power to oppress people. Have a look at verse 4. In your majesty ride out victoriously.

[11:13] For the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness. Let your right hand teach awesome deeds. See that this king does what is right.

He does what is good. Now the psalmist might be thinking about King David in the Old Testament. Some of his conquests against his enemies. Or perhaps Solomon's wisdom in resolving disputes. God's king on David's throne was supposed to be both strong and good. He loved justice and righteousness. But he's not soft.

He's a warrior king who defeats his enemies. And we see this in Psalm 2 verse 9. Where God's king rules the nations with a rod of iron.

But of course however good David was at defeating his enemies. However good Solomon might have been at resolving disputes. They were never that good. You might know David's own son Absalom.

[12:14] Forced David to go into hiding. And eventually the kingdom was torn apart. However why Solomon was at resolving disputes. Well his heart was led astray by the many foreign wives that he had.

He was never as good as the Psalm 45 king. These verses are only true of Jesus. In the book of Revelation chapter 19 verse 15.

It speaks about Jesus as this king. This glorious king who will one day come to judge the world. And it says that from his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations.

And he will rule them with a rod of iron. Using the language of Psalm 2. So in describing God's king as ultimately fulfilled in Jesus.

This Psalm 45 is saying that Jesus is also a warrior. He's a king who defeats his enemies. Jesus doesn't turn a blind eye to those who reject him.

[13:17] He is patient and gracious. But he will destroy his enemies. C.S. Lewis describes this idea beautifully in his Chronicles of Narnia.

The lion, the witch and the wardrobe. For those of you who don't know. The story is of four children. Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy. They find themselves in a magical world called Narnia.

By going through a wardrobe. And once in Narnia they meet a beaver called Mr. Beaver. And he arranges for them to meet Aslan. Who's a lion. Who actually represents Jesus.

But the children, they feel a bit uneasy about meeting a lion. Aslan is a lion, says Mr. Beaver. The lion, the great lion.

Ooh, said Susan. I thought he was a man. Is he quite safe? I shall feel a bit nervous about meeting a lion. Safe, said Mr. Beaver.

[14:13] Of course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the king, I tell you. Aslan is good. But he's not soft.

He's a king who defeats his enemies. And so in a far greater way, Jesus is a warrior king. One day he'll wrap up history and make a new world.

And he will destroy his enemies with everlasting destruction. And as Psalm 45 verse 5 says, his arrows are sharp in the heart of his enemies. He only ever does what is right.

But what is right is to ultimately destroy those who reject the God who made them. Now perhaps you're here this morning and you feel slightly uneasy about following a king who makes war against his enemies.

Perhaps as uneasy as Susan felt about meeting Aslan. But you see, in order to get righteousness and justice, which is what we all want, evil must be dealt with.

[15:17] Rebellion must be defeated. And Jesus is not an evil, power-hungry dictator. No, he's good. He's gracious. But one day he will return as judge.

I wonder what sort of image of Jesus you have in your mind. I wonder if your heart overflows in the way that this psalmist's heart overflows in verse 1. Do you think of Jesus as merely a crucified teacher?

A Jewish carpenter? Well, Jesus didn't stay dead. He rose from the dead. And he's at God's right hand, enthroned as king. He's a glorious warrior king.

Of Psalm 45. And one day he will defeat his enemies. He will defeat evil forever and make a new world. Where everywhere is full of verse 4. Truth meekness. And righteousness. God's king is glorious. Well, the second thing I want us to see from this psalm is that God's king is divine.

[16:26] And that's from verses 6 to 9. God's king is divine. Have a look down with me at Psalm 45 and verse 6. The psalmist writes, Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.

The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness. You've loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore, God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness.

Now, the psalmist was originally talking about God's king on David's throne. God has promised always to have a descendant on his throne who would love righteousness and hate wickedness. But verse 7 doesn't quite make sense, does it? Have a look at what he says. Verse 7 again. He says, We can see from verse 6 he's talking about God, your throne, O God.

So how is it in verse 7 that God can have a God that anoints him? It's a bit of a puzzle, isn't it? Unless, of course, the king on David's throne is God himself.

[17:39] If Jesus is a king on David's throne, then we can say of Jesus both, Your throne, O God, and that his father God has anointed him as king.

Now, these verses in Psalm 45 are quoted in the New Testament in Hebrews chapter 1, which Mary kindly read to us earlier. Have a look in your Bibles at Hebrews chapter 1.

It's on page 1203 in the church Bibles. Have a look at Hebrews chapter 1. Just turn there again with me.

And have a look at Hebrews chapter 1, verse 8 and 9, which we read earlier. The writer is telling us, isn't he, how great Jesus is.

And he's saying that Jesus is even greater than angels. He's not just a warrior king. He's divine. He's God himself. So have a look at Hebrews chapter 1, verse 8.

[18:43] You can see that the author is proving to his audience that Jesus is greater than angels. In fact, he's God. And he says in verse 8, but of the son, of Jesus, he says, the psalmist says, quoting from Psalm 45, Your throne, O God.

The author of Hebrews is saying that without fully knowing it, the psalmist in Psalm 45 was writing about Jesus. See, he is the reason that the king on David's throne really is forever.

Because the king is God himself. So, of course, the fact that God's king is divine, it makes all the difference, doesn't it? It means that there's no contest.

It's not as if good and evil are kind of battling it out. Sometimes good kings win. Sometimes bad kings win. And we'll just have to see what happens. No, the king of the universe, God of the universe, is himself a completely good and righteous king.

And that's why God laughs in Psalm 2 when the nations gather together and they set themselves up against his king. Because how can man possibly win against God? God's throne is forever.

[20:00] Because his king is divine. So, turn back to Psalm 45 with me on page 565. No wonder then that in Psalm 45 verse 8, people play stringed instruments to this king.

Stringed instruments make you glad. And in verse 9, daughters of kings honor him and the queen stands next to him dressed in gold.

See, if the king on David's throne is divine, it really changes everything, doesn't it? It's not just that he's a human king to be admired. He's God to be worshipped.

Some people think that Christians make too much of Jesus. Maybe you're one of them. Maybe you come to Grace Church and you think, oh, they're always going on about Jesus. It seems to me people don't mind talking about God in the abstract.

But as soon as you mention Jesus, they start to switch off. Because he doesn't seem that impressive. But that's because they haven't seen who he is. He's not just a religious teacher or a carpenter from Nazareth.

[21:14] He's God himself come to earth. He's the majestic warrior king who defeats his enemies. He's the everlasting God who sits on David's throne ruling the nations.

So no wonder the psalmist starts in verse 1 by saying, my heart overflows. I can't wait to write about him. Because he's writing about God come to earth. He's got a far bigger view of God's king than we often do.

Even though we know far more about Jesus than the psalmist did. You see, if we really take this psalm to heart, if we really see the greatness of God's king, Jesus, well, we will rejoice in him, won't

we?

Our hearts will overflow as the psalmist does. And that brings us to the third and final thing I want us to see from this psalm. So thirdly then, rejoice in God's king who secures your future.

And that's from verses 10 to 17. So have a look at verse 10 with me now. The psalmist has been talking about God's king and how he turns to talk about the bride of the king.

[22 : 23] And we know he's talking about the bride because in verse 13 and 14, it talks about the princess in her chamber. And she's led to the king. So have a look at verse 10.

He says to her, listen. He says, forget your people and your father's house and the king will desire your beauty. She's getting married to the king.

So she leaves her old family and she joins his. She's got a new identity. And in verse 11, she is told, since he is your lord, bow to him.

Submit to him both as your king and as your husband. And here as God's representative on earth, on David's throne. And see how blessed she is in verse 12.

The people of Tyre, the riches of the people will give her gifts. In verse 13, she's glorious in her chamber. She's wearing robes of gold. She's got companions behind her entering the king's palace with gladness and joy.

[23 : 24] More glorious than Meghan Markle on her wedding day, this bride is utterly beautiful. She wears robes of gold. A divine king who is glorious should have a bride who's equally glorious.

Now when this psalm was originally written, it would have referred to one of the queens in Old Testament Israel as part of a royal wedding. But the New Testament describes the king's bride, Jesus' bride, as the church.

As us. In Revelation 21, it describes the church as prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. In 2 Corinthians 11 verse 2, Paul describes the church as presented to Christ as a pure virgin.

It's not that the church is really beautiful and Christ looks at the church and thinks, wow. No, it's that Christ makes the church beautiful.

The church is made beautiful by Jesus dying for it and by making it righteous. And in the new creation, the new world that God will make, the church will be utterly perfect.

[24 : 37] Think back to Meghan Markle's wedding day back in May. She was made even more beautiful for Prince Harry. It's because of him that she captured the world's imagination and the attention of the media.

It's because she was marrying him that she had to look perfect. Now if she'd be marrying someone else, I'm sure she would have looked great. But because of who she was marrying, she had to look even more perfect.

And it's because we as a church are married to Christ that we will be made even more beautiful than Meghan Markle. In the new creation, the church will be absolutely stunning.

In fact, in Ephesians 5, Paul says that human marriage was always meant to point towards Christ and the church in the new creation. Now I wonder if you feel beautiful.

Perhaps you're all too aware of your imperfections, your weakness, your sin. Perhaps you watched the royal wedding back in May and you felt jealous. You wished you could have looked as beautiful as Meghan Markle.

[25 : 43] You wished you could have married a prince. Well, if you're a Christian, you're already engaged to be married to the king of kings. And in the new creation, he will make you glorious.

All your sin, all your imperfections, all your weaknesses will be gone. In the new creation, you'll be far more beautiful than the most beautiful bride on earth. You'll be as glorious as the bride of Psalm 45.

So rejoice in the king, like this psalmist. Verse 11 is true of you. The king desires your beauty. He wants to make you beautiful forever.

But it's not just beauty that the king wants to give you. It's also security. Remember we said earlier that in the Old Testament Israel, there were kings in the line of David.

And a king on David's throne meant the future was secure. So kings were desperate for their sons to sit on their throne. They wanted the succession to continue. They're constantly anxious about who's going to sit on my throne after I'm gone.

[26 : 50] Even if they had peace and prosperity, they were asking the question, well, for how long? What will happen to my sons after I'm gone? But the psalmist says of this king that there's no anxiety.

There's no concern about his kingdom being torn apart like David's kingdom was. About his sons being defeated. Have a look at verse 16 with me. The last two verses of this psalm.

Verse 16. He's now talking to the king again. And the psalmist says, In other words, David's line would continue.

Not just for a few hundred years. But forever. And so because Jesus, the king on David's throne, is divine, he'll reign forever. So the future is secure.

And those who are sons of the king will reign with him. Did you see in verse 16 it says, You will make them princes in all the earth. Sons of the king will reign as princes.

[28 : 06] And the New Testament describes Christians as reigning with Jesus. It's not just he describes us as a bride made beautiful forever. But also sons of the king reigning with him.

I don't know if you've ever thought about that. But in 2 Timothy 2, Paul writes, If we endure, we'll reign with him. In Revelation 5 verse 10 says that, Everyone that Jesus has ransomed will reign with God.

Now in marrying Prince Harry, Meghan Markle's future is pretty much secure, isn't it? She has everything she could want. Being married into the royal family has secured her future.

Now although she's never going to be queen, In a sense she shares in the reign of the royal family. And in the same way, as Christians, we share in Jesus' reign.

We share in the future that he is secured forever. Like Old Testament kings, we're tempted to be anxious about the future, aren't we? Perhaps particularly about our children's future.

[29 : 09] We look to education or money or careers for security. But Jesus has secured our future. In the new creation where we'll reign with Christ, Our future is far more certain, far more secure, Than even being married into the house of Windsor.

But it's not automatic. Have a look again at verse 11 of Psalm 45. Verse 11 he says, Since he is your Lord, bow to him.

Jesus is a glorious warrior king who defeats his enemies. He's God himself reigning forever. He invites us to be his bride, Promising to make us beautiful forever and forever secure, Reigning with him.

But we must bow to him. We must forget our people and our father's house. That is, we must give him undivided loyalty. We must leave our own kingdoms and join his.

Like Meghan Markle, we must embrace our new identity. Bowing to him means giving up everything and following him. Perhaps you're sitting here this morning and you're curious about this king, Jesus.

[30 : 27] I mean, he's not like other kings. He's unbelievably generous. He wants to make you beautiful. He wants you to reign with him. He wants to secure your future. But when it comes to verse 11, When you're bowing to him, you're not really sure.

You like what he offers, But bowing to him? I mean, giving up everything to follow him? It kind of sounds a bit extreme, doesn't it? Giving your life to Jesus.

You want to be free. You want to be king of your own life. Well, look at this psalmist. He rejoices in this king, doesn't he? His heart overflows.

His tongue's like the pen of a ready scribe. There's no hint of reluctance. He rejoices in devoting his whole life to this king because of who he is. Now, if God's king on David's throne was an evil dictator or a power-grabbing tyrant, he wouldn't dream of it, would he?

He wouldn't bow to him. But God's king is good. He's divine. He gives us security forever. See who he is. Why wouldn't you want to put your life in his hands?

[31 : 38] See, the 21st century lie is that putting my life in my hands will make me happy. Be true to yourself. Do what feels right.

But of course, our hands are not big enough to save us. They can't make us beautiful forever. They can't secure our future. They can't save us in the face of death.

So if you're looking anywhere for security apart from Jesus to secure your future, you're looking in the wrong place. It means you haven't seen who he is.

You haven't understood what this psalmist understood. God's king Jesus is not gentle Jesus, meek and mild. He's glorious. He's divine.

And he secures our future forever. So take another look at who he is. Rejoice in him. Put your life in his hands. As we finish, let me pray.

[32 : 39] Father God, thank you so much for this psalm that it paints such an awesome picture of Jesus. Thank you that he is the king on David's throne. Thank you, Father, that he is glorious, that he is God himself, and that he secures our future forever.

Father, we pray that as we get a better sight of Jesus, as we look again at who he is, our hearts would rejoice in him. And we would bow to him.

We would follow him. And we would delight to give our lives to him. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.