

One King to Reign Forevermore

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 24 January 2010

Preacher: Wayne Schuller

[0 : 00] I'm ready to preach. Wow, that's a first. Well, friends, why don't I pray for us and we'll turn to God's word together, Psalm 132. Let's pray.

Lord God, our Father, we do thank you for your word to us that speaks words of power and of life to us and reveals to us true reality, especially of the majesty and office of your Son, our King and Saviour Jesus, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Well, friends, it's been an interesting week if you're interested in anything to do with the monarchy because we've had Prince William bless our shores and visit our city.

And so if you're a royal watcher, you've probably had an exciting week and I'm interested if anyone's been chasing Prince William and seen him anywhere, I'd love to talk to you. While doing a hospital visit this week, I was listening to a very cynical radio talkback guy.

They're all cynical on talkback, by the way. This time it was John Fain and he was suggesting very cynically that the whole visit of Prince William was a PR campaign for the monarchy and just here to sort of shore things up so we don't kind of decide to become a republic.

[1 : 20] And then on the way back from the hospital, some other point in the week, I was listening to the other talkback cynical station, which is Neil Mitchell, and he had a very different view.

He was actually saying he's been converted this week to monarchy. He's been saying this week he wasn't a fan, he was sort of into the republic thing, but having seen Prince William, he's been excited by it and now he's into the royal family.

Well, I don't want to tell you which radio station to listen to. I don't want to tell you whether to be into a republic or to be a supporter of the British royal family.

That's your private view as a citizen and I'm not going to tell you what I think on those issues or what channel I tune into. But I just want to raise this issue of monarchy in our modern society.

There is a sense in which it's easy to critique monarchy because it does seem so out of date. In a modern Western individualistic democratic society, it does seem very, very out of date.

[2 : 21] The idea of a family by virtue of just their status can be above everyone else. Although I must, just to sort of stay balanced, I think the best comeback to that is that it's one of the great myths of our age that anything new is better.

Do you know what I mean? That's just patently not true and I think you'll be very lost if you never find the old great things that are worth rediscovering. But anyway, I just wanted for us to think about the fact that as Christians, independent of, say, the British royal family, we are actually committed to the idea of the concept of monarchy very much because we believe in the kingdom of God, which is a very monarchical image, isn't it?

And we're committed to Jesus Christ and Christ means king. And so at that level, we believe in kind of a divine monarchy. And so the concept, we can't necessarily reject holus bolus because God seems so committed to it in describing his own relationship with us and his world.

And I wonder if it's all undermined a bit because we're so democratic, this view of God as king or Jesus as king. When I was studying at Bible college, we were doing a class and just talking about sort of kingdom of God kind of stuff, Jesus as Christ and king and all that.

And a guy sort of stopped the class. It was the ultimate kind of barbecue stopper kind of thing to say. He stood up and said, well, I'm a chaplain in a high school.

[3 : 57] Those kids have no idea what a monarchy is. Therefore, this whole class is a waste of time. We need to reinvent all the images. We need to reinvent all the concepts because young people will just not get the idea of Jesus as king.

It's outdated. And so he was really just saying, we need to find new metaphors to describe God's relationship with us. Now, that really kind of, that's a good way to throw a class right out of action.

Now, I was sympathetic to him at one level because we do want to make Christianity understandable. We don't want to make it harder than it has to be for outsiders who have never had any Bible or anything to get into it.

We want to make Christianity accessible. But I think rather than dumb it down, I think what we need to do is teach up. Rather than water down the images, we need to teach people into them.

We need to actually learn what it means to serve a God who is a king, a God who manifests his relationship to us in a monarchy.

[4 : 57] And I think we need to acknowledge that we are babies at this. We've got the owl plates on in terms of what it means to be subjects of the kingdom of God. Do we really know what it means to serve King Jesus?

Do we really know what it means? What are we praying when we say, Father, your kingdom come? Do we really know what we're asking for? What does it mean that Jesus is our Lord?

What does it mean that he is king? What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus? And our lack of progress here manifests itself in almost every weakness of the Christian church in Australia can be almost tied down to this, that people treat church like a club rather than treating church like it's the worshipping army of the king of kings.

It's very different. Is it just a club or is it the worshipping army of the king of kings? Depending on your view, you'll have a very different relationship to church. Most of us, in the way we use our money and time, possibly reflect that we actually think Christianity is a hobby rather than we are serving a divine kingdom.

Do you see? The way we use our wallet and our diary says something about whether we're in a kingdom or in a hobby. Some of us, I think many of us probably even come to be part of the body of Christ, the church, still wearing our own little phony crowns, our little crowns of self-authority and self-absorption that we're in charge.

[6 : 40] And we actually fail to cast those down before the gleaming crown of King Jesus. You know, and we think we can hang on to our crown and yet worship him as king.

Well, the way monarchy works is you can only have one crown, you see. So, our plates betray us there. Many of us feel like, here's another example, many of us feel like whenever we do something for Jesus or for church, it immediately puts Jesus in our debt, you know, as if he owes us.

But in a monarchy, you used to serve the king. You're a subject of the king 24-7. You owe him the whole time. And then when you've served him, he doesn't owe you back. That's just how you relate to the king.

You're his subject. You know, God, Jesus owes us nothing. We deserve no rewards from him for our service. He's the king. I mean, and as king, he actually has the right to sort of, I mean, this is a shocking thing to say, but we assume that Jesus will want to receive our worship.

But it may be that the king could decide to not receive your worship. You know, on what grounds do we expect Jesus to receive our worship? Is it because, you know, he owes us because we got out of bed and got up to the alarm on Sunday morning?

[8 : 02] You know, that's not the way monarchy works, God's divine monarchy. Many of us walk our Christian life as if the kingdom of God is something that we can just dip into sometimes and then dip out of for a while, rather than actually see our whole bodies and resources as conscripted into the kingdom, conscripted by the blood of the king into his wonderful subjection and service all our days.

Do you see how this really affects the way we live our Christian walk? And these psalms we're looking at in January, these messianic psalms or kingly psalms, are a very helpful remedy, I think, for challenging our relationship with King Jesus.

And in these psalms, what the model is, is basically you have a kingdom in Israel with David and it foreshadows the reign of Jesus. And we can learn a lot about the way David reigned and the way he led about the reign of Jesus, both in imitating David and also doing what they had to do for David, we do for our king Jesus, who's the even greater king, the true son of God.

And interestingly, Psalm 132, it connects these two themes of kingdom and sanctuary or monarchy and worship.

And by worship, it has in mind the gathering worship of the people of God. In the Old Covenant, it's to do with the temple. And so a lot of this psalm is linking David and the temple.

[9 : 39] And it tells us a lot about what it means to follow King Jesus and to be a worshipper here today, which we've all come to do. So just let me give some examples from the psalm.

It starts by, it's a song of ascents. I'll explain that in a minute. That's important. And it starts by asking God to remember in David's favour all the hardship he endured and in particular, how he made this promise to God.

King David promised God, I will not enter my house or get into my bed. I will not give sleep to my eyes. I will not sleep until, what is David most passionate about?

Until I find a place for the Lord, a dwelling place for the mighty one of Jacob. King David's passion was worship, was the worship of God.

And he made an oath that actually he would have had to break, that he wanted there to be a place in Israel where the people of God could gather to worship God, where God would dwell.

[10:41] God had promised to be present in the Ark of the Covenant, in this golden box that had the Ten Commandments in it and some other relics of redemption. And it was moved around in the tabernacle, this sort of portable tent, which was a portable sort of place where they would go and meet and worship God.

And David didn't like the fact that he had a palace made of gold and brick, but God only had a tent. And so he made this oath. Now it turns out, if you read the story in 1 Kings or 1 Chronicles, that God said to David, it would have been very disappointing for King David, God actually said, you're not going to build it, your son will build it because you've shed too much blood.

You've been a warrior king and there's too much blood on your hands. And I'm sure that would have been heartbreaking for King David, but he was still delighted that his son would build this place. And so what this psalm becomes then is a song of ascent.

This is a psalm that would have been read when they upgraded from tabernacle to temple. And maybe every year they would rededicate the temple as a place of worship and they would pray this prayer asking God to be here as they worship.

And so verse 6-7, we heard of it, that is the ark, we heard of it in Ephrathah, we found it in the fields of Jha, that is there was a time when the ark wasn't in Jerusalem, it was just going around.

[12:07] And we said, let us go to his dwelling place, let us worship at his footstool. And then it imagines coming to the temple and asking God to be present among his people. Rise up, O Lord.

That's the ascent, the song of ascents. Rise up, O Lord, and go to your resting place, you and the ark of your might. That's the golden box. Let your priests be clothed with righteousness and your faithful shout for joy.

So they're saying, God, be here in our worship, receive our worship, make our worship righteous and right and joyful. And why?

Because of King David. For your servant David's sake, do not turn away the face of your anointed one. You know, God has the son of David and his son, each son is the Messiah, each son is the anointed one.

And they weren't all as good as David and they're really appealing to God based on David's love of worship to bless the worship of Israel. And I suspect here there's a sense of fear because not every king was as good as David.

[13:15] They're worried that God won't accept the worship because the king is not a man after God's own heart like David was. But the net effect of this prayer is saying, God, bless our worship because of your promises to King David.

And interestingly, last week, I made a very strong point about the role of king and priest was separate in the old covenant. Kings could not be priests. The only kingly priest was Melchizedek and Jesus, Psalm 110.

But a king couldn't be a priest. So kings' jobs were to rule, to run the government, to fight wars, protect the city. That was David's bloodshed.

He was a warrior. He was a soldier of God. And the priest's job was more to do with worship, was to lead the praises of God, to offer sacrifices in the temple. So you could think, well, David's a man's man.

He's an outdoors kind of bloke. He could easily have said, I'll just leave that temple worship stuff to the priests and I'll wield the sword and do kind of this blokey manly stuff.

[14:19] But that's actually not what David was like. Even though the roles never blended, David loved worship. King David loved worship and he was a model king who loved the praise and worship of God.

I mean, we know that David played the harp. We know that he was a musical. We know that he was a poet. He penned many, many of our psalms were written by David. He did everything he can to support the worship and the corporate praise of Israel.

Israel. There's a wonderful story. There's a few actually. In the building of the temple, he could have easily said, well, I'm king. I need all my gold. You guys raised the money or whatever.

But he actually freely submitted his kingship to worship by giving of his kingly treasury to build the temple. And there's a wonderful story of how David puts worship before his kingship in when the ark was coming back to Jerusalem.

He danced and he embarrassed himself. He embarrassed those around him because he was so happy, so full of worship and praise to God that God's ark was returning to Jerusalem.

[15:27] He stripped down and just started dancing, sort of stripped off his kingly robes and just honoured God and just showed his joy in God and exalted and showed his love just to praise and thank God.

And his wife, who clearly didn't love God as much as he did, despised him, it says. She said, why are you humiliating yourself? You're the king. And he would have said, but God is God.

I've got to worship God. And that's the heart of David. That's David's love for the worship of God.

Even though, in a sense, around the temple he has no special status.

He's just like every other Israelite. He doesn't have a special place as king because he's not a priest. He's just a member. But he loved to worship God.

And there seems to be this sort of game in the Old Testament between David and God. It's sort of this battle of blessing where David wants to do all this stuff for God and God says, no, no, no, no.

[16:26] I'm going to do stuff for you. And they seem to kind of keep going back and forward trying to exalt the other. And so, the best example of this is when David actually says to God, I'm going to build a house for you, God.

I'm going to build a temple for you. Isn't that good, God? I'm going to bless you. And God says, no, no, no. I'm going to build a house for you. I'm going to build a dynasty for you. I'm going to bless your sons. And so, there's this amazing kind of competitive exaltation between David and God.

And you see this in verses 11 where it speaks of God's promise back to David. Verse 1 and 2 were David's promise to God and now we have God's promise to David.

This is it. God will not turn back. One of the sons of your body I will sit on your throne. If your sons keep my covenant and my decrees that I shall teach them, their sons also forevermore shall sit on your throne.

So, the idea here is that God has actually invested in David's kingdom, David's monarchy so much that God has said it will run forever. There's a little kind of condition in there that the sons must keep the covenant but I don't think David would have felt the whole thing was very fragile that it's going to get broken quickly.

[17:41] I think David would have really thought it's going to go forever because God is so committed to it. I mean, God is the one who's going to set the son on the throne.

God shall teach them the decrees. So, there's a real hope for this monarchy that God is with it forever. And so, with God's commitment to the monarchy, because David was such a worshipful, kind of king, the commitment to the monarchy then overflows in the commitment to the place of worship.

And so then, following on from that, verse 13, the Lord has chosen Zion, he has desired it for his habitation. God has said, this is my resting place forever. Here I will reside for I have desired it.

I will abundantly bless his provisions, I will satisfy the poor with bread, its priests, I will clothe with salvation, its faithful, will shout for joy. God is saying, he will bless the worship of Israel. Why?

Because of the kingdom. Because he's first and foremost committed to the monarchy, he'll bless the worship that comes out of the monarchy. I will cause, verse 17, a horn to sprout for David.

[18:44] I have prepared a lamp for my anointed one. His enemies I will clothe with disgrace, but on him his crown will gleam. So this is a great hope that God will constantly be present and accept worship because of the monarchy of Israel.

It's on the merits of David in a way that God will accept their worship. Now the sad story is that the sons of David by and large were ratbags who failed as kings.

And very interestingly, how did David's sons, how did Solomon's sons fail as kings? They failed in worship. They failed to worship God alone.

They added Asherah poles and images of Baal. They added pagan rites of praise and worship into the life of Israel.

And because they failed in worship, they failed as kings. And eventually, God destroys the monarchy and the worship in one fell swoop using Babylon in 586 BC.

[19 : 52] And they are exiled. And eventually, they get to come back to Jerusalem. They rebuild the place of worship, but they never get the kingdom back. They never get the monarchy back.

And in the time of Jesus, they have a worship system without the monarchy. And it's not working. It doesn't work. The worship is based on the monarchy. You don't have the monarchy.

It doesn't work. But you have Jesus. He arrives in the line of David. He is a man of worship. Jesus is a man who loved God with his heart, soul, strength, and mind.

Jesus called himself the true temple, the true place of God's presence and the true place of worship. When Jesus walked the earth, people worshipped him.

They called him Lord and God. They bowed down at his feet. And Jesus himself is really the heart of both monarchy and of sanctuary.

[20 : 47] Jesus is the heart of kingdom and he's the heart of worship. And the amazing thing is that he dies on the cross for sin and then in rising from the dead he is made king.

In his resurrection Jesus is, I don't know the right word, it's his coronation as king in the resurrection. And so Jesus goes to the right hand of God to worship the father and now through the king we worship the father forever.

We can pray to God, God will hear your prayer, he will accept your worship in Jesus' name. You now worship God very much literally through the king. You worship through the king.

And basically what I would say the kingdom of God is, it's a realm where people are gathered to praise and worship the father through the son in the power of his spirit.

That's what the kingdom of God is and it's growing. It's growing week by week. Now just let me make some concluding comments about worship.

[21 : 54] Friends, Israel was bound to one location to worship God. They were bound to Zion. But what has happened in the resurrection is that Zion has expanded because Jesus now rules over the whole earth.

He can be worshipped anywhere on earth in his name. You can get to the father. And so the location of our worship is really irrelevant because Jesus is lifted above all.

And another thing that is different is that the building no longer is pivotal the way it was for Israel. The temple was pivotal. It had God's architecture in it. It was a place of sacrifice.

That's not like us. When you go to the New Testament the building of God are you, the people. You are the temple of the spirit. God's spirit dwells in you.

So you are the church. The building is not the church. You are the church. You are the building, the true building in that sense. And so wherever we go we could just go into the car park and do exactly the same thing we do in here.

[23 : 00] It would be fine. God would accept it through Jesus. So the building is largely irrelevant. But I do want to say one thing it's not irrelevant is and probably many will disagree with me on this one so I'll just have a crack at it.

The day is not irrelevant. The day is not irrelevant in my view because Sunday is resurrection day. Sunday is the Lord's day.

And if we can only worship through the king we ought to at least worship the king on coronation day. Does that make sense? Sunday is coronation day.

It was a big deal for the early Jewish Christians to change the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. Why did they do it? Because it was the day Jesus became king and you accessed the father through the king.

And so it at least seems fitting and most appropriate for the people of God to gather Lord's day by Lord's day coronation day by coronation day to worship the father through the son king in the power of the spirit.

[24 : 10] And there's a sense in which I think by doing it on Sunday we really do by faith connect heavenly realities with earthly realities because where else on earth can you go anytime to hear the news that Jesus is king where you would just go to any Christian church any resurrection day any Lord's day and you'll see the heaven realities in the gathering of the people of God so really there's a sense in which heaven meets earth in our coronation day gathering and so it's a great day we

celebrate in the Lord's supper his death his rescue of us we celebrate the defeat of Satan and the defeat of sin on the cross it's a great launch to our week Sunday is meant to be the first day of the week so that on coronation day we go into our weeks serving the king yes worshipping the king and all we do but we do it with the momentum gathered on coronation day and then in the next coronation day we come back and re-energize re-encourage each other bring people back in that we've met during the week that we want to join the kingdom and they're baptized in the name of the father son and spirit and week by week the worship grows the kingdom of

God spreads and the father is honoured through his son king so friends let me just conclude with these questions are you committed to the king of kings are you committed to the divine monarchy if you are how is that reflected in your worship have you structured your week around the coronation of king jesus have you structured your week your life around the coronation of king jesus the broad paradigm that we see in psalm 132 is this that the king leads and gathers the people for worship it's a distinguishing characteristic of all god's people that they gather on coronation day and the promise i think of this psalm is that as they appealed for god to receive worship for david's sake god will always receive our worship for jesus sake through the blood of christ god is pleased to accept our praise even when you're not a good singer like me or whatever or you know whatever god is pleased to accept our worship in the name of jesus christ and through his blood and you know it's it's a psalm then that we can claim and the sort of conclusion applies to us the enemies of the king god will clothe with disgrace but on him his crown will glean so my challenge to you is to lay down your personal crowns before the king of kings and worship him day by day culminating each week in coronation day worship with your brothers and sisters in christ that were brought with his blood who are sitting next to you today let's pray for god to bless our worship dear father we thank you for giving your son in fulfillment of david's kingdom to be the true king of kings and lord of lords at your right hand thank you lord jesus that you mediate our worship and make it acceptable to god the father and thank you lord jesus you are constantly praying on our behalf and taking our prayers to the father as well please father i pray that you bless holy trinity and our coronation day gatherings sunday by sunday and we pray that they would structure and shape and energize our whole week to live as subjects of your kingdom amen