

The Maker's Recall

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[0 : 00] And Psalm 24 is our main focus this evening, which you probably expected. We were in Psalm 22 yesterday morning and Psalm 23 this morning.

So the predictions of those in the vestry were right. We're in Psalm 24 this evening. Some of you might recall thinking back probably over a year now, actually, the scandal that hit the newspapers and the news broadcasts in relation to Volkswagen.

The cars that were produced for the period were advertised and they were sold as coming up to a certain specification in terms of emissions. But it was discovered after they were tested that they weren't performing as they should have been.

They were damaging to the environment, more damaging than they had declared themselves to me. So what happened after this investigation?

What happened when all this came out into the open? Well, it was a maker's recall. And all the cars that were affected, all the cars which were seen to be substandard, all the cars that had malfunctioned or were never actually performing as they should have been, they were recalled to the maker.

[1 : 23] More recently, you'll remember the story about the Samsung phone, the Samsung Galaxy Note phone. Supposed to be all singing, supposed to be all dancing, the phone to have.

But within a few weeks it emerged that it had a fundamental problem. Although it may have been full of apps and able to do many different things, the problem it had was it was catching fire.

So what happened? Well, it was a maker's recall. All the devices that were affected were recalled to receive attention from the manufacturer, from the creator, from the maker.

And the first point that I'd like to note this evening in relation to this psalm is we read of a maker's recall. Verses 1 and 2.

The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein. For he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.

[2 : 43] What do we learn here? God's word is his revelation of himself. So who do we see here as we begin the psalm with David?

As he is inspired by God, as God is revealing himself to the psalmist, what is the first thing that we see? Well, the first thing we see is that God is our maker.

And we see here that the world that we are part of, the earth, it is not ours. We don't hold title to it. We are not owners of it. But we read here, as it has it in another translation, the earth is the Lord's and everything in it.

So everything that we claim to possess, everything that we live in, everything that we sleep in, everything that we work with, everything that we relax in, everything that we put in the bank, everything that we store away in safe places, everything that we value and we list on forms as assets, in ultimate reality, they are not ours.

[4 : 07] They are his. And that is a truth. Which, if it was accepted, and if it was fully grasped, how transformative that would be, both of our lives and of the world that we live in.

So many of the wars and the quarrels that we read of and we hear of, whether they are international, global disputes or local quarrels, whether they are over a strip of land and a fence or battleships and how far they should go into certain waters, at the heart of these disputes, so often when we analyze them, they are driven by a deep desire to own and to claim title to some area of land, to some asset, to some resource, to something that is deemed to be valuable.

And yet, in the light of Scripture, in the light of these opening verses in particular, we own nothing. Because he, the Lord, our maker, ultimately he owns everything.

And all that we are allowed to handle for a while, it's his. Not ours. The earth is the Lord's and everything in it.

The fullness. They're off. So when we think about the mess that we're in in terms of this world, when we think about the damage that's caused by battles to own this and that, yes, these things are damaging to us at the relational level, as tenants of this world, as stewards in this world, but ultimately, these battles are an offense.

[6 : 17] against God, because he is the creator. And he is the sustainer. And he is the owner of everything that we have.

To everything that we have, we need to hold loosely, because we need to realize we don't have it. we don't own it.

It's the Lord's. It's not only everything that we have, but it's also all that we are. It's not just the possessions and the things that we can touch and see, but it's we ourselves.

There is not a soul in this world. God, now or in times past or in times to come, that is not his. Even those who are most vehemently against him, even the most vocal atheist, the most violent terrorist, the most depraved dictator tyrant, they are gods.

He is the one who made them. And he is the one whom they will stand before on the last day. The earth, the fullness thereof, everything, everyone in it, God is our maker.

[7 : 56] We are his. And I wonder in application here, do we see that? And do we realize that?

And do we accept that? Do we have a big enough view of our God? Jamie Phillips wrote a book in the 70s, I think it was, entitled, your God is too small.

Is your view of God too small? Dale Ralph Damus, the commentator, he writes in relation of this psalm, David simply wants to keep you from punifying Yahweh, from thinking that he is simply the divine mascot of some Middle Eastern ghetto.

No, says Davis, the earth, the world, the whole shooting match is his. So what does that mean for you and I this evening?

well, it means that you are not your own. You and I belong to God.

[9 : 23] We were made by God. Before the foundation of this world, he determined he would make us. Think Ephesians 1.

In the womb, he knew us. Think Psalm 139. He's numbered our days. You're not your own.

And that gives you and every human being that walks this earth such dignity and such worth and such purpose.

There is no one who is an accident. We never get to look at anybody in a despising, disparaging way.

They are not an accident. No one is an accident. We are not the insignificant byproduct of some chemical reaction. You and I were made by God.

[10 : 25] You and I were made for God. And we thrive when we are in relationship with him.

We thrive when we can say with the psalmist in Psalm 23, the Lord is my shepherd. scared. But you know, we break down and we become confused and lost and frustrated and dysfunctional.

We decay, we malfunction when the relationship with God breaks down. And that's why our world looks the way it does.

That's the story of this world. It's the story of your life and mine. Sin came in through Adam, through the fall.

Sin drove us out of that intimacy, that relationship with God and now as a race, fallen man, is dysfunctional by nature.

[11 : 37] And yet the God who made us, the God whom we turned our backs on through the fall, the God who sees the rebellion in our hearts, the God that this world shakes its fist at and says, we don't need you, the God who is defied and who is rejected and who is despised and who is spat on and mocked and scourged and killed.

He's recalling us to the gospel. Just as Volkswagen, Samsung, the makers of that batch of dysfunctional goods recall them.

our God, our maker, looks in love at the sorry state that we are in because of our sin and he recalls us. And this psalm and indeed the whole gospel, the whole Bible is a book which is essentially a divine recall.

and that's got to be good news for us. The God of all creation, the God of heaven and earth speaks to us as individuals and what does he say?

He says, I love you and I want you, my creation, to know me and to live close to me.

[13:11] You have wandered, you are far from me, but he calls us back. There is the makers recall.

Secondly, there is the master's requirements. And the master's requirements come and are introduced in the form of a question.

As those who are lost, as those who are far from God, as those who are enemies, those who are fallen, God in love, looks at us, he recalls us, but there is a problem. The problem is the requirements, it's the bar that he sets for entry.

The master's requirements and we read of them in verse 3. The question is asked of the psalmist, who may ascend the hill of the Lord?

Who may stand in his holy place? Or in other words, who is it that can come? We may hear the call, but who can come? Who can draw near to this holy and pure God?

[14:22] Who can come into his presence and stay in his presence? Who is it that can enjoy communion with him? That's the question.

And then the answer follows from verse 4. As the requirements are listed, he who has clean hands and a pure heart who does not lift up his soul to what is false.

Another translation says, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false. He will receive blessing from the Lord and his righteousness from the God of his salvation.

such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, the face of God, the God of Jacob.

There's the master's requirements. Let's think about them for a moment. What are the requirements for entry into the presence of this God who calls us?

[15:29] Well, there are four that are listed here. We are to have clean hands. And hands refers to what we do.

Hands addresses the way that we live our lives. So to have clean hands is to have a life that is free from wrongdoing. A life that is blameless.

A life that is free from charges of wrong and inconsistency and hypocrisy. Who can come? Those who have clean hands.

Those whose lives are they stand up to scrutiny. I wonder is anyone here willing to put a hand up and say, well, that's me.

I am it. sometimes we look at people and we see from a distance lives that look something like that. Remember Daniel in the cut and thrust of political life.

[16:37] His enemies see him and his enemies hate him. And they want to take him down. And so the smear campaign starts and they start to dig for dirt, much like we're seeing in the US unfolding in the political battle that's going on there.

They want to take Daniel down so they start going through the archives. They start going through his private life. They go through everything looking for dirt that they can stick to him. Looking for blame that they could attribute to him but the more they looked the less they found.

And ultimately at the end of the search they found nothing. His hands appeared to be clean. And the person who is called and able to come into the presence of God needs to have such a life.

Not simply from a distance but up close. Clean hands. Nothing. No skeletons in the wardrobe. But that's just requirement number one. Requirement number two is more searching still. clean hands verse four a pure heart.

[17:55] And this surely is where we all fall. If our hearts are exposed surely we see that we are condemned.

Jesus shows us that does he not in Matthew five on the Sermon on the Mount. And he addresses the crowd and he says you've heard it said don't murder.

We can imagine them nod. We haven't murdered. Nodding approvingly. Our hands are clean but then Jesus says what about anger?

that's heart murder. You've heard it said don't commit adultery. Maybe some could put their hands up and say well I haven't done that.

And Jesus goes deeper into the heart level. He says what about looking lustfully where you shouldn't? That's sin.

[18:59] That attracts judgment too. and this is where we all fall. Because none of us can tick off requirement number two.

If we have any sense of how our hearts are. Our hands may be cleanish in some areas but our hearts are not.

Jeremiah 17 9 says the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Who can know it? as we continue down this list it's a sorry tale.

What are the master's requirements? Clean hands, blameless life, pure heart. Speaking to somebody the other day who sat their driving test and within the first five minutes of their driving test they did one of these major errors.

And they knew at minute number six of the 30 minute test they'd failed. And yet they had to continue for another 25 minutes knowing that they'd failed. That's how I approach this list.

[20 : 15] we fail on number one really. We double fail on number two. But as we carry on down the list we just see more and more that convicts us.

Who can come? What are the entry requirements? Clean hands, pure heart, no idols. idols. The person who comes is one who does not lift up his soul to an idol.

Who does not lift up his soul to what is false as it says in the ESV. I wonder is anybody here who could say well I have an utterly idol free life.

Well in terms of having graven images and sacred places in our homes I'm sure we have no idols of that nature. But we have idols.

Sometimes our idols are people. People that we want to please and find approval from more so than we want to please and find approval from God.

[21 : 25] Sometimes there are our jobs good things. But when our jobs are all consuming and they consume all our time and our energy and we've got nothing left to give because our job is everything.

It's gone from being a good thing to a God thing. Sometimes it's our leisure, our hobbies, music, sport, good things.

things. But when these things creep up the list of our priorities and they keep us from walking close with God and attending the means of grace, they have become elevated from good things to God things.

They are idols. habits. And if we're honest, we all have them. But they debar us from stepping forward in response to our maker's recall.

Dale Ralph Davis says, there can be no divided affections. One's devotion must be to the Lord alone. Clean hands, pure heart, no idols, no lies.

[22 : 50] It says in verse 4, we have this picture of one who does not swear deceitfully, who does not swear by what is false. Another translation puts it so simply that one who never tells lies.

is there anybody here who's never told a lie? Never told a half truth? Never used any kind of mild flattery to gain advantage and favor?

So these are the requirements. Clean hands, pure heart, no idols, no lies. absolute integrity of speech, absolute undivided devotion to God.

These types of people, says the Lord. These types of people, says the psalmist, as he's inspired by God. These are the ones who will be blessed. These are the ones who can seek and find God.

These are the entry requirements for coming forward and being fit to enter and rest in God's presence. There's the criterion.

[24 : 07] So how did you do? Did we pass? I certainly didn't. The truth is nobody else did either.

We all fail. None of us pass. and unlike the sliding scales of our day, God's entry requirements, they do not change.

In university, we have these clearing processes. The bar is set. The pass mark is detailed. But if there is a response where lots of people don't make it, the entry level often is lowered to allow some people to access.

But no such process is there with God. you either meet his perfect, sinless standard, or you don't. And the problem is you don't.

And neither do I. There is none righteous. Not one. And so at this point in the psalm, there's this tension.

[25 : 19] The maker, our maker, he recalls us. and yet he sets a standard, an entry requirement that we just can't, we can't meet.

And so it seems like entry into God's presence, that blessing, that salvation, it's inaccessible. the hill climbers here, there's bound to be one or two.

One of the Monroes, I've never been there, but one of the Monroes is called the inaccessible pinnacle. And if you've ever seen pictures of it, it looks just that, it looks absolutely inaccessible. But those who have expertise in these matters know that it's not inaccessible. It's possible to get there. There is hope.

And as we continue in the psalm, we're given a hint that the blessing that we crave and the salvation that we need and the presence of God that we thirst for, it looks inaccessible.

[26 : 34] But it's not beyond reach. Because this holy God who recalls us, he is, verse 6, the God of Jacob.

Do you remember Jacob? If you don't know Jacob, you can go back to Genesis and read about Jacob. If you know about him, think about his life.

Did he have clean hands? No. Did he have a pure heart? No. Was he idol-free? No. Was he one who never told lies or spoke or acted with deceit?

He was far from that person. And yet he came to know God. He sought blessing from and he received blessing from God even though his life was far from the standard, the requirements that are set here.

So how did that happen? How can sinners like Jacob, how can sinners like you and I, how can those who have filthy hands and impure hearts, how can we come to God and find blessing and salvation?

[27 : 50] Well, we need a majestic redeemer. There is the maker's recall. There is the master's requirements that are so high and it looks like the way is barred.

But then we begin to see the majestic redeemer whom we need and whom we long for. The building question of the psalm is can there be salvation?

Who is there that can usher us into God's presence? How can the inaccessible become accessible? How can the impossible become possible?

And the question is answered in the resounding chorus that sounds out from verse 7. Will there be a saviour? Will there be a king?

And the answer is praise the Lord, yes, gates. And we begin to see him as the psalm points us forward.

[28 : 59] Lift up your heads, O gates, and be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the king of glory may come in. Who is the king of glory?

The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, gates, and lift them up, O ancient doors, that the king of glory may come in.

Who is the king of glory? The Lord of hosts. He is the king of glory. Who is coming into focus here? Who is the psalmist pointing us forward to? Who is it that we are beginning to see? Jesus. That's who.

He is the Lord. The Lord of lords. He is the king, the king of kings. He is the savior. And he is the only one who is able to take us into the presence of God.

[30 : 14] He is the only one who is able to take us into heaven. We could not ascend the hill of God because of our sin stained hands and our impure hearts.

But Jesus, he descended. He condescended from the heights of glory to the horrors of Golgotha for us.

God. And so it's Jesus that we see when the everlasting gates are opened. It's Jesus that we see when the ancient doors lift.

Jesus, the God man, and in his deity, in his godliness, he is perfect. Sinless, with absolutely clean hands and a wonderfully pure heart.

And the gospels that we have testify to the wonder of that. In his deity, he lived that sinless, blameless, pure life.

[31 : 36] that we could never live. And yet, in his humanity, as the one who condescended, he was able to stand in the place of the sinner.

He was able to take our sin and Jacob's sin and the sin of all his people upon his shoulders. Peter tells us he bore them on the tree. He made atonement as he hung there.

the king, the king of the Jews, it said, above the cross.

The king of glory is the one whom we see. The eternally majestic one who redeemed us with his blood.

the sin that we could not defeat and shake. He went to war with.

[32 : 44] He took from us the devil, the enemy of our soul that we cannot overcome. He engaged in battle. And because he is the Lord, strong and mighty in battle, he overcame.

Making a public spectacle in the victory that he won. And that's what we remember today. Those present.

We remember the wonder of the fact that he, Jesus, he has done it.

what we could never do, the access we could never have. He has done it.

He is the one who ushers us into the presence of God. He overcame. And because he did, because he perfectly met the master's requirements, you and I can respond to our maker's recall and find forgiveness and blessing in the presence of God in time and for all eternity if we will simply turn in faith to him.

[34 : 31] Have you turned in faith to Jesus? Have you called upon the name of the Lord?

Have you confessed your sin? Have you asked for his forgiveness? forgiveness? Have you asked that he will do for you what you can never do for yourself?

If not, do it now, today. If you hear his voice, do not harden your heart, the psalmist says, but come to him.

And if you have strayed, come back to him and find rest and joy and peace and life in the presence of the God who loves us, who gave himself for us, and who calls us to return to him.

Amen. Let's pray. Thank you, Lord, that once more we see that the gospel is not about what we have done or are doing or could ever do.

[36 : 12] We see that the way into your presence is so far beyond us. And we thank you that you show us that in love so that we will come to an end of ourselves and look in faith to Jesus and come to him.

Enable us to do so, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.