

A Marriage Made For Heaven

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[0 : 0 0] Let's turn together to Psalm 45 in the book of Psalms. Psalm 45, we're going to look at verses 6 to 17, the second part of the psalm. We looked at the first part, verses 1 to 5 last time, so we're just going to finish off looking at the psalm just to get the whole picture. Well, most of us, I'm sure most people will always be excited at the prospect of royal weddings. The most recent one, William and Kate, still is in people's memories, I'm sure, just like another one before, when William's father, Charles, married the late princess Diana.

And of course, that awakens such a lot of excitement and interest, not only in our own nation, but actually throughout the world, and the media publicity, the pomp, the ceremony, the glory, the splendor, all of these things that are attached to royal weddings, especially when they're prominent, royals are things that we're well used to. And yet, that's really nothing compared to what you find described here. Because here's a royal wedding, a wedding between the king, who is Jesus Christ, as we saw last time from the first five verses. The New Testament makes it clear that this psalm is particularly applicable to Christ in his kingship. And so, we come to the second part, which talks about the king's marriage. And that New Testament helps us there as well, because the New Testament, in many places, like the chapter we read in

Ephesians, refers to the marriage between Christ and his church. The relationship between Christ and his church is spoken of in terms of a marriage, and in terms of the Lord taking his people to himself and uniting them to himself in a living relationship that can be pictured as a marriage. And indeed, that's the way that Ephesians 5 uses it, that as it is between Christ and the church, so it is to be in marriage in human terms as well. Now, we saw in verses 1 to 5 that the Lord is pictured there as a great warrior king, and that he is armed for battle, that he uses the various weapons there in leading the campaign in his own cause. But of course, that's, as we saw, to be regarded spiritually, especially, especially the Lord uses the weapons of his truth, of his word. He comes to assault our minds by his word. His power is expressed through his truth. It's not an encouragement, as some people think, that the Bible gives to violence and to Christians to act violently, and making religion, therefore, a means of encouraging violence. It's nothing to do with that. It's to do with the Lord as our spiritual king, coming to bring us under his own dominion by, as we'll see today, bringing our minds to be willingly united to himself. He comes to invade our hearts and our minds, using the weapons of his truth in order to bring us to be joined to him in salvation. And just as it is, usually at weddings, you have a certain number of speeches. Well, so it is here as well. Although, as we'll see, it talks here about the bride not yet quite being by the king's side. She's in her own chamber.

She's just getting ready to leave her own house, her own chamber, which was the practice in those days, in order to make her way to the king's palace, to the one she's going to be married to.

[3 : 5 7] That was the practice. You left your own house, and you went to the place where you were to be married. That's the picture you've got here. She is in her chamber, verse 13, and as they make their way along to the king's palace, where the wedding is going to take place, the king is waiting for her, and the wedding will take place there. Well, the speeches are actually addressed, while this is actually the case. It's not after they've been married, and the way we have speeches at our reception.

There's a speech, first of all, here, to the king himself, by whoever it is. Well, the psalmist is saying this is what is in his mind to do. So it's a picture of a speech being given, but it's addressed to the bridegroom, firstly, to the king, verses 6 to 9. And then you have a speech to the queen, verses 10 to 15, where it speaks about various things that she has to do in relation to the king and her relationship with him. And then there's finally, in verses 16 and 17, although it's addressed particularly to the king, it's essentially to both of them. There's a speech to them both.

And it's looking to the future of the relationship between them. So we're going to follow these three speeches, as we've called them, just looking at the details, or most of the details in the speech, first of all, to the king. Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness. And so on, verses 6 to 9. It's, first of all, a reign which is going to last forever and ever. There's a whole lot of debate, isn't there, over the last few years in our own nation between various people. And you see it on the media from time to time.

When is the queen going to hand over to Charles? When is he going to actually come to be king after all of these years of waiting? Well, of course, nobody knows that. And the queen looks likely that she'll just continue. And when she dies, as she will one day, and if Charles survives her, then he will be replaced, replace her, and become king. But there is no such replacement in this instance. The reign of this king goes on forever and ever. There is no need for him to be replaced, because he himself has an everlasting reign. The reign of Jesus Christ will not end. The reign of Christ continues, not only through the course of the history of the world, but right on into eternity, and every single being will actually come to acknowledge that he is the rightful king.

And many people know that will not acknowledge him as the rightful king, and don't give King Jesus the rights that he claims through the Bible are his. Many people despise the very idea that he would actually, that we would actually have such a person who we cannot see physically with our eyes.

[7 : 07] And a lot of people of a secular humanist persuasion will just talk about these things of the Bible as fairy tales, and that we're guilty of believing in fairy tales. Well, this is no fairy tale, because you know that this person is real to yourself, that he's the king of your life, and that you believe the Bible's word, that he will be the king of the universe forever.

And the remarkable thing here is that it speaks about the king as God. Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. And that's speaking to the person that's described in the first five verses.

This warrior king who is Jesus, in verse 6, your throne, O God, is forever and ever. And you'll find a lot of different groups trying to change the wording here because they don't believe in the deity of Jesus.

They don't believe that Jesus is actually God. If you go to Jehovah's, listen to Jehovah's Witnesses, for example, when they come to your door and they start disputing that Jesus is not really God, he was created. They say, just like any one of us, and you take them to bits in the Bible, like this, which demonstrate that he is God. They'll say, ah, but that's not how you should translate it.

And they will say something like, the throne of God is forever and ever. Or, your throne is God forever and ever.

[8 : 45] which doesn't really make much sense, but that's how they would translate it. Another different translation. Now, all of these are actually an attempt to get round the obvious.

Because the words in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament here in Psalm 45 are exactly as they are translated there. Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.

It's one of the great texts in the Bible to demonstrate who Jesus is. Who is this person? He is God. He is the Son of God, a person of the Trinity, and in every sense He is God, just as the Father and the Spirit are.

And Hebrews, the letter to the Hebrews, in the opening chapter of that letter, there's a series of comparisons made between Jesus and different other people and Jesus and angels.

And that's because we're taken through these steps so that we'll come to the same conclusion that the writer there is coming to, and that is that Jesus is superior.

[10 : 01] He is above. He has supremacy over all of these creatures, over these human beings and even angels, including Moses and the angels in heaven, even the chiefest angels.

Not to any of these did He say, Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. But He said it to him. God the Father said it to him, His Son, Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.

Give thanks today. when you pray to Jesus, when you pray, give thanks that you know that He's God, that He has demonstrated that He's God to your own heart.

And never let go of that conviction in your own mind that your Savior is God and that it's God who reigns in your life in Jesus Christ.

your throne, O God, is forever and ever. Not only is it a lasting reign, it's also a righteous reign. A reign that's marked by righteousness.

[11 : 13] The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness, of righteousness. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore, God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.

Now, what does that say? Well, let's say something that's uniquely true of Christ. The kings in the Old Testament were charged by God to reign in righteousness, to exercise their authority righteously, compassion, understanding, consideration of the poor. These and other things were to be part of the way a king actually exercised his kingship because he was supposed to and meant to reflect God reigning in righteousness. Many kings didn't. Many kings and sovereigns to this day don't. Sadly, they're not by unrighteousness, by selfishness, by sinful behavior. But Christ is a king that reigns in righteousness. And we're thankful for that because our world is full of unrighteousness.

[12 : 34] And we need to know that the throne of the universe, the throne above all other thrones, the throne that is going to bring all things to a rightful conclusion, that that throne is a righteous throne.

That's why Paul, when he wrote one of his final letters in 2 Timothy, he was looking at his life running out. I am now ready to be offered, ready to be poured out as the way he's thinking about it. The time of my departure has arrived. He goes on to speak about how he finished the course and kept the faith. Henceforth, he says, from now on, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me at that day.

Not only to me, but to all those who love his appearance. You see, when you're looking for Christ to come back and fulfill your hopes that he will establish his final reign forever and ever in the new heavens and the new earth, and that we shall be with him to share in the glory of that, it's to a righteous king that you're looking.

You're looking to a judge king who will come in righteousness and deal with everything and everyone righteously. That's why Psalm 72 has the same emphasis.

[14 : 11] Endow the king with righteousness. Give his son that righteousness. as well as we've been singing a few minutes ago in that psalm.

May he judge the people, your people, with righteousness. Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people and the hills in righteousness. And there in these verses you've got righteousness mentioned so many times.

Acting righteously, uprightly, properly, in accordance with God's own nature and God's own demands. That is who your king is.

But you notice this word therefore, in the middle of verse 7 there, you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness, therefore God, your God, has anointed you.

Obviously, there's a distinction there between God and this king. That doesn't make him less than God, but it brings in distinctions which the New Testament makes clear belong to God as Trinity.

[15 : 24] Distinction between the king who is the son of God and God here mentioned as his God that is the father. Mystery of that Trinity and that glorious truth that is in many parts, in many respects, so beyond our comprehension and understanding of it, but it's a great truth and one which our whole salvation is founded upon.

It is God as three persons, one God who worked out your salvation, each of the persons having his own role in that.

That's by the way. But he's saying here therefore, in the words, in consequence of what you find there in the beginning of verse 7, in consequence of having loved righteousness and hated wickedness, therefore God your God has anointed you with the oil of gladness.

In other words, we're brought again to the New Testament emphasis on the quality of Christ's work. The quality of his ministry in this world from his coming into it to his leaving it to go back to glory. The quality especially of his death and his resurrection and his obedience in both. And that is the way in which, in consequence of that, God exalted him.

[16 : 51] Remember in Philippians chapter 2, there's a great passage there dealing with how Jesus came to be a servant, and as a servant that he was obedient unto death, and having done all of that perfectly, therefore God has highly exalted him.

In consequence of, as a direct result of the perfection and quality of what he did, God exalted him. God set him at his own right hand.

That's what you've got in a prophetic sense here. Therefore God your God has anointed you. In other words, we should think of the oil of gladness beyond your companions.

Oil, of course, was used in the Old Testament to anoint kings like David when they came into office. It's part of the way that they were appointed to office or ordained to office.

And what you find here is that it's called the oil of gladness. That's obviously joy. Christ has been anointed with joy above anyone else.

[18:04] Beyond your companions. And that anointing of joy is particularly in his exaltation. In consequence of the work that he did and finished here on earth, God has anointed him with the oil of gladness.

With the oil of rejoicing at his right hand. He has made him glad, as Psalm 21 puts it, with his countenance.

And that is why you have such emphasis here of fragrance. Your robes are fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia.

The oil of gladness, you think of oil as being poured out on the king's head, someone like David, and then soaking down perhaps into the garments, and all of the perfumed oil that would have been used, the wonderful fragrance of it, coming to soak into the garments, the milk, the myrrh, the aloes, the cassia.

It fills the place with fragrance. That's what the picture is of Christ exalted, the Lord exalted and anointed with the oil of gladness, so that when you think of Christ and his exaltation, there is, if you like, the fragrance of joy, the fragrance of heaven and its joys about him.

[19:37] Some of the old saints used to speak about when Jesus came near to them and when they were aware of his presence, they spoke about the fragrance of his presence, because he comes near to reveal to us what he's really like.

This is what he's really like. He is the exalted warrior king anointed with the oil of gladness, carrying that fragrance into your heart as he comes to have fellowship with you, through his word, through his spirit.

So, there's a speech to the king. Now, we're going to have to rush through the speech to the queen, because, verse 9, there's, at your right hand stands the queen in gold of ophir.

In other words, the picture is complete at that point. The queen is standing by the side of the king.

But then it changes to the way that she made her way towards standing at the king's side.

That's what you've got from verse 10 through to verse 15. The way that the queen made her way as a princess before she was married to him, to stand at his side, to take her place at his side.

[21:02] Well, here is what the speech to the queen has. First of all, there's a severance from her family. This is true, of course, of all ordinary marriages as well.

Hear, O daughter, and consider and incline your ear. Forget your people and your father's house, and the king will desire your beauty. Genesis has a man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife.

That's what Ephesians 5 picks up. But here the relationship is looked at from the bride's side. She also is leaving her home. She also is putting a distance now between where she was brought up and the king that she's going to be married to.

There's a severance. You know, in marriages ordinarily too, there should be that same kind of element, a demonstration of leaving.

I mean, for example, you'll find, in most cases, at least certainly in church weddings, that there is a procession of the bride into the ceremony or the service to take her place beside the groom that she's going to be marrying.

[22:24] And she's given away. Her father usually, or somebody, if her father isn't able to do it or has passed away, somebody who's directly related or closely related or a very close friend, she is given away.

That giving away is exactly what you find here and is a demonstration that there is a severance taking place. And it's particularly so when you find a father coming with his daughter, bringing his daughter up the aisle, leaving her, handing her over to the one she's just going to be married to in a moment.

Then he makes his way away and sits and that's it, there's a severance. She's left home. There's a new relationship about to begin. And that's how it is too with ourselves in our spiritual journey.

There's a severance with the world. The place we called home until we came to the Lord to be married to him. And there's a severance with the world in order to be married to him.

And that's what we're told here, oh daughter, this is the speech that's addressed to ourselves today as the saved people of God if we're in a living relationship with Christ today. And if not, we are being called into it.

[23 : 44] Hear this. Consider, incline your ear, give careful attention to this. Forget your people and your father's house. Not in the sense in which you no longer remember them or deal with them in any way at all, but in the way in which there is a distinct separating and severance in order to take your place by the side of the king in relationship with him.

And there's homage to the king as well. Since he is your lord, bow to him. Because the husband in this relationship is actually the lord.

And since he is your lord, bow to him. This is the church being addressed in such a way as makes it clear that her allegiance and her homage and her obedience is to this king.

That is where she must first actually look to see who she is responsible to and answerable to. Because she is married to him.

And you see, although she is leaving her father's house and coming into the king's palace and coming to be in homage to him as her lord, she is not a loser by that.

[25 : 04] Because verse 12, the people of Ty will seek your favour with gifts, the richest of the people. In other words, if you think of a king like Solomon, who had gathered all of these riches from the surrounding nations that he had brought under his control, and the gold that he had brought from all of these lands to Jerusalem, that was demonstrated in his glorious temple, and palace, and so on, all of that comes to be the property of his bride.

His riches become her riches. And whatever that may have been for Solomon, or for David, it was certainly the case, it is certainly the case in the spiritual relationship that God's people have with Jesus Christ, their king and their husband.

All the riches that he has, obtained as king, they are for them. They come to possess them. They are not losers, they are actually gainers by coming to leave their father's house and be married to him.

Nobody here, as a Christian, will say that they are a loser by whatever they have had to turn their back on and leave and lose and give up in order to have Christ.

It's then that the riches have really come into your life. The king's riches belong to you. And that's why he has them, to share them with his people.

[26 : 41] Talks then about her beauty. All glorious is the princess in her chamber, with robes interwoven with gold.

Now we say that's a picture of the bride just about to enter the journey towards the palace. She's still in her chamber, but she is all glorious.

She's decked out with the finest garments. It's the most magnificent wedding dress you've ever seen. And you will never see any other one as magnificent as this.

they're all females, the ladies especially, when it comes to a wedding. This is one of the really interesting things about the wedding, isn't it?

When the bride appears in the doorway, gasps. Look at her dress. Isn't she magnificent? Yes, most of the time that's the case.

[27 : 43] But here is God saying about his people as they are decked out in the salvation that God gives to his people as they are on their journey to join him finally in the palace to be with him there forever.

Their glow, their clothes, their decked out, this bride, this church of Christ is decked out, all glorious with robes, interwoven with gold.

You just hold your breath when you see it. it's just too beautiful for words. And she is led to the king. I think it's a marvelous emphasis again how in an ordinary marriage you have, as we said, you have this procession, you have the person giving the bride away, leading the bride up to the bridegroom, giving her away and leaving her there going to take his seat.

When God created a wife for Adam, he said, it is not good that the man should be alone. I will make for him a helpmeet, a suitable companion, one like himself.

[29 : 02] But when he had created Eve, you actually read that he brought her to the man God was giving her away to be married to Adam.

That was the institution of marriage. And when you come to Ephesians 5, there is another interesting emphasis there following the same pattern.

Jesus loved the church and gave himself for her. Why? So that he would sanctify her by the washing of water by his word so that he would use his power and the power of his truth to make her into the splendid bride that she will be when she will be finally glorified so that he might present her to himself.

He's going to lead her up the aisle, but he's also going to be the person to whom she's going to be married forever. he's going to present her to himself a glorious church without spot, without wrinkle, without defect or any such thing.

That's what you've got here a picture of. In many colored robes she is led to the king. With joy and gladness they are led along as they enter the palace of the king.

[30 : 31] Now you notice, the joy and the gladness don't begin when they enter the palace. We use these verses sometimes in singing at the funeral of a believer who's passed away.

And rightly so. They have gone into the palace of the king. That is eternal joy in the palace of the king, in heaven that is. But this is a picture of them singing as they make their way along to the palace.

In other words, we as believers, as people in Christ, if that's what we are today, we have the privilege of singing and singing with joy and gladness.

As we're led along to the palace where we're going to be with the king forever. In other words, this life that you're presently living as a Christian, although it has all of these troubles and challenges temptations and things that you have to confess where you've slipped up, where you've lapsed, where you've sinned, although all of that is in it, yet it is true that because God has already decked you out with the garments of his salvation, because you already belong to the number of his people that are his bride, you have every right to be glad and to celebrate the fact as you go along in your life's journey towards the palace of heaven.

In other words, today if we lack assurance, there are many ways we can go about trying to deal with that, but one of them is this, who am I?

[32 : 20] Who am I today as a Christian? What has God made me into? He has made me into one of his people who belongs to his spiritual bride, and therefore belonging to his spiritual bride, I am supremely rich, and not only am I supremely rich, but I am the most beautiful to him of all people, because I belong to his beautiful bride, and he has made me beautiful, and he has given me a beauty that reflects his majesty.

My garments spiritually are not ordinary garments. They are not the kind I could have made for myself. They are not the kind a secularist, or an atheist, or a Buddhist, or an Islamist can manufacture.

They are interwoven with gold. They are many-colored. They are just too magnificent for words. How can you actually put into words what it means to have your sins forgiven?

To be accepted with God as righteous. To be part of God's family. To have the rights to an inheritance that never ends.

That's what makes her joyful. Think of who we are as God's people. Not only that, think of what awaits us. We are going to enter the palace of the king.

[33 : 59] We, poor, doubting creatures, we who can say of ourselves, who am I, and why should I think well of myself, and I don't have many gifts, and I'm not able to do very much for the Lord, I wish I was more like so and so.

Forget it. You are a person who is heading for the palace of the king. Think of where you're going. Doesn't that fill your heart with joy, with excitement, with gladness?

And then finally there's a speech to the two of them. In place of your fathers, it's really to the king as we said, but it involves the family that they're going to have together. shall be your sons.

You will make them princes in all the earth. In other words, all that comes from this marriage will be special and lasting. And an endless praise will be given to God.

Therefore, nations will praise you forever and ever. This king will be forever praised. We're all very conscious of being fallible.

[35 : 12] flawed, frail people in all our relationships in this life. There is nothing in this life like a perfect marriage, a perfect home, a perfect relationship with other people, a perfect congregation, a perfect church.

It doesn't exist in this life. We all know that. Sometimes very painfully. And that's all the more reason to find our hope and our ground of gladness and joy here.

In the relationship that we have with the Lord Jesus Christ, where there is perfection, where there is lasting joy, where there is a bride and a husband that will enjoy each other's company forever. And that will make up for all the disappointments and the hurts of this life. let's pray.

Lord, our gracious God, help us, we pray, to appreciate all that we have in relationship with you. Help us especially to appreciate the grace that you give to us daily, so that we are kept mindful of our relation with yourself.

[36 : 50] And so that we are kept in exercise of our faith and of our hope and of our love as we seek to express this to you. Bless this portion of your word to us, we pray, and grant your mercy to continue with us for Jesus' sake.