

God's Good Authority

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[0:00] The sermon text for today is Psalm 82. At the conclusion of the reading I will declare this! is the word of the Lord and the church in joyful response to his revelation given to us will! together say thanks be to God. Psalm 82 a psalm of Asaph. God has taken his place in the divine! counsel in the midst of the gods he holds judgment how long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked give justice to the weak and the fatherless maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute rescue the weak and the needy deliver them from the hand of the wicked they have neither knowledge nor understanding they walk about in darkness all the foundations of the earth are shaken I said you are gods sons of the most high all of you nevertheless like men you shall die and fall like any prince arise oh God judge the earth for you shall inherit all the nations this is the word of the Lord thanks Jules um let me let me pray for our time before we uh start talking about the psalm uh lord thank you for today um your word is holy it is inerrant it is um the words you have chosen to give to us humankind I pray that as we approach them today you your spirit would be at work in our hearts pray for a humble posture lord um for all of us to submit to your good authority your healing authority your rescuing authority lord bless uh the conversations that happen during and after the meditations our thoughts and the preaching amen all right good morning church my name's brad um i put on my fifth grade teacher costume today to teach you just warm up for the school year um um reason I say that is because the reason I chose this psalm 82 when we got asked to pick a psalm we were allowed to choose is because I actually picked this psalm a few years ago um as a year-long meditation during my school year it was the first psalm I picked I'm pretty sure I picked it because more out of a heart of like angst or frustration more than a worshipful attitude um but what I learned as

I spent the school year going back to this psalm week after week day after day um you know with with just the small things that went on in my classroom or or the big picture things of administration in the district um the lord actually used this to to teach me about him and ended up leading my heart to focus on him more than my problems in the classroom or what I thought were problems it even transformed what I thought about that so um when I first picked it maybe when you read it you were thinking this is kind of a weird one that was kind of my initial reaction and then God used it so here we go we're going to dive in under that pretense um okay so the main idea today is God has all authority which he commissions to man until his return I'm going to dice this up into three parts and we're going to consider that the three main points God has all authority which he commissions to man until his return so our first part here is um the first four verses a psalm of asaph God has taken his place in the divine council in the midst of the gods he holds judgment then God speaks how long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked say la give justice to the weak and fatherless maintain the right of the afflicted and destitute rescue the weak and needy deliver them from the hand of the wicked so this starts with a superscription this is a psalm of asaph that's part of the biblical passage um so that places this writing in the time of king david king solomon king asa or asaph wrote about 12 psalms um and they focus on God as judge administrator and justice and deliverer primarily so you can definitely sense that tone in this psalm the opening scene that he describes is a divine council it's a high and lofty setting it's kind of like the boss's office and God is

the boss in these verses we can know some things about God he takes his place nice he takes his place this is where he's meant to be god is the creator of everyone and everything he is the only infinite being we also see that god possesses all authority even in the gathering of the highest people in the midst of the gods he holds judgment we see this especially when God speaks everyone listens he asks a question for dramatic effect the psalmist puts say la it's kind of like maybe if you've ever had a parent yell downstairs do i have to come down there and it's like kind of like oops what really quiet no one's ever had that happen i see some kids like my parents that's never happened then finally we see God gives authority its purpose how long will you judge unjustly give justice rescue the weak all authority is God and that is why he can tell us the right way to use it it's like inventing a tool he invented authority he has given a specific job he has designed its purpose so wherever we see authority we should recognize it as coming from God kind of like if you see a red reusable shopping bag with white circles on it you don't wonder where it comes from it's from target it's the same thing with authority all authority comes from God Romans 13 says for there is no authority except from God and those that exist have been instituted by God asaph is describing a scene with God in charge his rightful place is the highest his authority is over all creation and his word is law whatever God say says is so true it becomes the definition next let's look at verses two through five God speaks and says how long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked say law give justice to the weak and fatherless maintain the right of the afflicted and destitute rescue the weak and needy deliver them from the hand of the wicked they have neither knowledge nor understanding they walk about in darkness all the foundations of the earth are shaken the second part of our main idea is that he commissions authority to man to humans first we need to pause and ask though who are the gods in this psalm God is talking to gods it is the Hebrew word Elohim most commentators agree that verses one and six the word gods is being used as a name to describe humans which God the creator has chosen to administer his authority so why even call them gods why call them gods a commentator says gathered around him is an assembly of judges who are called Elohim because they are his delegates they administer his will they are his executive agents so the main two reasons for using of this edgy title is emphasizes God's status the words gods illustrate how high God's position is the true God's place is reigning over all of rulers it also emphasizes the weight of the task the term gods gives weight to the responsibility and conveys the God's size impact of their actions so we had to start on the back end of this point um these gods are humans in with influence and power but let's look at what God has to say and then what the psalmist observes i'm going to break this part into three parts there's a guilty charge there's a commission and there are consequences verse two is the guilty charge how long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked say la the judges are guilty of two things failure to carry out justice and showing partiality to the wicked these rulers have neglected God's good purpose for their power primarily by giving preferential treatment to the wicked God does not show partiality and he expected the same for his judges in second chronicles God says there is no injustice with the Lord our God or partiality or taking bribes in Deuteronomy judges are instructed you shall not show partiality you shall not accept a bribe the judges are guilty because they are using God's given authority not in God's way the next two verses are the instructions of what they should do with their power it's a commission a duty and responsibility that God has given I believe there was a commissioning recently at EB is that true can someone confirm that from EB yes yes yeah for a submarine and when a submarine is commissioned it is when it's officially expected to receive and execute orders so this is God giving his orders he's expecting them to be executed by the judges the commission is give justice to the weak and fatherless maintain the right of the afflicted and destitute rescue the weak and needy deliver them from the hand of the wicked these two verses uh the commission is twice as long as the guilty charge this is significant because each verse also uses parallelism this is something that would occur in Hebrew poetry to demonstrate the importance we see give justice maintain we see rescue deliver in addition both verses use parallelism parallelism with similar focus i i feel like i'm really diving into the weeds here but i think it's i think it's worth us looking at this this is the only place in this psalm that this happens the whole psalm is little chunks of parallelism but here the psalmist expands a little i think so i don't know if double parallelism is a thing i'm not a hebrew poet but if it is i think this is an example i also believe there's an escalation throughout these four verses in verse three we see give justice maintain the right of the weak fatherless afflicted and destitute these people are the main focus um these are the people who the wicked of that time would take advantage of they were

vulnerable targets of unfair treatment that had no power to stand up for themselves god wants judges to focus on giving and maintaining them maintaining their justice it's pretty par for the course when we think of judges that's what we want but in verse four it continues and the language gets a little bit more powerful rescue and deliver the previous two actions were give and maintain rescue and deliver i think are a little bit more aggressive we may expect a judge to give justice or maintain rights but a judge who rescues we might call a hero a judge who delivers would have to go and rescue you and then take you somewhere better provide a better outcome deliver you somewhere deliver them from the hand of the wicked also directs judges to act directly against the wicked persons they were collaborating with god is commissioning his authority his authority is more than good it is escalating and overflowing goodness he exemplifies this through all of scripture but i think one key example is in exodus in exodus chapter 2 the israelites pray for rescue exodus 2 23 says their cry for rescue from slavery came up to god and god heard their groaning so what does god do in response in the next chapter god speaks to moses this is a matter of verses afterwards and god says this i have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land a land flowing with milk and honey i was i was thinking about this and this is almost like an escalation clause but in the backward sense sort of like can i have 20 bucks no here's 50.

[13:48] okay thanks like great it only got better than what you asked for the commission to rescue and deliver is a commission that follows god's example of how he uses his authority for escalating goodness the title of gods is a high title the task of acting like god is even higher and in verse 5 we see that the people being addressed are failing to serve or failing with severe consequences so in verse 5 they have neither knowledge nor understanding they walk about in darkness all the foundations of the earth are shaken verse 5 lays out the consequences in three layers of deterioration first their wisdom is being impacted deviating from god's design impacts them personally the second line shows how effectively they can now operate walking about in darkness could either refer to clouded judgment or shady dealings failure to follow god's law has made them reckless thirdly the consequences of sin radiate out impacting themselves and the world the commission and the consequences are polar opposites in god we see increasing goodness that reaches down to rescue the lowly and in man we see decay that radiates out to destroy god has all authority which he commissions to man but this is a massive task the responsibility seems to be an ever escalating task of rescuing that is directly pitted against the consequences of human failure that spread out to earth shaking proportions so is there any hope let's look at the next few verses the psalmist continues i said you are gods sons of the most high all of you nevertheless like men you shall die and fall like any prince arise oh god judge the earth for you shall inherit the nations this is the last part of our main idea god has all authority which he commissions to man until he returns our three sub points here human authority is limited this is god's judgment on corrupt leaders no amount of power can keep them from death for the weak and needy this could be their only hope for the poor and the victims this is a truth to cling to that god sets limits god does govern and restrict as he sees fit authority is god given so are limitations the last verse circles back to where we started looking at god but the first verse first seven verses are a court scene verse eight is a prayer the psalmist stops talking about god and starts talking to god the psalmist's arise oh god and judge the earth asaph begs god to do something because he knows whatever god does is good judge the earth please come take over from these terrible substitutes right this really difficult babysitter mom dad come back we do not always know why god allows leaders to miss you that use their power but we do always know he is in charge god's perfect authority is forever for you shall inherit the nations this prayer is faith-filled and future looking the rest the request becomes a

proclamation and the good judge judge and loving creator will not stand by idly forever

asaph's greatest hope in this psalm is that god is the good and powerful judge who can be trusted to rescue and deliver because all the nations belong to him and this is our greatest hope as well this is where the rubber meets the road we bring the psalm down to us in the 21st century the rescue that asaph was praying for has happened when jesus came to earth to live a perfect life die come back to life defeating death on our behalf he showed us that all authority was given to him in matthew 28 jesus says all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me we also see that jesus has fulfilled his god-given commission perfectly as a man on our behalf he perfectly obeyed god's will and in so doing showed himself to be the perfect rescuing delivering hero hebrews 2 says since therefore the children share in the children share in flesh and blood blood he himself likewise partook of the same things that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death that is the devil and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery and then lastly he came for us to make us his people his nation as citizens of heaven we follow his way empowered by the holy spirit jesus gave us the great commission in matthew 28 to go make disciples of all nations and observe all that he has commanded old testament asaph wrote this psalm looking for good authority and rescue but new testament saints can read this psalm and see how jesus is the answer jesus is the good shepherd jesus is the rescuing hero so let's think about how this impacts us in some practical ways how do we follow jesus today all authority is god's if all authority is god's then we should ask ourselves where do we bring our concerns i would argue the big picture goal of this psalm is for us to understand who to pray to and how to pray for anything at all we get to see who we pray to the all-powerful compassionate reigning righteous god we get a guide of how to pray have you been feeling like asaph frustrated discouraged angry this psalm directs our attention upward to look at god and outward to love others god is the boss he is the all-power creator but he is also compassionate caring and protective god didn't just send jesus so we could talk to him god sent his son because he wants us to talk to him he sent christ so we can have direct connection instant and unhindered 5g access with full coverage loving and acceptance this right view of god is also a rest giving view of god how do we put this into the the nitty-gritty practice these are some things that struck me throughout that school year that i tried to translate into a broader context but tough decision at work you talk to the boss about it god's the boss quite literally in a lot of ways right trouble with a teammate on the baseball team soccer team cross country talk to the coach's coach it's god that's the highest authority you can go to it's the best person you can talk to are you frustrated with the upper ranks in the military it could be hard to get up there and get into the general's office pentagon's kind of a drive have a heart to heart with the general god right disagree with a political leader take it up with the person who got him elected god going to him with these circumstances might not be the quick fix that we are looking for but they are the type of fix god wants god wants to fix our hearts it's possible to leave god out of our prayers and i think one of the ways we do this is by complaining and i'm going to say that is my personal default to pray and leave god out through complaining because i will talk to anyone i'll talk to my wife talk to my kids my kids have a lot of dolls they're good listeners i'll talk to myself but complaining is usually an inaccurate view of the world it's leaving god out of the view it's kind of like gossiping behind god's back it's his world it's god's stuff the situation you're in god let happen if we can first look up and see god taking his place maybe we can get a glimpse of our situation from his perspective and at least know he is in charge he does charge the wicked and he will judge the earth one day and make all things right there are endless reasons to complain but we have an everlasting god who can give us eternal perspective another application reflection if all authority is god's then we should ask ourselves how do we view human authority there's a lot of bad examples of authority on earth and you don't need asap to tell you that but we should be cautious about thinking that authority is bad by nature authority is one of god's good gifts to the world but as we have seen in this psalm when it's misused it has terrible far-reaching effects so what can this psalm teach us about authority it's ordained by god this is authority we do and do not respect we do and do not agree with we do and do not approve of so if we see good biblical leadership we can praise god and let it remind us that he's the good shepherd if we see bad leadership we can complain to god not gossip about his choices we can trust he's in control we can seek to maintain a humble heart posture this sort of perspective can only grow out of a christ-focused heart hebrews 2 says now in putting everything in subjection to christ god left nothing outside his control at present we do not yet see everything

subject to him when we see bad authority do we act like god made a mistake or do we humbly wonder why god allows it do we seek godly advice on what to do in those circumstances circumstances don't i don't understand reveal my limited vision and god's limitless wisdom um i do want to be clear and say there is such a thing as evil authority and god does desire your rescue and your deliverance the bible warns many times about persecution for jesus's namesake but never coerces believers into choosing or allowing

physical suffering and abuse as an example jesus quoted this psalm so he could escape being stoned if you are seeking wisdom in this area our church elders would be great people to talk to about that let's look at how the second part of this main idea and also can give us some application if all authority is god commissioned then we can ask ourselves what do we do with our authority god has ordained your given sphere of influence he wants you to consider how jesus would have used it in whatever job you have so jesus was a carpenter keegan has it easy but when we look for tangible ways to care for people around us we display what it would have looked like for jesus to be in the navy what would it have looked like for jesus to sit in a cubicle to go to the homeschool co-op be on a sports team doing this brings god's character close to the lost jesus quoted this psalm to emphasize that what we do is more important than our title the jews were hung up on titles that jesus was using for himself but jesus quotes this psalm and says if i am not doing the works of my father then don't believe me but if i do them even though you do not believe me believe the works that you may know and understand that the father is in me and i'm in the father so consider the implication of god's commission be an impartial leader be fair but don't settle for the minimum don't check the box i did it god next care especially for the weak and needy the ones who have nothing to give back to you this could be the unfriendly co-worker who won't reciprocate your smile this could be boring people who don't add to the party difficult people who regularly take more work to love or the outsider who needs you to go get them to be brought in this was jesus's way more than being nice to outsiders he was always seeking to do excessive good to those who had been rejected by society i think they were called miracles a lot of the times we can play a part in rescuing and delivering we can use our abilities to show god's escalating and overflowing care for others um if you don't believe in god though this is just a very nice sentiment it actually makes no logical sense apart from god makes no sense if you consider survival of the fittest to be the law of the land why would we help the weak and needy why would we not use other people's weaknesses to our advantage i read a book recently about um by glenn glenn scrivener and he says if natural selection means survival of the fittest for the sacrifice of the weakest and the sacrifice of the weakest then christianity is about the sacrifice of the fittest for the survival of the weakest us christianity is about the sacrifice of the fittest jesus christ for the survival of the weakest us our biggest problem is that when we sin we are guilty like the judges in this psalm god is a good judge and does not show partiality so the verdict is that we deserve eternal death

the good news is that god wants us to use wants to use his incredible power to rescue us from sin god wants to deliver us into his good plan for our lives and presence for eternity so this is a personal invitation for you to see yourself as weak and needy but it's also an invitation to be rescued and delivered don't leave shoreline today without talking taking the chance to talk with someone about this there is still another lingering question how do we feel about the commission whether you're a christian or not this commission calls us to use our power our energy for others benefits if all authority is god commissioned then we should ask ourselves do we comply or celebrate this commission to care for others it is possible to hear this commission and obey in one of two ways we might comply this is our duty it's not enjoyable but it's honest work or we can celebrate this as true freedom we are free from viewing people as assets and liabilities we are able to give without requiring or keeping track of return we are free from being manipulated god alone commissions us we stand on our convictions because god gives and takes away the power of those who may oppose us this means we are free from what other people think and we are free from what we think we only care what god thinks the naturalistic laws of the world we're free from those too the laws that say we need to fight and scrounge to survive pull yourself up by the bootstraps we lift others up knowing this is the ideal use of our strength ultimately we are free from spiritual death we are free from spiritual death now we play a role in god's plan to rescue and deliver by sharing the gospel this is following directly in jesus's footsteps this is the greatest good and part of jesus's great commission so we can celebrate our god-given commission by viewing it for what it is freedom but certainly this will be exhausting if it all depends on us we've already called this a very high calling so we depend on and cling to the truth in the last few verses of this psalm until he returns if god has all

authority which he commissions to man until his return then let's pray to that end for the evil there will be an end god has allowed all imperfect authority for a specific time and purpose but we pray and thank god there will be an end revelation 21 says he will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more neither shall be their mourning nor crying nor pain anymore for the former things have passed away for god's children your limitations are part of the ability god has given you you can work with all your might while also being aware that god is the only being in the universe without limits so let's pray for god to arise lord jesus come quickly galatians 6 says and do not grow weary of doing good for a due season we will reap if we do not give up so then as we have opportunity let us do good to everyone

[34:06] especially to those who are of the household of faith so in closing this psalm started with looking up to god in a lofty divine council this psalm ends by praying arise asking god to stand up and act by coming down to earth to rescue us we are the weak and needy human race who have no way to repay god for his trouble nonetheless are treason against him this is a really low stoop for the god who rules all creation galaxy and spiritual realms to come down and get involved in the childlike human concerns of the world and yet we know god did do this through jesus so in closing i want to read jesus's description of his rescue plan as he described it to one of israel's leaders this is jesus speaking god sent his son into the world not to judge the world but to save the world through him there is no judgment against anyone who believes in him but anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in god's one and only son and the judgment is based on this fact god's light came into the world but people loved darkness more than the light for their actions were evil all who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for their sins will be exposed but those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what god wants let's close in prayer lord all authority is yours and we praise you for that we praise that you are good authority we can run to you we can call to you we can cry to you lord! because you are compassionate because you are rescuer because you are deliverer we thank you that nothing is too big or too small we praise you for jesus who came so that we don't have to perfectly live we can try empowered by your holy spirit to obey you as a response to what you have already done the good news lord we thank you for this psalm for your holy scripture for your word that has the power power to be used by you to change our hearts amen