

# The Lord and His Anointed

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[ 0 : 00 ] St. John's Shaughnessy Church Now it would be great if you would open your Bibles to an unnumbered page.

Psalms 2, page 473. You can see by the bulletin, the white bulletin, that we began a series last week on the Psalms.

And we began to read through the Psalms as a congregation together. And I printed the chart on the very extremely remote possibility that you weren't here last week.

Or that you might have lost the chart during the week. And that you might want to put it up on your refrigerator or in your Bible for the week to come. And I have tried but I can't find a polite way to check if you've been doing your homework.

I have a friend who is a minister in Australia and whenever he sets homework for the congregation he checks them at the door. And he's an Australian and he's working in Australia but my guess is people go out by the other door.

[ 1 : 37 ] Now those of you who have not read the Psalms this week will have to forgive the self-righteous feelings of those who have.

If you've missed a couple of days, don't worry. Just pick it up at the day that you start so you join the rest of us. So now you can put that white sheet away and we'll open the Bible together.

I want to say just three things by way of introduction to this second Psalm. And the first is this, that Psalm 1 and Psalm 2 need to be taken together.

Last week when we looked at Psalm 1 we saw it describes the life of blessing. And it serves as a gateway and a guide into the whole of the book of the Psalms.

But Psalm 1 is only one gate and there are two, or two spectacles if you will, which lead us into the Psalms and teach us how to read them.

[ 2 : 38 ] Let me show you how this works. Psalm 1 verse 1, just have a look down, it begins with blessing. Look at the last verse of Psalm 2. It finishes with blessing.

And the blessing of God forms bookends around Psalm 1 and 2. There are a number of words and phrases repeated in both Psalms. And they are the only two Psalms in the first of the five books that don't have titles.

They are meant to be taken together. That's the first thing. The second thing to say is this, that as we move from Psalm 1 to Psalm 2, we move from the private world of the individual to the public world of nations and peoples.

Just cast your eye down the first three verses. It's very important. You see, the book of Psalms is not just about our lives as individuals. It's about our public and corporate life as a people.

Remember last week, Psalm 1 points out two ways for us to choose as individuals. Well, now this moves up into the public arena and we are given two ways to choose as people and as a nation.

[ 3 : 48 ] And the life of blessing and salvation you see is not just about our private meditation on God's word. It's profoundly caught up with the groups of people we identify with and how we relate to peoples outside our group.

That's the second thing. And the third thing by way of introduction is this, that Psalm 2 is all about the resurrection of the Messiah. The Messiah is mentioned four times.

Let me just mention a couple. The first is in verse 2. You see the last phrase? Against the Lord and his anointed. In Hebrew, the word anointed is Messiah.

And when it's translated in the New Testament, it's Christ, Christos. Christ means Messiah, means anointed. That's how the king was chosen.

He was anointed with oil. You see the name Jesus Christ isn't a first name and a surname. Jesus wasn't Mr. Christ. Christ is a title.

[ 4 : 55 ] The title of God's chosen king. And in verse 6, God calls him my king. And in verse 7, God calls him my son. That's why it is no wonder that this psalm is quoted more often than any other psalm in the New Testament.

Pivotal to Jesus' understanding of himself. Pivotal to the way the apostles understood the resurrection, which we'll come to in just a moment. And what it means is this. That we cannot read and understand the book of the psalms apart from faith in this son of God.

In this Messiah. True worship and obedience to God is caught up in serving the king. Every one of the psalms bears witness to Jesus Christ.

Salvation and hope is all caught up in him. So let's turn to Psalm 2. It has four scenes. And I just want to warn you that it is not a pleasant pastoral stroll.

But confronts us with the truth in a bold way. Why don't we read the first scene, which is the human project in verses 1 to 3 together. Why do the nations conspire?

[ 6 : 11 ] Why don't we read the first scene, which is the human project in the New Testament.

Thank you. The psalm begins with astonishment. And it says, While God is building a kingdom for his son, the anointed one, nations and peoples are engaged in a project that has exactly the opposite aim.

The aim of peoples and kings and nations and groups is to throw off God and his Messiah like an old rag. And the shock about this is that it's tragic and futile and entirely pointless.

In verse 1, the word plot, the people's plot in vain, is the same word as in Psalm 1 verse 2, which we translate meditate.

You see, the godly life in Psalm 1 was to meditate on God's word. But now in Psalm 2 we're told that instead of delighting in and meditating on God's word, the nations delight and meditate in being free from the word of God.

[ 7 : 29 ] And it is a groundless, futile and universal defiance of God. And the place it is most clearly seen, of course, is in the attitude to God's word.

That's what verse 3 is telling us. Instead of seeing God's word as the source of life and blessing, it is an irrelevant, annoying restriction.

Instead of seeing the will of God as the path to freedom, it is seen as blocking my fulfillment, as an impediment that must be got rid of if I am to be self-determined. It's amazing three verses, isn't it? This is what binds us together as human beings. This is what gives us as humanity a tremendous unity of purpose. It is to throw off the restraints of God and his Messiah.

What unites us as a people is that we see the word of God as an affront to our right to self-determination and our massive and ever-expanding human dignity. It is a threat to our right to choose to believe what we want, to act what we want and to love what we want.

[ 8 : 37 ] And this is what gives our human race its unity. We consider God's word an embarrassment. That puts the whole risk of exploring the limits of our desires.

The whole endeavor puts it at risk. And I think it's an almost unquestioned unity in our culture. You can see it in the way that Christianity is represented in the media. You can see it in the way our government bans the name of Christ at Christmas celebrations.

And you can see it in our own hearts as we choose priorities that are not God's. But what's remarkable about the human project is not so much its unity nor its futility, but the fact that it is directed against the Messiah.

That is the point of the end of verse 2. Against the Lord and his Messiah, the two cannot be separated. One of the questions I'm asked with increasing frequency these days is this.

If I believe in God, why should I bother with Jesus Christ? I mean, if I have a good friendship with God, and I respect Jesus and his teaching, why do I need to worship Jesus?

[ 9 : 48 ] And I think Psalm 2 is one of the clearest answers. The answer is simply this, that God has attached his own glory and his own honor and majesty and name to the Messiah.

And that the unity of defiance which is in our world is met by unity of person and a unity of purpose from God himself. That is, that God decides from Psalm 2 onwards that the way in which he is going to rule his world is through this chosen king.

And God's purpose now is to build a kingdom for his son. And to refuse his son is to make war on God. Do you remember how Jesus said this in John chapter 5?

He said, The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that they may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. And just in case we missed it, he goes on and says, He who

does not honor the Son, does not honor the Father who sent him.

God has fused his glory to the Messiah. And what God has joined together can no longer be put asunder, even though it is the uniting factor of the human project.

[ 11 : 06 ] We move to the second scene from the human project to God's response from the empty arrogance of earth. We move into heaven and perhaps let's read these three verses together again. Verses 4 to 6.

He who sits in the heavens laughs. He who sits in the heavens laughs. It's a tremendous contrast between what is happening on earth.

The fury on earth. When we are allowed to look into heaven, we see an invulnerability and a security. See, when we look around the world, what we see are that God and his Messiah are irrelevant.

When we look into heaven, we see that the rebellion is actually irrelevant. And I think the problem for us is that we find ourselves here in court between the first three verses and the second three verses.

Because it so often feels like, God, why don't you do something? Why don't you show yourself to be relevant? You know, sometimes when we look at the world, it seems as though the human project of defiance is all there is.

[ 12 : 25 ] Sometimes when we look in our own hearts, that's what we feel. And throughout the Psalms again and again and again, this is the difficulty that the people of God bring to God. God, where are you?

Why are you so inactive? Just keep your finger in Psalm 1 and turn over to Psalm 10, verse 1. Which you all read this week, I'm sure.

Verse 1. Why dost thou stand afar off, O Lord? Why dost thou hide thyself in times of trouble? Or down in verse 10. The hapless is crushed, sinks down and falls by his might.

He thinks in his heart, God has forgotten. He has hidden his face. He will never see it. Arise, O Lord. Do not forget the afflicted. See, I think this is where we find ourselves.

This is why Christians are so easily drawn to the next big thing. You know, God is doing a new thing. And I think this is why Psalm 2 is so important. As we enter into the book of Psalms, it teaches us to expect that it will feel as though God is distant and asleep and even unwell.

[ 13 : 39 ] It teaches us to expect that those who say Christ is irrelevant seem to have a good point. But if we go back to Psalm 2, we find in verse 5 that God is not asleep.

Nor is he powerless. But he takes things into his own hands at exactly the right time. Then. And he acts. Verse 5. By speaking.

So that the primary way God protects and advances his kingdom is by speaking his word. Isn't that amazing? That the way in which the glory of the Messiah is extended and defended is through the preaching of his word.

That's why when we come to the New Testament we read that the gospel is the power of God for salvation. For in it is revealed both the righteousness of God and the wrath of God.

What is God's response to the rage and arrogance and disobedience of his world? Verse 6. He simply says, I have set my king in Zion, my holy hill.

[ 14 : 43 ] This is my decision, he says. It is not negotiable. It's not up for discussion. This is what I have done. And so we move to the third scene which is the most important scene.

We move from the human project and God's response. And now we move to God's project. And the Messiah himself steps forward in verse 7. And we read these words.

I will tell of the decree of the Lord. He said to me, You are my son. Today I have begotten you. These are very important words.

They look back to God's promise to King David. That he would forever place a son on David's throne. But there's much more here.

This speaks about the fact that the Messiah, God's anointed king, will be elevated above all human beings and all angels and given the rule which is God's alone.

[ 15 : 43 ] And when it says, Today I have begotten you. It means that Messiah is not just one amongst many sons of God, but he alone is preeminent in heaven and on earth. And so important is this text.

Do you remember that twice in Jesus' ministry, when God the Father speaks audibly from heaven at his baptism and his transfiguration, do you remember the first thing he says? He says, You are

my son.

He quotes from this text. And now I want you to work with me on this. Here is a question for you. If Jesus is God incarnate, if he was always the son of God, what on earth does the second half of that phrase mean?

Today I have begotten you. What day is God speaking about when he says, Today I have begotten you as a son? Put your finger in Psalm 1, please, and turn to the right to the book of Acts in the New Testament, chapter 13, on page 125.

Ah, this page has a number. It's a very good thing. Acts 13. We're going to begin at verse 30. This is the Apostle Paul, and he's preaching in a Jewish synagogue.

[17:03] And from verse 26 onwards, he gives them a quick history of the Old Testament, actually really from verse 16 onwards. And then he comes to Jesus, and he speaks about his death, and now he speaks about his resurrection.

We pick it up from verse 30. But God raised him from the dead, and for many days he appeared to those who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people. And we bring you the gospel, the good news, that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us, their children, by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee.

You see what the Apostle is saying? Today was fulfilled on the day of resurrection. Jesus was begotten as the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead.

And we say again, he was always the eternal Son of God. He always shared God's power and authority. When he became human, he did not stop being divine.

[18:19] But when God raised him from the dead, he appointed him and installed him as the divine ruler. The day of resurrection, therefore, is the beginning of all things new.

This week, Bron and I went to see the film The Shipping News. I don't know if you've seen it. There's a wonderful scene in the film. It's a wake in youth and land. And the man who was supposed to have died revives during his wake.

After the speeches have been given. It's great. And you can see the wild excitement of his family. It's a tremendous scene. And it's such a moving scene that a number of people in the theatre broke into spontaneous applause.

You see, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is more than just a resuscitation to life. And it is more than the beginning of a new life, a life of heaven, a life beyond the grave.

When the New Testament celebrates the resurrection, it celebrates it as the installation or the enthronement of Jesus Christ as God's chosen king.

[19:35] Do you want me to say that again? When the New Testament speaks about the resurrection, the primary significance is that on the day of resurrection, God installed Jesus and appointed Jesus and enthroned Jesus and begot him to be the Messiah, the Son.

That is, I think that explains something of the wild excitement of the angels. That day of resurrection, it's what the universe had been waiting for. It's what had been prophesied throughout the Old Testament.

It is the beginning of everything new. It is God's purpose. It is now fulfilled. Jesus of Nazareth is God's appointed king and saviour and ruler.

Let me show you one other text. Turn to the right to Romans chapter 1 for a moment, please. I heard a talk this week that said that preachers should never flick around the Bible when they're teaching from the Bible.

But I said to him that he doesn't know my congregation so they're very sleepy and need to be kept awake. Romans chapter 1 verses 3 and 4.

[20:51] The apostle says, the gospel concerning his son who was descended from David according to the flesh and designated son of God in power according to the spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead Jesus Christ our Lord.

You see, verse 3, Jesus was the son of God, always was the son of God, but in verse 4 he is designated, appointed, elevated, installed, proclaimed, begotten, enthroned to be the son of God in power through the resurrection.

And that is the point of Psalm 2. Let's go back to Psalm 2, shall we? That's why I say Psalm 2 is fundamentally about the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

And the whole of the rest of the psalm spells out the implications. Just look at verses 8 and 9. Ask of me, says God, and I will make the nations your heritage and the ends of the earth your possession.

You shall shepherd them with the rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. God says, in the day of installation I will give you the rule of the world.

[ 22 : 10 ] Do you not think that that's what Jesus had in mind in Matthew 28 when after rising from the dead he said to his disciples all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me and the way in which I wish to extend my authority over all people is for you to make disciples.

But it is not just Christians, you see, who will be ruled by Jesus Christ. That is the point of Psalm 2. It is God's people, sorry, it's God's purpose that all nations and all peoples and all tribes and all religions must bow and acknowledge Jesus as Messiah and Lord and God's appointed King. God has not appointed him on Zion in some little corner of the world. He hasn't raised him from the dead so that this world might treat him as irrelevant.

Nor has he created a church so that we might keep this news to ourselves. I take it that's why we read about the rod of iron in verse 9. It is exactly the same rod that in Psalm 23 is our comfort.

Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. But here it is the rod of iron because not everyone willingly receives the care and rule of Jesus.

[ 23 : 25 ] And if we reject him as Savior and if we reject him as Lord that rod of comfort becomes a rod of iron and we find him not to be our saving king but our sovereign judge.

These are difficult words and I need to say that the Bible reveals God as a meek God a gentle God full of loving kindness full of mercy and it reveals a God who is holy the one before whom we must tremble.

One of the commentators puts it lovely in this way he says he who shows himself a loving shepherd to his gentle sheep must treat wild beasts with a degree of severity either to convert them from their cruelty or effectively to restrain it.

I'll leave it with you to think about further. Now fourthly let's move quickly then to the human response and now this is applied to us.

Perhaps we should read together verses 10 and 11. Now therefore O kings be wise be warned O rulers of the earth. It's wonderful isn't it?

[ 24 : 51 ] It is a call to turn to God in joyful repentance and embrace his son as the rightful ruler and refuge. It's a call to us to become spiritual refugees.

I don't know if you're following the news in Australia but Australia has a group of refugees that they are keeping out in the desert in this this is a dreadful camp called Woomera.

It's you know the temperature rarely goes below 40 degrees and they're in iron sheds and they've been trying to break out. It's an awful situation for refugees. What this is saying to us is it's calling upon us to be refugees but to take shelter not in some tin shed but in the Messiah in God's chosen king.

It says to us that this is the path of wisdom. If God has appointed Jesus Christ to be the Messiah it is not wise to live just for this world.

It is not wise to follow the way of the culture and it is incredibly unwise to leave Christ as a peripheral concern in your life but it is the height of wisdom to see ourselves not as self-ruled and self-grounded but to throw off our pride and humble ourselves at the feet of Jesus Christ.

[ 26 : 11 ] That's why that last verse where it says kiss his feet his means the Messiah. We cannot serve God without faith in his son and the psalm finishes with that blessing for all who take refuge in the psalm and let me just say the word refuge if you read through the psalms comes again and again and again it is a most precious word to us God is our refuge and Jesus Christ is our refuge as we take shelter under his wings which means to us that the place of blessing is not just the private meditation on his word but is in the sweetness of seeking refuge in Christ himself.

So here is Psalm 2 tells us about the human project and God's response and then God's project and our human response.

The real story in the psalm is not our plotting and our defiance. The real story is the appointment of the Messiah as God's king and God's son as our saviour our ruler and our refuge.

And do you not find it remarkable that here in Psalm 2 deep in the Old Testament we have clear prophecy of that event on which history and eternity and our universe turns the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

And is it not a wonderful thing that even after our defiance and our neglect of the Messiah he offers to draw us into the very blessing of God. It's why he calls on us to kiss his feet.

[ 27 : 54 ] It's much more than a cold and formal resignation. It means a loving desire to have him as our saviour and Lord to love him and worship him with all our desire and to take him to be our God and our refuge.

Blessed are all who take refuge in him. Amen. God bless you.

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We hope that this message has helped you and that you will share it with others. Thank you.