

The Lord Said to my Lord

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Preacher: Canon David Short

- [0 : 0 0] St. John's Shaughnessy Church The current issue of the Canadian Journal of Psychiatry reports to us that religious belief and frequent church attendance is very good for your mental health and means it's much more likely that you will be sane.
- Which explains why you're in church. And it's a very good thing because everyone who drives by thinks that the very fact that you and I are in here is reason enough to question our sanity.
- And some of you may be wondering why you would forego a perfectly good Sunday morning to come and worship a man who was executed 2,000 years ago and as word has it rose from the dead.
- A lot of people think that what we're doing in here is positively dangerous. Many I think more charitably see it as a harmless expression of losing touch with reality.
- A religious diversion for those who are questionable in their mental health who just can't cope with life in 2002. And I think if the last 12 months have taught us anything at all it is to be sceptical of having hope.
- [1 : 5 1] The events of September 11, the bloodbath in Israel, the elections in Zimbabwe, Afghanistan, Pakistan have only confirmed and deepened what we learned in the last century that there is something deeply wrong with this world and we have not got a clue how to fix it.
- And if there is a God then why does he allow our brutality and our violence and our hatred? And why does he torture us by allowing us to continue to have hope?
- And what possible relevance could Jesus be or his resurrection in this world torn by tribalism and religion dominated by a quest for financial and technological superiority and the pursuit of personal pleasure?
- And I think the answer is Psalm 110. This is the pivotal psalm. There is no psalm in all the psalms that is more quoted in the New Testament.
- In fact, we cannot understand what God is doing in his world. We cannot understand why Jesus rose from the dead apart from the words of this psalm. And before we look at it I just want to introduce you to the three main characters.
- [3 : 1 1] You'll see in the heading Psalm of David King David the one chosen by God who is dead and buried long gone on whom our hopes do not hang. And then in the first line there are two lords.
- The Lord said to my Lord this second Lord my Lord speaks of one whom David worships.
- King David the king of Israel says there is another Lord besides God who sits at God's right hand far superior and we've met him before. He is God's Messiah.
- He is the son of God who is expected to come into the world bringing healing and justice and peace and salvation. The one whom God will rule through.
- The one who is the key to human destiny. And if there's any doubt about whether this is talking about Jesus Christ you may be interested to know that Jesus takes the first verse and in front of some hostile clergy quotes it and says this is fulfilled in me.

[4:19] So there's David David's Lord and then at the beginning of the line we read capital L capital O capital R capital D whenever the Bible uses Lord in capitals it's speaking of the God who created the heavens and the earth who seven times in that creation stepped back and said it is good and on the last day stepped back and said it is superlatively good and he created us to live in this world a world which would ravish our hopes and fulfil all our expectations beyond imagination and even though we seem to have done our best to relieve God of his position or at least to treat him as irrelevant God is alive and well and continues to be Lord capital L capital O capital R capital D of heaven and earth the God of the Bible you see is not the God of a deist he didn't wind creation up like a clock and set it moving and then step back uninvolved he's not the God of the Greeks an unstable God filled with lusts that need to be satisfied for his own weak ego nor is he the west coast new age God or goddess an amorphous spirit who is there for us to tap into when we really feel we really need it and our God is the Lord and in this psalm he reveals to us the way in which he will relate to his world the primary way that he relates to his world is through this Messiah

Son and you can see from the structure of the psalm there are two words from God the Lord to the Messiah Son we are taken up into heaven we are allowed to listen to the words of God the Father to God the Son this is not academic this is not like a reality television show where we are voyeurs this is ultimate reality and it concerns us more deeply than we can possibly understand because this is how God will work in his world through his Messiah Son two words from God the Lord to his Messiah Son and the first is in verse 1 and he says this you are the king sit at my right hand he said till I make your enemies your footstool one of the most remarkable things about heaven is we discover there are two thrones not one on one throne sits God the Lord the creator but at his right hand side on a second throne sits the Messiah

Son Jesus Christ if you like God does not rule his world solo but he invites David's Lord the Messiah King into a position which is beyond imagination to sit at his right hand and rule and you cannot understand anything that God is doing in his world until we come to understand that this one is God's precious choice and worship him as rightful ruler from now on the way that God relates to his world as I said is through this Son at this point you may be thinking what on earth are you talking about why doesn't this person just get on to the resurrection well actually I am talking about the resurrection this is God's view of the resurrection the enthronement of Jesus at the right hand of God takes place when God raises him from the dead God raised him placed him at his right hand and I want to say this the main point of the resurrection is that Jesus Christ is now the ruler of all things now to demonstrate that I wonder if you would just turn over the page for a moment to the second reading in Acts chapter 2 you remember on the day of Pentecost when Peter is preaching after the resurrection down in the second paragraph we read these words this Jesus

God raised up and of that we are all witnesses being therefore exalted at the right hand of God having received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit he has poured out that which you see and hear for David did not ascend into the heavens but David says the Lord said to my Lord sit at my right hand till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ this Jesus whom you crucified now that is why we've met this morning it's the reason we sing hymns of praise it's the reason we pray through Jesus because the resurrection is the moment when the Messiah son is taken up and seated at God's right hand do you remember when he rose from the dead Jesus said all authority has been given to me that is what he is talking about the trouble is that God's decision does not meet with universal approval not everyone is happy that Jesus is placed in the seat of power and the way the fundamental way in which we show our disagreement with God is by ignoring his choice by building our lives as though there's no one at the right hand of God that's why if we go back to Psalm 110 immediately after installing

Jesus at his right hand God says until I make your enemies your footstool that is the story of our world since the day of the resurrection until today and until this world ends what God is doing in our world is he is bringing every living human being under the rule of Jesus Christ all things in history are controlled by this all things in heaven and earth are subservient to this purpose every circumstance in your life and mine Jesus must reign and Jesus will reign and Jesus shall reign but his rule is not as you might expect look at verse 3 please your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your power in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the dawn like you your youth will come to you this is the language of new creation new birth you see when Jesus rose from the dead and went to the right hand of God that was the day of power that was the womb of the dawn the empty tomb is the womb of a new creation it's the dawn of the new hope because you see an overcoming death

[11 : 49] Jesus has opened the door to life and a whole new creation not just for us as humans but for this world that's why the verse begins by saying your people will offer themselves freely this is how the Messiah rules Jesus rules as men and women and boys and girls come to see his death and his resurrection as their only hope and we offer ourselves willingly and freely abandoning ourselves to Christ and his cause and when we do we become like dew he shares his life with us and that life is a life that doesn't weary and doesn't grow old and will not be taken away by death but continues into the next world where God makes all things new you see what the psalm what psalm 110 is telling us is that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the beginning of a new creation it's not just an event back there in history which we celebrate because we have to and our parents did it is the event where the Messiah is drawn up to God and he gathers us to himself and he shares his life with us and he gives us what we cannot give ourselves forgiveness of sins friendship with God and life with him forever and it's not a difficult thing to know whether you have this life or not if you have this life of Jesus in you what will happen is you will see

Jesus as the source of all beauty and all grace you will want to look on his face to know him better to hear his word you will speak to him and about him as though he is real you will discover new spiritual tastes you will want to love other people particularly Christians you will look at the world differently you will see the injustice and suffering and you will look to God and you will take your part but you won't despair and you will look at your own weakness but you do not give up hope and you will know deep down that when your days are finished in this life God will raise you to a new life you will that's what it is to feel the doom of the morning here is the first word from God you are my chosen king draw people to yourself while I make your enemies a footstool and then secondly and very briefly the second word from God is in verse 4 he says you are the eternal priest the Lord has sworn and will not change his mind you are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek you can hardly have a more solemn word could you

God doesn't just speak it he swears an oath and then he says I will not change my mind and then he finally says he will be my priest forever now one of the most sobering realities of preaching from this pulpit is these little plaques to my right here each of these plaques stands for a priest a senior minister in this parish they have two things written on them the name of the priest the date they started and the date they finished there is one box left I'm not sure what that means there's some more over there every time I walk up into the pulpit I look here as a very tangible reminder of the weakness and temporariness of my ministry but Jesus is an eternal priest in his death and in his resurrection he has brought to us eternal life life from

God life that will continue forever his work as priest on the cross was to bring us to God and now he has gone to the right hand of God he brings us all the blessings from God but notice please that just as his kingship is not welcomed universally neither is his priesthood verse 5 the Lord is at your right hand he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath he will execute judgment among the nations filling them with corpses he will shatter chiefs over the wide earth and then there's a change in tone he will drink from the brook the living water therefore he will lift up his head in Friday's Vancouver Sun there was an article on Easter art and it featured a number of Christian artists in Vancouver including David Robinson I was very drawn to the comments of one of the artists who may have been reading

Psalm 110 she said this the resurrection is both terrible and beautiful I don't think you can depict the resurrection without a sense of terror it is not an easy grace I don't know if you've ever thought about it or not but when God made the first creation it was easy there was no opposition but now what God has done instead of wiping out the old creation and just beginning again he has come into our creation and he has begun the new creation from within and there is massive opposition to his work he chose to send his Messiah son into the world to become our priest and in fulfilling the workers priest Jesus became the object of all our brutality and our violence and our hatred that is why you see the resurrection is not just a happy ending to a gloomy story the resurrection and the crucifixion they belong together you cannot separate them from each other and Jesus now acts as our eternal priest because he has taken the judgment of God that we deserve the resurrection is the beginning of a new creation because the death of

[18:16] Jesus was the end of the old creation and I take it that's why in verse 7 it's a picture of Jesus experience of the resurrection it was the refreshment that he needed because he was judged for us a wonderful psalm as I finish I think one thing is clear above everything else that all the treasures of God are in the person of Jesus Christ Jesus Christ is the touchstone of human history of human destiny and of human hope not just because he came as God in the flesh not just because he showed the love and mercy and kindness of God but because God the father has put him forward as our priest and our king and that everything that God is doing that's going to last forever is built on him in his life he perfectly revealed who God is in his death he acted as our priest and stood between us and God receiving the punishment for our sin and bringing us to

God and in his resurrection he has become our king and our ruler opening the door to life the door to heaven the door to new creation much more than our mental health is at stake here from that day of the resurrection God's purpose has been bringing everything under his son and you may not see it in the newspapers although I do think it goes a long way to explaining our shattered hopes God's desire is that every one of us comes to acknowledge Jesus Christ as our priest and our king he is priest and he is king but the key is do we recognize it and those who refuse him will be shattered by his coming judgment those who come to him and offer themselves freely to him will taste the newness of life and the dew of the new creation I wonder today whether you can taste that dew it all depends on the place that Jesus plays in your life if he has been of marginal interest I mean if he has been basically irrelevant if you've been building your life as though there's no one sitting at the right hand of

God you must go to him and beg him to forgive you and to receive you and ask him to be your priest and king and that is what we do when we come forward to receive the tokens of his body and blood he has given his life for you and for me he has been raised to the father's right hand he is gathering his willing people who will live forever for him and with him and he shall reign until that day when the whole creation hears the trumpet sound and the dead shall be raised and we shall be changed and the kingdom of this world will become the kingdom of our lord and of his christ and he shall reign forever and ever amen this digital audio file along with many others is available from the st john's shaughnessy website at www.stjohnschaughnessy.org that address is www.stjohns.org www.stjohns.org www.stjohnschaughnessy.org .

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Oh there's a microphone Thank you.