

Psalm 72 “The King and His Kingdom”

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[0 : 00] I hope that you have enjoyed as much as I have the chance to contemplate the Psalms a bit this summer.

I know we're finished with them for now in the two-year reading plan, but we will be back soon in that plan. Just keep reading and get back to the Psalms a lot. In the meantime, I trust you are all meditating on Psalm 119 and making it all the way through that over these weeks.

At least some of you. We have looked in our sermons at several different types of Psalms. Lament, wisdom, praise, and so on.

But this morning, we're going to look at a royal psalm, Psalm 72. There are several of these psalms that talk a lot about a king.

This one starts, give the king your justice, O God. But when we pray or sing them, it can be a little bit hard to know who we're talking about.

[1 : 16] Is it the king of Israel, like David or Solomon or someone? Is that who it is? Is it the president of the United States? Hint, no.

Is it Jesus the king? So, before we read Psalm 72, I want to give us just a brief background on king and kingdom in the Bible's story that I hope will help us know a little bit more where to apply what we're reading and singing and praying in psalms like this.

The Bible begins with God himself as the one true king, the sovereign over all the earth, right? The whole creation is his and is thus his kingdom.

And he chooses to rule his kingdom through vice regents, people who are his image bearers. All of them, by the way, not just kings.

They are to rule the way the one true king would, in his image, so that this whole kingdom will flourish as he designed it. But as we struggle to do this, as we often seek to build our own kingdoms rather than his, God to help enters into this special relationship with one nation, Israel, as their king.

[2 : 43] And he gives his people the role of showing all the nations the beauty of living with Yahweh as your king and enjoying the goodness and the shalom of his kingdom.

When they demand and God gives them a human king, when Israel has these human kings over them, the king's job is to follow Yahweh, to lead the people in following Yahweh.

When the king is faithful to God and his covenant and follows his laws, the people tend to be as well. When, as is more often the case, the king wanders from God, the people wander even more.

God's kingdom is disturbed by wars in place of peace. The land is misused. His laws are disregarded. And so God's people are to pray for David and Solomon and others that they would be good kings leading them after Yahweh so they would enjoy the good blessings of the true king.

That's part of this. But as those human kings fail over and over and over to do that, God keeps promising his people that the king, the anointed one, Messiah, David's son who will reign over God's people forever and bring with him the promised kingdom.

[4 : 18] He's coming. And there will be a kingdom that they've never known like this before. It will be a blessing forever and to all nations. Not just Israel is going to know this king.

In a new and great way, that kingdom's going to spread. Jesus comes and he does finally bring that kingdom in word and in deed and in so many ways in his life we see that here.

And then Jesus commissions his followers. This risen king says this needs to continue. I am sending those who follow me out on a mission to take the good news that there's a risen and a reigning king to all the nations that all the earth may know the true king once again.

And that's what we're a part of now. The church of Jesus Christ is praying and longing and working for King Jesus' name to be made great.

For his kingdom to come more and more on earth as it is in heaven. That's what we pray for, right? One day, the story promises King Jesus will return to reign forever and to make the kingdom of this world the kingdom of our God and of his Christ.

[5 : 44] And we look forward to that. So, as you listen to Psalm 72, you think of the king over God's people, David or Solomon at the time.

Often, think more appropriately or fully of King Jesus. And because of that, because much of this points to him and his kingdom, we also think now of his church and her leaders.

What should we long for and love? That's what we'll see this morning. Psalm 72. Written, depending on how you understand the top line in the last verse, by David or Solomon.

About Solomon or Solomon's son, it really doesn't make much difference. There's certainly plenty here about Jesus and for us.

Let's listen to God's word together. Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the royal son. May he judge your people with righteousness and your poor with justice.

[6 : 55] Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people and the hills in righteousness. May he defend the cause of the poor of the people. Give deliverance to the children of the needy and crush the oppressor.

May they fear you while the sun endures. And as long as the moon throughout all generations, may he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth. In his days, may the righteous flourish and peace abound till the moon be no more.

May he have dominion from sea to sea, from the river to the ends of the earth. May desert tribes bow down before him and his enemies lick the dust. May the kings of Tarshish and of the coastlands render him tribute.

May the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts. May all kings fall down before him. All nations serve him. For he delivers the needy when he calls, the poor and him who has no helper.

He has pity on the weak and the needy and saves the lives of the needy. From oppression and violence, he redeems their life and precious is their blood in his sight.

[8 : 00] Long may he live. May gold of Sheba be given to him. May prayer be made for him continually and blessings invoked for him all the day. May there be abundance of grain in the land.

On the tops of the mountains may it wave. May its fruit be like Lebanon and may people blossom in the cities like the grass of the field. May his name endure forever. His fame continue as long as the sun.

May people be blessed in him. All nations call him blessed. Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things. Blessed be his glorious name forever.

May the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and amen. The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended. Pray with me.

God, we're grateful for your king. We rejoice that the Lord is king. We pray that you would give us hearts that do delight in that more and more.

[9 : 01] That love your kingdom. That seek its advancement. Teach us, Father, as we read your word, as we study it together this morning.

Shape us by your spirit. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. If you could design the place you would live, your own little kingdom, what would it be like?

What words would you use to characterize your dream kingdom? Prosperity? Equality? Peace? Beauty? Growth? Joy? Joy? Probably many of those things. We actually get to enjoy many of the very things we would dream of in the kingdom of our Messiah King, don't we?

Maybe we don't get low humidity in 70 degree days, which may be at the top of your list right now. Maybe we don't get, I'm in charge of everything and it's all about me and I get to do whatever I want.

[10 : 14] That is often on the top of our selfish lists for our kingdom. But think about singing Psalm 72. Maybe this is happening already in your hearts as we read it.

Doesn't it draw our hearts to hope in the true King? And doesn't it inspire our hearts to embody the values of His kingdom now?

Don't we want to live like this? We get to look forward to this wonderful existence and we get to reflect the image of the King even now.

That is the function of Hymn 72 that God gives to His people and several others like it. They help us to long for and hope in and delight to serve a King and a kingdom that are first just.

In the first four verses, it's justice and righteousness and righteousness and justice. Over and over, they characterize God's King.

[11 : 24] But not just any kind of generic fairness. justice? No, it's God's justice, isn't it? In other words, we're reminded that the King himself is dependent on God, a representative of God, an image bearer who is to rule as God would rule.

And so, he must exercise God's justice for God's people. They must know God's laws and be led after His ways that reflect His glorious kingdom design where everyone, the haves and the have-nots here, are protected and pointed to the glory of God's kingdom.

Do you remember how Solomon asked for this? It was overwhelming to be the leader of God's people, wasn't it? Solomon said, I need God's wisdom to govern God's people.

He received it, didn't he? To their great blessing. Until he got caught up in his own ideas. But certainly, we long to see God's kingdom come here, now.

Certainly, the church of Jesus Christ must work to root out injustice, to combat racism, to declare the truth, to speak up for the voiceless, to rescue the abused, to right wrongs like Jesus, just like our King.

[12 : 51] We can't wait for the kingdom where he sets everything right. Do you feel that? I mean, we literally can't wait.

We are compelled to see justice, to see relationships and neighborhoods and churches and cities known for things being done right.

Secondly, the kingdom and king that we are delighted to serve are everlasting. Now, Solomon had a good long reign at 40 years.

That was a long time, especially if you live in America. But this psalm cries out for more than 40 years, doesn't it? When we start in these middle verses to realize even the best human king is going to be a shadow of the promised king will reign on David's throne forever, we're promised. It's a kingdom, verse 7, where peace abounds. Shalom is everywhere, flourishing as it was always meant to be for you, for the grass, for the whole creation to the point that you don't want it to end ever.

[14 : 04] As long as the sun and moon exist, this is the way it should be. Oh, in fact, it is so delightful, this kingdom, that you want your kids and your grandkids and their kids and their grandkids to enjoy it with you.

I want you to think this morning, if you could show your grandkids one place, if you could give them one delight, if you could share a passion for one joy with them, what would it be?

May it not be Bryant Denny or Jordan Hare. May it not be a life marked by abundant possessions in a free country.

May it not be a week at the beach each summer. No, no, no. Far beyond that. May it be the wonder and the joy of King Jesus and unending relationship with Him and His eternal kingdom.

Would that be the one thing that is most glorious that we'd want to see generation after generation share? Similarly, this kingdom that we long for is universal.

[15 : 29] Not only is it unbounded by time, it also knows no geographical limits. and we do see expansion of Israel under King Solomon. Royalty from many nations including Sheba, it's named here, bringing tribute to Him.

It's always exciting when the nations come to see Yahweh's greatness. But the earth is much, much bigger than even Solomon knew, right?

The design of God for all the nations to know Him as King cries for a Messiah throughout the prophets like Zechariah chapter 9 where this from sea to sea from the river to the ends of the earth is repeated again after Solomon when Zechariah says your king is coming.

The king that's going to do this is still to come. In fact, he's coming on a donkey to bring peace.

Where? To all the nations. Isn't the global reach of King Jesus today incredible?

From that ragtag bunch of disciples in the Middle East over 2 billion Christians worldwide.

[16 : 47] Two-thirds of those in the global South Brazil and Nigeria and the Philippines with some of the largest groups of Christians in the world. But, but there are more people that we long to see bow the knee to King Jesus.

Yes? And so we go to work with international refugees in D.C. as we heard earlier in this service. And so we gather after this service to pray for our neighbors in Huntsville to know King Jesus.

And so we partner with missionaries and church plants around the world going to France or to India to share the joy of Jesus to learn from them how he's at work there because oh there's so many places we don't see and the joy of King Jesus is not just for me.

It's not just for us. We want everyone everywhere to taste the goodness of his kingdom. Right? Jesus shall reign where'er the sun does its successive journeys run.

his kingdom stretch from shore to shore till moon shall wax and wane no more. That's a big kingdom.

[18:04] Usually such a kingdom would be established by conquest and power. Wouldn't it? That's how it happens. Amass a lot of wealth build up a great army conquer the less powerful people around you one after the other knock them out.

actually God's kingdom works an entirely different way. The foundation of his universal kingdom is mercy and compassion rescuing the weak and needy not trampling across them.

I bet you've heard it said that God helps those who help themselves. Please know that's not in the Bible. what is in the Bible is that King Jesus helps those who cannot help themselves and aren't finding help from any others.

Verse 12 he delivers the needy the poor and him who has no helper with pity he saves them and from oppression he redeems them because of his great love and mercy.

That's what this king is like. Charles Spurgeon says of helpless people and their King Jesus here let them look to him for he is looking for them.

[19:38] Let them look to him for he is looking for them. What a magnificent king. Solomon starts off pretty well with this but wealth and fame seem to attract his heart and distract it from the needy.

That doesn't happen with our promised king. This mercy flows out of the life of Jesus constantly over and over healing the sick welcoming the outcast caring for the widows showing the heart of God that we so need to know is there at God's core loving us Jesus is putting it on display.

Do you remember this blind man outside Jericho? He's been there blind he hears that Jesus is coming and he calls out in a loud voice Jesus son of David have mercy on me.

See he knows he read Psalm 72 maybe he knows that the promised king on David's throne will be full of mercy for people like him the thing is people around him that day don't really think so.

Hush right? Jesus is important don't distract him everyone says except one person Jesus Jesus stops Jesus speaks with him Jesus heals him Jesus with a heart for the ones that no one else will listen to that is my king he came for the sick he hung with the outsiders he came to call sinners he refuses to break a bruised reed or to snuff out a smoldering wick he sees them and he loves them and he strengthens them praise God Jesus helps those of us who cannot help ourselves amen now you just have fun with all the ways we should be giving our neighbors a taste of this kingdom on earth rushing to the homes of widows with trees falling through their roof as some of you did this week crying with grieving bringing tangible comfort in the hardest moments of people's lives walking with neighbors in faith and finances as we learn to steward

[22:14] God's resources to bring hope to break cycles of generational poverty in our city the list could go on all day but I want to ask why why care for the poor and needy is social justice like that the gospel is a cup of cold water the good news don't they just need to know Jesus that's what you're thinking right listen y'all we care for the poor and needy because we sing this psalm we read it and we meditate on it and we sing it and what happens in our hearts is that there's nothing in this world that we delight in more than King Jesus and his reign over every inch of his creation over every corner of our lives so we want to live in it and with him give others a taste of this merciful king the gospel is not less than a cup of cold water it is actually the good news that the true king will see that the thirsty has a cup of cold water and eternal living water from which he will never thirst again that is how good

King Jesus is social justice care for the needy deeds of mercy mark his kingdom because this merciful king is a need meeting king physical and spiritual temporal and eternal we all look to him because he is looking for us amen that's what we long for and how we love to live finally in case you're not catching on this king and his kingdom are blessed watch how much blessing there is at the end not only is the king himself to be blessed pray for long life and blessing to him but all of the people of the kingdom are blessed through him when this king and this kingdom are worshipped and they're lived out in our lives blessing is just flowing everywhere that's what should be happening all around us even the promises all the way back to

Abraham are being fulfilled here the great name that God will give his people all the nations blessed through the blessing of God's people God himself being with his people through this king isn't it interesting that the king will be blessed and then in that closing blessing it is Yahweh the God of Israel who is the blessed one and it is his name that is blessed forever as his glory fills the earth see this blessed king seems to share the very glory glory of Yahweh that fills the earth as always it was meant to and as the true king always was to see accomplished this indeed is our goal isn't it that as we taste the grace of this king as we are overwhelmed with his glory and his worth we increasingly delight in his rule and reign his just and merciful kingdom becomes so glorious to us that we want it to come here and everywhere now so that we can already begin enjoying it and never ever have to stop all day every day we want to live in this kingdom while we wait for the return of the king who for certain is the highlight of that kingdom

God how could I live so much for my own kingdom forgive me God how could I be so slow to share with others about this glorious king please forgive me I hope you're seeing the uniqueness of the king that this psalm ultimately points to he is indeed a king unlike any other isn't he most kings demand that their subjects give their lives to protect the king the king of psalm 72 gives his life to protect his subjects what does verse 14 say precious is their blood the blood of the poor and needy is what's being talked about here precious is their blood in his sight the king of kings so values their blood that he insists on shedding his own to save theirs the king to whom all other kings bow stoops at the cost of his own life to lift the undeserving to life unparalleled and unending this table reminds us of that gracious and glorious reality it was you see because of the fact that we refused to serve his kingdom it was because of the fact that we wanted to build our own kingdoms that we deserved to die our lives were forfeit we were condemned to die for our rebellion against the king until he loved us so much that he sent his son that he laid down his own life shed his own blood so that ours would no longer be demanded of us oh worship the king all glorious above gratefully sing his power and his love he has come and given himself for you come drawn by his love so great that he made a way for you to be with him forever listen to the words of our king as he prepared to give his life for you that night that Jesus was betrayed he took bread and he broke it and he gave it to his disciples as I ministering in his name give this bread to you he said take eat this is my body given for you do this in remembrance of me and in the same way after supper he took the cup saying this cup is the new covenant in my blood shed for many for the forgiveness of sins drink from it all of you for as often as you eat this bread and you drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes you proclaim that he died so that you would not eternally die but live this is the table of the Lord it is set by King Jesus your invitation secured to you by his Holy Spirit it is not the table of Southwood or the Presbyterian church so if you are his by faith in his death now bowing to him as your king in your life if you've publicly declared your allegiance to King Jesus by being baptized into his family then come and eat and be strengthened receive forgiveness have your hope set on the true king again today if that's not where you are today perhaps you have never bowed the knee to King Jesus perhaps you have but you realize sitting here right now that there's an area of your life where you're insisting on being your own king you're not willing to bow the knee there to King [31:08] Jesus you're unwilling to repent and turn to him for his forgiveness and be guided in his ways then I invite you not to this table there's no shame in acknowledging that that's where you are but come being there to King Jesus don't miss him come and talk with him you can pray to him right where you are you can come up here and tell us to pray with you we'd love to help you talk with him but come to King Jesus the one who doesn't demand that you give your life for him but gives his life for you let me pray and we'll come to this table together Jesus we thank you for the life you lived the death you died and the life you live again as our king forever would you take very ordinary elements and would you use them to give strength to our hearts joy to our lives hope in our darkest moments because our king is with us and he reigns forever work in us we pray as we meet and eat with you in Jesus name amen for more information visit us online at southwood.org