

The Beauty and Might of King Jesus

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 26 December 2022

Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[0 : 0 0] there. So with these intimations then we'll begin our worship today and we're singing firstly Psalm 145, Psalm 145, the second version of the psalm that's on page 444 and verses 1 to 7.

O Lord, thou art my God and King, thee will I magnify and praise. I will thee bless and gladly sing unto thy holy name always. Each day I rise I will thee bless and praise thy name time without end. Much to be praised and great God is, his greatness none can comprehend. How wonderful it is to be reminded in this opening psalm of God's worthiness to be praised, of his greatness and of his might and all other aspects of his being that make him worthy of our praise. So with the worthiness of God in our minds, let's stand to sing these verses. O Lord, thou art my God and King. O Lord, thou art my God and King, thee will I magnify and praise. I will thee bless and gladly sing.

O Lord, thou art my God and world and never say can I?

And great God is, His greatness done and of the end.

Great child, my word, great child to raise the mighty hand so done by Thee.

[2 : 2 8] Thy mercy, God, and glorious grace, and honor all Thy majesty.

Thy wondrous works, I will impart, Thy end and my joy be extrobed.

O God, Thy grateful acts, O Lord, and Thy, Thy greatness will unfold.

They utter shall upon the tree the memory of Thy goodness quake.

And chants in praises cheerfully, I may Thy righteousness prevail.

[4 : 0 1] Let's now call upon the Lord in prayer. Let's unite our minds in prayer. Amen. Almighty and gracious God, we give thanks for these great attributes that we have been singing of, of Your greatness that comprise the beauty and the perfection of Your being.

We thank You, Lord, today that You have reminded us of Your worthiness to be praised, that You alone are worthy of worship. And so we gather together, Lord, today to worship You.

Help us to do so, Lord, with our hearts truly set upon the glorifying of Your name. Help us to come before You with a true spirit of worship in our minds and hearts, with our mind focused on those things that You have revealed in Your Word.

With our hearts, Lord, as we seek the blessing of Your Holy Spirit upon us, our hearts quickened, our hearts revived, and our hearts brought into tune with Your truth.

We thank You today, O Lord, that we have this opportunity, this great privilege once again of being together to worship You as our God. And we pray as we do so, Lord, that You would guide us into Your truth.

[5 : 1 7] We thank You for the way in which we have Your own truth set out for us in written form, and for the way that You have brought it to us in our generation, with all its authority and relevance for our age, as has been the case down through the years in the history of the world.

We thank You today, Lord, as we look back upon all that You have accomplished, that You entered into this world in such a way as to provide for us an access to Yourself, an access which we now use in the name of Jesus, who is Himself the way, the truth, and the life.

We thank You today, Lord, that He took our human nature to Himself, that You did so in such a way as would combine in His person the wonder of God and man combined, and yet combined in such a way to retain the distinctness of the godhood and also of the manhood.

We thank You today, Lord, for the wonder of Your person, for the beauty that pertains to You. We pray today as we worship You that we would once again catch a glimpse of Your beauty, for Your beauty makes us, Lord, stand in awe at Your majesty and Your perfection and Your truth.

And we come, Lord, today, and our hearts are needy that we should once again meet with You. We pray, Lord, each of us here that You would bless us from Your Word, that You would give to us, O Lord, as we struggle with many issues in life.

[6 : 54] Help us, we pray, to realize Your perfection as the God and King of Your people. We pray today, O Lord, that You would, as we seek the guidance of Your Spirit into Your Word, we pray that You would help us, too, to retain it and to apply it in our lives in such a way, Lord, as would reflect the beauty of Christ in us.

We ask today that Your blessing will be with all Your people wherever they gather. We recognize, Lord, even as we are reminded in our bulletin sheet today of places in the world where people are persecuted and even put to death for their faith, for their adherence to the Lord Jesus Christ, and for the way in which they are determined not to be deflected from following Him, from honoring Him, from speaking of Him.

Lord, we pray today that Your blessing will be with all agencies that seek to uphold these persecuted Christians, whether it be through the Barnabas Fund or through Steadfast Global.

We pray for all their efforts, O Lord, and we pray for all Your people in the world today when we are able to rejoice in the freedom that we have, the many ways in which we can gather without fear as we do here today.

Lord, we pray for these places in the world where Your people don't have these liberties and yet where they remain faithful to You. We ask, Lord, for them that though we don't know them or don't know, we confess we don't know even the majority of them or their circumstances, yet we know that they are known to You and we know that Your interest is in them and Your concern, Lord, is to be their guide and be their stay, be their defense and be their shield.

[8 : 43] Lord, we thank You today for the way in which Your Word brings us in the Psalms, so many of our human experiences that we can bring before You in praise and also in prayer.

Lord, we thank You that You have gone before us so as to give us such a manual of praise and so as to give to us the experiences of Your people and of Your church down through the years that are expressed through the singing of Your praise.

And we thank You today that whatever depths we may have in the challenges of life to contend with and against, that we find them in these words of the psalmist, as we do also the heights of rejoicing and of joy that belongs to Your people also.

Oh, Lord, today we pray that as we come once again to celebrate the coming of Christ into the world and His achievements in His life and death and resurrection from the dead, Lord, we pray help us to do so, confident that He now lives forevermore, that You are alive for the benefit of Your people, that You minister to them through Your Spirit from Your throne on high.

Remember us, Lord, today as a congregation. Remember us in all the variety of our need as we present this before You. We pray, Lord, that You bless each and every home represented here and those that belong to us not able to be here today.

[10 : 12] We pray Your blessing for us, Lord, as we come towards the end of this year in our lives. We, Lord, reflect upon the many challenges that You have provided for us in Your providence throughout this year.

But we thank You, Lord, for the provision of Your sustaining grace, for the many promises that go before us in Your Word as we come to face these issues of life.

And so we remember today, O Lord, those who come towards the end of this year with heavy hearts, with hearts that reflect upon the passing of loved ones who have gone from the scene of time during this year.

Remember them, O Lord, and ask that You would draw near to them. We pray that You would comfort them, that You would give them the strength that they require as they reflect upon those that have now gone from their midst.

Lord, we give thanks for many precious memories that You enable us to hold. We pray that You would grant Your blessing to uplift us when the gloom settles in upon our lives and when we know, O Lord, and realize that things are other than we would have chosen or wanted to be.

[11 : 25] Yet, Lord, we pray that You would turn us at all times to Your wisdom and to the way in which You have ordered and patterned our lives according to Your knowledge and according to Your wisdom and according to the rule of Your will.

We pray, too, for those who have lost loved ones in times gone by. Lord, we know that this time of year is a poignant time for those who reflect upon times of bereavement and sorrow and loss and for whom these things, Lord, are an ongoing challenge and an ongoing reality in their lives.

Continue, Lord, to bless us, we pray, with Your truth and continue to provide for us as we come towards the turn of another year. We ask, too, that You'd bless those who are ill at this time of our number, those who are receiving treatment, who are recovering from surgical procedures.

And, Lord, we ask that You'd bless them and bless their families and bless those who mourn even in these present days. We commit them to You also and ask that You'd bless them.

Remember our children and our young people. Grant to them, O Lord, as they hear of the gospel and of the message of Christ having come into this world as a saviour. O Lord, we pray that You would sanctify their young lives.

[12 : 43] Give them as they hear of the truth of the gospel, that they may come more and more and day by day to be dedicated and committed to You and to Your ways and to walk in Your paths.

We pray for them today. We pray for all their families and ask that You'd bless them. We pray that You'd continue to remember us, Lord, as a people during this time of ongoing pandemic.

Lord, we pray that You would lift this from us. We pray that You would grant us again to be restored to times when greater freedom will be ours in terms of being able to engage in activities that we have not had for many years.

We ask, Lord, that You would bless to us these past two years of difficulty, of trial and of affliction and of sorrow and loss. We pray that You would grant, Lord, to go before us as a new year approaches.

May it be one that is filled with the light of Your countenance, filled with Your blessing, filled, O Lord, with those things that would further enrich our lives.

[13 : 48] We pray that You would enable us, Lord, to have once again a communion, the Lord's Supper, dispensed and partaken of in our midst as a congregation. Lord, we ask that You would, in Your providence, enable us to be and enable us to come once again to rejoice in the provision that You have made in the remembrance of the Lord's death until He come.

Hear us, Lord, we pray now, and pardon our many sins as we confess our sins before You. We ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Okay, now, children, I know there's some watching online as well, but it's good to see children back in the service today during your time of holiday from Sunday school.

I hope you all had many presents to open. I know that you probably received things that you'd asked for for your Christmas. Maybe you received some things that you didn't ask for as well and were very different, perhaps, to those things that you asked for.

But it's a great thing to receive and to exchange gifts, which we do particularly at this time of year, at Christmastime. And if you think about your gifts, I'm sure that none of you left your gifts unwrapped.

I don't suppose that any of you who received gifts just said, well, I'm not going to really bother opening that. I'll just leave it and see what happens in the turn of the year. Every time we get a gift, especially Christmas gifts, we're eager to tear the wrapping off and have a look and see what's inside and enjoy it.

[15 : 23] That, of course, is true with the gift of Jesus to us as well. We don't want to leave Jesus unaccepted. We don't want to leave him as if he's just an ordinary gift.

He is God's great gift, the gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ. Now, I wonder if God spares us to see the next Christmas, if the gifts that you received this Christmastime will still be as precious to you or as much used by you as they have been in the last few days.

I doubt if any of you left your gifts unused as well as unopened. But I wonder how much your interest in these gifts will continue through this coming year.

If you're like me, I'm very excited, usually opening a gift, but in the passing of time, that interest or that enjoyment tends to decrease.

It tends to wane. It tends to not be as intense as it is when you first open the present. And of course, whatever presents they are, the contents will inevitably grow old or you may become tired of them or you might outgrow them.

[16 : 34] Maybe they're no longer relevant as you grow up. And even if you get the most wonderful or expensive electronic gifts, for example, some of you might have received some of those if you're older, but even that tends to be outdated after a while.

Mobile phones, whatever else you have, and electronic gadgets, they're always replaced by newer versions, aren't they? So you tend to actually have the older versions.

Maybe it goes on for a while, but then after a while, you're tempted to exchange them and people often exchange them as time goes on. Well, with the gift of Jesus, that's never the case.

He never becomes out of date. He never needs to be replaced by a better model because you can't get one that's better than Jesus. And he never grows irrelevant or old or unsuitable for what you need at any time in your life.

So when you unwrap God's great present of eternal life in Jesus Christ, when you receive Jesus as your Savior, when you trust in him, when you believe in him, he's there not just for life in this world, he's there forever.

[17 : 48] He never needs to be replaced and you never want to replace him. You never want to be without him. That's the great difference between the gift that God gives us in Jesus and every other gift, however expensive, however much we enjoy it, the gift of Jesus is special.

Special because there's no one like him. And today in the sermon, I'd like you to listen to the sermon as well. I'll try and make it as easy to follow for you as well as for the older ones.

And we're looking at the beauty of Jesus, how beautiful he is and why he's beautiful. And not only why he's beautiful, but why he continues to be beautiful because he never loses his beauty as our Savior.

And so I hope you had a really good, happy Christmas. And I hope that whatever you got for your Christmas gifts will continue to be special to you. But do remember the special gift, the gift of Jesus as our Savior, that God in his love has provided for us.

And whatever age we're of today, Jesus is the gift we need, the gift we must never leave unopened. So we're going to say the Lord's Prayer together.

[19 : 05] Let's pray the Lord's Prayer once again. Amen. Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. Let's now read God's Word. And we're going to read today from the Psalms, from Psalm 45.

Psalm number 45 in the book of Psalms. We're going to read down through the Psalm. It's not very long.

Psalm 45. Psalm 45. My heart overflows with a pleasing theme. I address my verses to the King.

[20 : 07] My tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe. You are the most handsome of the sons of men. Grace is poured upon your lips. Therefore God has blessed you forever.

Gird your sword on your thigh, O mighty one, in your splendor and majesty. In your majesty ride out victoriously, for the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness.

Let your right hand teach you awesome deeds. Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies. The peoples fall under you. Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.

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

Your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia. From ivory palaces, stringed instruments make you glad. Daughters of kings are among your ladies of honor.

[21 : 07] At your right hand stands the queen in gold of Ophir. Hear, O daughter, and consider and incline your ear. Forget your people and your father's house, and the king will desire your beauty.

Since he is your Lord, bow to him. The people of Tyre will seek with favor your gifts. Your favor with gifts. The richest of the people.

All glorious is the princess in her chamber, with robes interwoven with gold. In many colored robes she is led to the king, with her virgin companions following behind her.

With joy and gladness they are led along as they enter the palace of the king. In place of your fathers shall be your sons. You will make them princes in all the earth.

I will cause your name to be remembered in all generations. Therefore nations will praise you forever and ever. Amen.

[22 : 07] May God bless to us. Again, a reading of his word. We're going to praise him once again. We're singing Psalm 47 this time. Psalm number 47. This is in Sing Psalms.

You'll find that on page 62 of your psalm books. And we'll sing the whole of this version of the psalm. All nations, clap your hands and shout.

Let joyful cries to God ring out. How awesome is the Lord most high. Great king who rules the earth throughout. He has subdued beneath our feet the nations who had been our foes.

In blessing Jacob, whom he loved, a heritage for us he chose. Psalm 47. These verses on page 62. All nations, clap your hands and shout.

Amen. All nations, clap your hands and shout.

[23 : 08] Let joyful cries to God ring out. How awesome is the Lord most high.

How awesome is the Lord most high. Great king who rules the earth throughout. He has subdued beneath our feet.

The nations who have been our foes. prod stuff. The people of themern you have to be■■■■ so thats simple.

God has been chosen. God has gone up with chance of joy.

The Lord have made the trumpet sound. Sing fresh, sing fresh to God's most high.

[24 : 40] To all our kings and priests abide. For God is king of all the earth.

Sing songs of Christ to him alone. God rules the nations from all night.

He sits upon his holy throne. The leaders of the nations come.

To yield themselves to Hebrews God. To him beyond the shields of earth.

Exalted great is the Lord. Amen.

[26 : 07] Amen. Amen. Well, let's turn together now to Psalm 45 in the book of Psalms. Psalm number 45. I'm going to look today at the first five verses of the Psalm especially.

But focusing really on some of the detail there in regard to the two attributes of Jesus, of Christ as our king. Firstly, his beauty and then his might.

Psalm 45, as you can see from the title there, is a love song. But it's not an ordinary love song. It's actually a wedding song.

It's a song of the relationship between a king and a commoner who's going to become his wife.

And that, of course, has tremendous spiritual significance. The psalmist actually very liked the Song of Solomon in many of its expressions. And as you find it quoted in the New Testament, it becomes obvious then especially that this really is a prophecy of the relationship between Jesus and his people.

[27 : 16] That he is the one who is referred to here prophetically in anticipation as the warrior king who is altogether beautiful. He has so many beautiful attributes that this song really describes them in such a way as would pour out.

As it says in the very beginning of the psalm, my heart overflows with a pleasing thing. My address, my verses to the king. It's not just that the verses are about the king.

They're addressed to the king as he is in his beauty set out before the psalmist. And so that's the subject, this king that turns out to be King Jesus.

And there's a wonderful emphasis in itself that you find things written in the Old Testament scriptures like this psalm that came to be fulfilled many, many hundreds of years afterwards.

And not just fulfilled, but fulfilled in specific detail. A specific detail in such a way that would really just confirm our conviction that this word, this Bible, this word is the word of God.

[28 : 28] Inspired by the spirit of God as he moved different authors to write the various parts of it down through the years. How could you possibly find such exact correspondence between some of the passages in the Old Testament like Isaiah 53 and here in Psalm 45 that came to be so specially and minutely fulfilled in the person and the work of Jesus Christ without knowing that God, without realizing really that God, or coming to the conclusion that God is really the author of all this from beginning to end.

Well, here is this wonderful wedding song, this marriage song, and this excited eagerness on the part of the psalmist to actually set forth these details.

And when we think of a king marrying a commoner, not just a commoner in the sense of the aristocracy or maybe not royalty, this girl that he's marrying, this woman is obviously, as it comes to be seen through the psalm, is just an ordinary common person.

She doesn't have any superior status, doesn't have any royalty, she doesn't have even aristocracy about it. She is like the woman in the Song of Solomon.

She's just an ordinary down-to-earth person. And when you think about Jesus coming to be spiritually married to his people, to his church, to those that he saves and brings into this marriage relationship with himself spiritually, a wonderful thing happens in that union between them.

[30 : 04] Because all the debts that we have as sinners, all the debts that we have and what we owe to God, that we cannot ourselves pay, Jesus takes these.

Jesus pays for these. All the things that God requires of us, but that we cannot pay, that we cannot do. The debt in which we placed ourselves by a rebellion against him as human beings, that's what Jesus has taken.

The king has taken the debt to himself. And he's happy to pay for it. That's the meaning of Christmas. The Son of God coming into the world.

Remember how Paul describes it in his second letter to the Corinthians. You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he was rich and is rich, he's rich with the riches that is his as God.

Yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich. It doesn't mean he lost the riches that belonged to God, but it means he placed himself in the situation that led to his death on the cross.

[31 : 09] And through that work, through that completion, through that accomplishment, we are made rich as we come to be united to him. And so, it's not just that our debts are passed to him and he pays the price of these debts by his death.

His riches are also passed to us. This ordinary commoner married to this king can say after the marriage is accomplished, after the marriage has actually been gone through, all the riches of the king become hers.

They're all passed over to her. And isn't that one of the most amazing things, one of the most wonderful things to celebrate, not only at this time of year, but all times.

All the riches that belong to Jesus Christ as the Savior of his people are passed to us as we come to accept him as our Redeemer.

So, let's look at the beauty of Jesus described in these words and also the might of Jesus, the strength of Jesus, the Jesus who accomplished such great things for his people.

[32 : 19] First of all, this beauty, you can see here in verse 2, You are the most handsome of the sons of men. Grace is poured upon your lips. Therefore, God has blessed you forever.

You're not just handsome, but the psalmist is saying, You are the most handsome of the sons of men. There is nobody else that has that level of beauty, that level of spiritual handsomeness that belongs to Jesus.

He is beautiful, first of all, in his person, because we're talking here about the Son of God. We're talking about the beauty that belongs to the divine, the beauty that belongs to God, the beauty and perfection of God himself as it is in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

That's something that did not actually cease to be the case, the truth about him. Remember Psalm 27, where the psalmist is there speaking of the beauty of God as well.

In verse 4, One thing I have asked of the Lord, and that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.

[33 : 30] When you think about the beauty of God, the beauty that's in Jesus as the Son of God, the divine beauty that is his, we're talking here of the beauty, we're thinking here of the beauty of his love, the beauty of God's love, the beauty of love that does not love just in order to get something back in return, but loves because he is love, because he loves to love.

The beauty of goodness, the beauty of perfect wisdom, the beauty of truth that never becomes other than truth, constant, eternal truth, the beauty of Jesus in his person, in terms of the beauty of God.

There's so much you could amplify in these points, so much you could elaborate, because the Bible is full of this beauty of God and the different ways in which God has made his beauty known to us.

All the attributes that God has are attributes that manifest, that show out his beauty. But then remember, Jesus is human as well, perfectly human, completely human.

He took our human nature to himself. The Son of God joined humanity to his deity so as to complete in himself one perfect person, two natures in one person.

[34 : 57] The mystery of Christ as our Savior, God and man together. And it's the beauty of a perfect humanity, a perfect human being.

What is that like? Well, it's like Jesus, because that's who he is, and that's what he is like. And every time you read about him in the Scriptures, in terms even of his humanity, you always stop to admire that humanity.

You just imagine what it must have been like, even to the extent that we can, and we can't go into it too far, but the beauty of a perfect man and a perfect life. You think of him being brought up as a child, and then as a little boy, and then as a young man, and there's never any flaw in him.

He has the beauty of perfect behavior, perfect speech. He has the beauty of that which is perfect in its humanity, in every aspect of it.

You can just think as far as you can of his parents. I wonder how many times they stopped his parents. That is, his mother Mary, and his legal father Joseph, because of course his father is ultimately God, the Father.

[36 : 20] But think about him being brought up by them. Think about how they never saw anything in them that was sinful, that was contrary to what God required.

every single thing he did, every single word he said, every aspect of his behavior, while he learned because he was human, and while his learning as a human developed, and all of that is true of him, just as it is of any human, yet it is perfect.

He is the perfect human being, the beauty of perfect humanity, that which did not exist ever since Adam fell, ever since we became flawed human beings, sinful human beings.

But Jesus is the perfect human, the beauty of a perfect, perfect humanity, and the beauty of the perfection of God.

He's perfect. He's beautiful in his person. You are the most handsome of the sons of men. But he's also beautiful. Secondly, in his speech, mentioned that a minute ago in terms of his humanity, but is specified here, grace is poured upon your lips, or into your lips.

[37 : 36] In other words, he is endowed with the most perfect speech. And if you look at the Gospels, and read the Gospels, you'll soon be aware of how people were marveling, and just wondering over the words that came from his lips.

For example, in the Gospel of Luke, chapter 4, you remember that great occasion where Jesus in the synagogue took the book of Elijah, the scroll of Elijah was given to him.

He unrolled it and found the place where it was written, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor, to speak out good news, to preach good news to the poor, the words of his lips.

And so on he went to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and he rolled up the scroll, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.

And he began to say to them, And today the Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing, and all spoke well of him, and marveled. And then listen to the words of Luke.

[38 : 42] Marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. Marveled at the words of grace that were coming from his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

And so on. But these words especially fit in with Psalm 45, don't they? It's almost as if Luke at the time was just thinking of reading Psalm 45. Grace is poured into or upon your lips.

You are endowed with the most amazing speech. You are endowed with the most amazing ability to speak words of grace. Grace has been poured into your lips. And you know, when you come, as those of you who know Jesus as your Savior know very well, when he spoke to you through his word, when he spoke to you, when the Spirit of God took the words of Scripture and impressed your heart and mind with them, as you heard the voice of Jesus say, Come to me and rest.

You know that these words were words filled with grace. Words that were not of an ordinary type of speech. They were words of the Son of God. Words of the Savior. Words by which he awoke you to your sense of need.

Words by which he introduced himself to you. As the perfect Savior. Words that you still remember and still hear and still long to hear is the words of grace. Words of favor.

[40 : 05] Words of blessing. God endowed him so that his ministry would be a ministry of grace, a ministry of favor to lost sinners.

There is a beauty in all his words. And of course, we know that because he is the Son of God, because he himself is behind the inspiration, the setting out of Scripture as we have it, Old Testament as well as New Testament.

It wasn't just at the beginning of Matthew's Gospel or in those times of the incarnation, of the coming of Jesus into the world, the birth of Jesus. That's not when Jesus began to live.

That's not the beginning of his life. He didn't have the beginning of life ultimately because he is God. He has eternal life as God. And you see the beauty in his words, the beauty in his promises, beauty even in his commands, beauty in his counsel, beauty in his comfort, beauty in his correction because he is always about setting us on the right path, keeping us on the right path.

Beauty of words of peace that he speaks into your heart. How beautiful are the words of Jesus when your heart needs peace, when your heart needs to rest, when you're faced with the challenges of this life, with the many different aspects of affliction and of grief and of sorrow and of change that you find in your experience from day to day, from year to year.

[41 : 47] As you come towards the end of another year in which you've seen changes, especially if you've lost loved ones, if your health has been an issue, if your mental health has been an issue, if all of these things and others you could add to them have been issues and challenges for you.

How wonderfully beautiful are the words of Jesus because he addresses you in these circumstances with his perfect knowledge, with his concern to bring his promises to bear upon your circumstances, to impress upon you and to give you an even deeper conviction that his word is always true, his word is always reliable, his words are always beautiful.

the beauty of Jesus, beauty in his person, beauty in his speech, in whatever he says, whether it's even at times to bring us up short and show us how far short we're coming of the standard he expects and requires of us.

maybe it's even today a time of correction for me or for you to set us back on the right path, to refocus our mind upon the things that are of eternal importance.

Well, that's beauty as well, isn't it? The beauty of Christ's words. But secondly, along with the beauty of Jesus, these words in the psalm speak of the might of Jesus.

[43 : 19] Jesus, he's talking here in verse 3, gird your sword on your thigh and then let your arrows that are sharp pierce the hearts of the king's enemies in verse 5.

So the might of Jesus, you can see him described here as a warrior king, somebody who is constantly equipped for battle. And of course, when the Bible speaks about battle in this way, it's not talking about fighting literally.

A lot of people make that mistake that we as Christians really just set out the Bible as containing all these terms of violence, that the Bible is responsible for much of the violence in the world, for the conflict between different views that human beings have.

Well, of course, Christ in his might and in these terms that are used here, they're used especially in a spiritual meaning. And it's been the case, I know very well, and you know very well that down through history, at certain times Christians have taken up the sword as if we present the gospel accompanied by violent means in order to persuade people to accept it.

That's not what Christianity is about. That's a distortion of Christianity. That's a distortion of the values of Christ. Because when Christ goes out to conquer, he goes out to attack our hearts and our minds by ways of his truth.

[44 : 44] He brings us, as it says there, into subjection to himself. In verse 5, your arrows are sharp in the hearts of the king's enemies, the people fall in subjection under you.

The subjection that is talking here of Jesus is the subjection of your heart and your mind to him, to be ruled by him, to be ruled gladly and willingly by him. It's not a forced subjection, it's not something that's done violently.

That's why we value our freedom of religion, among many other freedoms like freedom of speech, freedom of thought, freedom of religion.

We don't force people into acceptance of Christianity or of Christ. We seek to persuade them. We seek to persuade them by the beauty of Christ, by emphasizing the beauty of Christ, by emphasizing his beauty in his person and in his words and in everything else to do with him so that they be persuaded to lay down that rebellion against him, the spiritual rebellion that is ours by nature and come and yield to his authority.

And that's our basis of confidence in the gospel, isn't it? That this gospel, this good news of life, of eternal life in Jesus Christ, that is not dependent ultimately on our ability, whatever ability we have or don't have to speak or to preach or to witness or to testify for him, the success of the gospel does not rest with that.

[46 : 16] It rests with the power, the might of Jesus himself. It's in the very nature of the word of Christ that he uses in order to persuade us to come to be in subjection to him, to accept his truth, to accept him as our Lord, accept him as our Savior, accept him as the King and Lord of all the earth.

It's interesting, isn't it, that Psalm 45 follows on from Psalm 44. I know you're saying, well, that's logical, 45 follows 44 in terms of numerical sequence, but what I mean is in terms of the content of Psalm 45, it's deliberately placed beside Psalm 44 because Psalm 44 is by and large a psalm of defeat, a psalm of lament, a psalm of seeking to have God refocus them and re-guide them and bring them back to know himself.

And there's his appeal there in verse 23, Psalm 44, awake, why are you sleeping, O Lord? Arouse yourself, do not reject us forever. Why do you hide your face?

Why do you forget our affliction and oppression? Our soul is bowed down to the dust, our belly clings to the ground. Rise up, come to our help, redeem us for the sake of your steadfast love.

What is the next portion of the Psalms? My heart overflows with a pleasing thing. I address my verses to the king, and then he describes his beauty.

[47 : 47] You see, the beauty of Jesus and the might of Jesus is really the answer to our human problem. It's the answer to, and I'm using the term problem in the singular because the human problem includes all our problems.

All our concerns and all our wants. But God's answer to that is in the beauty and in the might of Jesus, in his suitability and in his sufficiency to actually deal with our problems, and to deal especially with the problem of our sin, which is the root of all other problems.

Our sin, our rebellion, our broken relationship with God, and into that comes Jesus Christ, the beauty and the might that is his.

And the might of Jesus, you see, the might of Jesus has seen that he never loses in his campaign for the truth. Christ has never lost a battle.

The church has lost many battles, but in the overall scheme of things, the Lord has never lost a battle. You find it described in the Gospels, especially as the battle between good and evil, the battle between Jesus, the head of his people, and the likes of Satan, who is at the head of this great campaign against Jesus and against his truth and against the light.

[49 : 14] And every time you find Jesus confronted by the devil, whether it's in the wilderness, in Matthew chapter 4, or Luke's description of it, or Mark's, you'll always find that the ultimate victory is with Jesus.

He never loses a battle, nor will he ever. And you know, that's some of the most comforting thoughts that you can have. Some of the most comforting truth that comes from the Bible to you and to me today is that in all your battles, in all your struggles, in all the things that you experience in this life, where you know failure, where I know failure, when your trust is in Jesus, ultimately, in the final analysis, you're never on the side of failure.

You're always on the side of victory, because this is your king. This is who your king is. One who never loses in his great campaign that he heads.

You know, even coming to the description in the Gospels of his death on the cross, and all that led up to his trial, which was a sham, really, of a trial, and then his being led out to be crucified, and his death that actually took place on the cross.

Looking at it outwardly, and probably the devil was of this opinion. Looks like defeat, doesn't it? And you find these disconsolate disciples who had been as disciples during these years with him, and here they are, and they're disconsolate.

[50 : 56] They haven't understood, of course, at that stage, the meaning of the cross, and especially before the resurrection took place, you'll find, as in Luke 24, these disconsolate, downcast disciples walking together and reflecting on what's happened.

We thought this was he who would redeem Israel, and where is he? He's in the grave. But then someone came and joined their company.

Someone no less than Jesus himself. And as he revealed to them who he was, that he was indeed Christ, risen from the dead, as they then reflected on him as he eventually disappeared from sight, and went out of their company.

Did not our heart burn within us while he explained to us the scriptures? He opened the scriptures. He opened their minds to understand the scriptures, the beauty of his speech, the beauty of his words, the beauty of his person, and they realized this is who he is.

He's risen from the dead. He's not lost the battle. He's actually the victor. He's conquered death. He's beaten sin.

[52 : 13] He's overcome all of that. And so we overcome with him. And by him and by being joined with him, we come indeed to share in that victory that is his.

See the way in which he appeals here, verse 3, gird your sword on your thigh, almighty one in your splendor and majesty. And then think about the difference between a sword used in an actual battle situation and the sword that you find in a ceremonial situation.

Well, the sword that Jesus uses, spiritually of course, again, is not a ceremonial sword. It's one by which he conquers and goes out and brings people into subjection to himself.

The sword of his truth, the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. And his cause is the most worthy of all. I'll finish with this.

You know that in actual battle situations, it's almost always the case that each regiment has their own colors, the ensign or the flag, you might call it.

[53 : 23] It's a standard. It's an ensign. It's called the regimental colors. You'll find these used on different parades, even formal parades. But in an actual battle situation, almost always the colors, the ensign, goes before the troops into battle.

They take their inspiration from the colors of the regiment. And they follow whoever is carrying the regimental colors into battle. They follow on from that. They take their inspiration from that.

That's what gives them, in a sense, the courage to follow it into battle, to engage on behalf of the cause that they're fighting for. Well, the regimental colors of Jesus are inscribed with three great words.

This is the regimental motto, if you like. You'll find it in the psalm, in verse 4, and your majesty, ride out victoriously. And here are the battle colors.

Here is the ensign. Here's the standard. Here's the regimental colors for meekness, for the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness. These are the great words inscribed, embroidered, if you like, heavily onto this standard, the ensign of Jesus.

[54 : 34] And as you see Jesus going before His people, so this ensign gives you the encouragement and the confidence to follow Him and the inspiration to follow Him, because that's really a description ultimately of Himself, truth and meekness and righteousness.

How do we face the assault made upon the cause of Christ by falseness, by lies, by false teaching, by distortions of the gospel?

How do we counteract the pride, the brashness, the arrogance of human antagonism to God and to His gospel? How do you react to the sin, the immorality that is in your own heart and also in the world, as you see the word living without God?

You follow the ensign. You take your inspiration from Jesus Himself, this wonderful, beautiful, mighty King. And for the sake of meekness holiness and truth and righteousness, you follow the colors.

You engage with all the disanimity with Christ on His behalf and as His people. And that's what the psalm sets out for us.

[55 : 58] The beauty of Jesus and the might of Jesus, His cause is the most worthy of all. And His cause is a cause that we take up when we follow Him.

And just as He heads up His people for the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness, so that's what we take to ourselves. And for truth and meekness and righteousness, these great spiritual qualities and moral qualities, we follow Him.

And we follow Him into engagement and battle with everything that is at enmity with Himself. and with His people. But let me finish with a question.

Who is your King? Whose colors are you following? What's inscribed on the ensign of your life?

Is Jesus today your great King? Is His cause the most worthy and important cause for you to follow?

[57 : 08] Have you truly entered into the regiment of Christ, the regiment of the saved, who has our allegiance today?

Christmas time. God's name. The word became flesh and dwelt among us. We beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

That's our King. He's our King. And we are to live as His people. May God bless these thoughts on His word to us.

We're going to conclude our service just now singing in Psalm 24. Psalm 24 in the Scottish Psalter version on page 230. singing verses 7 to 10.

Ye gates lift up your heads on high. Ye doors that last for a be lifted up. That so the King of glory enter me. But who of glory is the King?

[58 : 21] The mighty Lord is this. Even that same Lord that great in might and strong in battle is. And as we read and sing these verses, let's think of them as the doors of our heart being opened up.

The gates of our heart to receive and to admit. Once again the King as we follow Him. So these verses, ye gates lift up your heads on high.

Ye gates lift up your heads on high. In yours and us all name.

Ye gates lift up that saw the King of glory enter me.

But who of glory is the King? The mighty Lord is this.

[59 : 27] He gates lift up your head, in the Lord that great in might and strong in battle is.

In the Lord that great in might and strong in battle is.

He lifted up your heads, ye doors, He lifted up your heads, ye doors, Lord, start to last for aid.

He lifted up your head, ye doors, and he lifted up your head, ye doors, and he lifted up your head, ye doors, and the King of glory enter me. of glory enter me.

But who is he that is the king, the king of glory who is this?

[60 : 31] The Lord of hosts and round the king, the king of glory is.

The Lord of hosts and round the king, the king of glory is.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and evermore.

[61 : 39] Amen. Amen.