

Remember O' Lord

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Date: 06 June 2021

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[0 : 00] and then I'll pray for the children as they make their way out to Sunday school and crew. In thinking about the Lord Jesus Christ, we turn to Colossians 1, and we read in Colossians chapter 1, verse 19 through to 23, these words, now hear God's word.

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

And you, who were once alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and abrupt reproach before him.

Well, may God bless the reading of his word, but may God also bless you with the reality of what those words say about you. And this is what I want you to appreciate this morning.

These words are telling you something about you. Okay? They're telling us something about Christ, but they're telling us something about you.

[1 : 27] That Christ is making you holy and blameless and above reproach. A beautiful place to be in Christ.

Above reproach. No fault. Perfect. Perfect. Just not yet. We're getting there. We're getting there. Let me pray for the children as they make their way up to Sunday school.

Father God, I would ask that your seed, your gospel seed, be sown today. I would ask, Father God, that you would be with the leaders and teachers and helpers as they seek to share the gospel and share the message of the word of God with these children.

And I pray, Father God, that you would open up their hearts and cause them to come and see and believe and understand the importance and value of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So, Father, I ask this day for them. May it be a blessed day where seed is sown and fruit is produced. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[2 : 36] Thank you, Gordon. Read. Let's come to God in prayer as something that the church should do together.

And as we pray, we're very mindful of the future. And therefore, we're very mindful of the fact that knowing exactly what to pray for is difficult.

The psalm this morning helps us perhaps to understand how God works in difficult times. But when it comes to praying, it's very easy for our prayers to default to ordinary or our normal concerns.

So, we pray or we may find ourselves praying for the same things over and over again.

I would recommend it. But I would never recommend that we pray over and over again where it becomes a mantra, as though we pray in a way where we're kind of saying to ourselves, everything will be all right.

[3 : 43] Everything will be all right. Everything will be all right. Jesus, you know, had harsh words to say to those who had long, endless prayers, mantra-like.

And the remedy was keep them short and simple and honest before the Lord. Now, of course, we must be convinced this morning that when we're about to pray now, that the Lord will incline his ear and answer our prayers.

There's no point in praying unless you will approach him in faith, because without faith, it is impossible to please God. So, it's not just a case of motion, and it's not just a case of words.

It's rather the application of faith, to really believe that what God has said in his word is true, to really believe that we can hold God to his character, that if God is love, then we hold him to that character, that if God is patient, we hold him to his character.

And as we pray to God for what we would like to see and what we would like to happen, we recognize that at the end of the day, that we are subjects of a king.

[4 : 59] And we know our humble position, or we ought to know our humble position, and acknowledge that as we pray before our Lord and God, that he does indeed care for us, that he does indeed love us, and he does indeed will look after us.

And therefore, when we don't receive what we're praying for, or perhaps have been praying for for a long time, we recognize that this is ordered by God of who loves and who is love, rather than by one who's dictatorial and indignant and many other things that would cause you to disbelieve or cause you to doubt.

Okay? We pray to God who is love and who loves, but we must pray by applying the faith, because it is, we cannot please him.

You will not be pleasing God if you pray in a way that doesn't apply faith. Okay? It's impossible to please God without faith. And so our prayers may look very ordinary, they may not have high lofty words, but if they are done so in faith, then this is what pleases the Lord.

Okay? Let's pray. Father God, for our future we come before you, for a future that we do not know, but we are completely assured that you are in control of all things, that you order all things that according to the counsel of your will, and that, Father God, your nature and character is one where you are love and you love your people.

[6 : 42] I would ask, Father God, this morning that as we gather, that we would have a taste of your presence, that we would know of the things to come this morning, that we would recognize through frustration that your will will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

And that, Father God, while many things are not the way that we would want them to be, and they are not the way that they, things are not going the way we would like them to go, we do recognize, Father God, that you hold all of these things together perfectly.

And that, Father God, you are reconciling all things. And you, in the process, are making us holy and blameless and above reproach. So, Father God, may we take our gathering seriously.

May we recognize that we're not simply attending a building or a church, but we are gathering in the heavenlies with heavenly hosts, though we do not see them. We recognize our there through faith in your word which tells us so.

Father, and as we gather this morning, we would ask that you would please give us a sense of your presence, that you would present yourselves amongst us this day, that your blessing would be upon your people here, and that we would recognize that we are not ordinary people, but we are people who belong to Christ. That we are not ordinary people for ordinary ends, but we are a special people for a very special future. So, Father, as we gather to worship you, we pray that our worship of you will be in accordance with your law and your grace and your favor. And that we would ask, as we come to read your word, that we would understand that though they are men's words to you and your words to us, they are indeed words that you use to cause us to be like Christ. So, we would ask, Father God, this morning that you would open our ears and our hearts, that we would receive your word as we are meant to, and keep it as we are meant to. In Jesus' name. Amen.

[8 : 54] Well, the reading this morning is taken from Psalm 132. I need to preface this psalm, but we will read it first. So, Psalm 132. It's longer than some of the other psalms, but it's not super long. It's only 18 verses long. But it's dense, it's thick, it has much to say, and much to instruct the church with. So, now hear God's word, Psalm 132. Remember, O Lord, in David's favor, all the hardships he endured, how he swore to the Lord and vowed to the mighty one of Jacob. I will not enter my house or get into my bed. I will not go to, I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids until I find a place for the Lord, a dwelling place for the mighty one of Jacob. Behold, we heard of it in Epaphras. We found it in the fields of Jar.

Let us go to his dwelling place. Let us worship at his footstool. Arise, O Lord, and go to your resting place, and you and the ark of your might. Let your priests be clothed with righteousness, and let your saints shout for joy. For the sake of your servant David, do not turn away the face of your anointed one. The Lord swore to David a sure oath from which he will not turn back. One of the sons of your body I will sit on your throne. If your sons keep my covenant and my testimonies that I shall teach them, their sons also forever shall sit on your throne. For the Lord has chosen Zion. He has desired it for his dwelling place. This is my resting place forever. Here I will dwell, for I have desired it.

I will abundantly bless her provisions. I will satisfy her poor with bread. Her priests I will clothe with salvation, and her saints will shout for joy. There I will make a horn to the sprout for David. I have prepared a lamp for my anointed. My enemies I will clothe with shame, but on him his crown will

shine. Well, let me just sort of preface this psalm before we get into it by saying that everything functions according to the will of God. And this is pretty important when it comes to reading the psalms, especially ones within the song of ascents, but all the psalms, in fact, all of God's word. We must always appreciate it in the context that everything functions according to the will of God. Now, the reason that is important is because men and women and boys and girls have desires that are always going to be structured by God's will. Every now and then it is possible for people within the church to exercise their will to a certain extent and length of time, and it's only a matter of time before God's will corrects it. God does allow things to take their course, only for him to correct that course further down the line. So it's entirely possible for people of old and people in the church today to live their own will, but it's not possible to continue to do that without the Lord bringing some kind of correction at some point. We see this famously, perhaps, in the Tower of Babel, where men and women desired to make a name for themselves in the whole earth, only for God to allow it to allow it to allow it to get to the stage where it was high enough to bring down so that the lesson would be taught. Not everything that flourishes is of the Lord. Sometimes things can be built, like the

Tower of Babel, only for it to be brought down so that the Lord can make a very clear and definitive statement. For us as the church listening to this, what we are coming to understand or appreciate is that we have wills, but how important it is for our will to be structured by God's will.

[13 : 47] And this isn't just in terms of desires, this could be in terms of anything. This will work its way out into your marriage, it'll work its way out into your work, it'll work its way out into your business, it'll work its way out everywhere, and therefore we must be sensitive and conscious to how the Lord's will is affecting and shaping the people of God. Because God uses anything he chooses to shape us.

It's not just necessarily the word of God. The word of God is what explains to us that God uses anything he chooses to shape us. He could give us a promotion or he could take the promotion away. He could lead us in one direction so that we have a taste of the danger only with safeguard to bring us back in.

Because God knows, as it states in his word, that we cannot learn as much as we need to learn as quickly as we need to learn it. And therefore God uses particular measures in order to shape his people because not everyone learns the same thing at the same speed at the same time or even at all.

What we have here in this psalm is we have the contrast of two sons but neither are the right one. David is the first king in this sense. When I say a son, I'm really talking about Solomon who is to come and Christ who will eventually come who is the right son. David is a man of war. David is a man with blood on his hands. David is a man who has the desire to build the temple for the Lord, only for the Lord to turn around through the prophet Nathan and tell David it is not for him to build it. And this causes perhaps a little bit of internal tension because how is it possible for you to have the right desire to do the right thing, to actually do the very thing that God wants doing, and then for God to respond, it will be done but it will not be done through you. This is the history of this psalm. This psalm is about David's desire to build the temple so that the Ark of the Covenant can have a home and he will not rest until that day happens. But the history of this, it goes back to 2 Samuel 7 where God has to tell David through the prophet Nathan, you are not going to be the one who will do it. David is a man of war. David has blood on his hands. He fights. Solomon doesn't. Well, he does, but not like David. Solomon is a builder. Solomon is the one who will build the temple and both David and Solomon are kings, but neither king will actually be the one who has a kingdom that will last forever and yet that's the promise.

The promise is that God will establish a kingdom forever. And what this psalm is doing is that the psalmist is praying to God saying, Lord, remember David's hardships, remember the oath that he swore, remember everything that he did and make good on that hard work. Would you reward us for the hard work that David has done? And what the psalmist is doing is he's holding God to his own character.

[17 : 31] He's holding God to his own promises and he's saying, Lord, remember, remember, look at what David has done. Look at why he has done it. Now reward us. So let's just go through these verses together.

The psalm begins with a request. Remember, O Lord, David. Remember all of his hard work. Remember his hardships. But most importantly, remember why he was doing what he was doing.

He says in verse, sorry, verse three, I will not enter my house or get into my bed or get into my bed. I will not give sleep to my eyes or stomach to my eyelids. Verse five, until I find a place for the Lord, a dwelling place for the mighty one of Jacob. And what he's speaking about there, of course, we will pick it up further down, is really a place for the Ark of the Covenant to dwell, the Ark to be placed. So the people of God can gather from afar, verse six, because their desire or rather the people's desire ought to be to worship the Lord God at his footstool. And then this desire is summarized, is it the one thing that the people need, whether they realize it or not, is for the Lord to present themselves amongst them because that is where the blessing is. The people in many ways are chasing the blessing here, the blessing of the Lord in their prayer, that what they are after is that they recognize, and we have seen this in Psalm 127, Psalm 128, that unless the Lord blesses, we can work our socks off and nothing will come of it. Nothing will come of our endeavors unless the Lord blesses. And therefore, when we look at successes or fruitfulness that is in accordance with God's word, we're able to ascribe greatness to God and praise to God because we recognize that this is the result of God's blessing upon his people. But also, the people of God must come and worship God because they need to hear that God loves them. It's not just a one-sided transaction here where the people of God are coming to give God praise. The people of God have to come to God so that they would hear that God loves them, that God has made promises to them. And when you know who God is, and when you know that God will not break those promises, suddenly I become a different person. Suddenly I feel very different about myself, not because of anything that I have done or any achievement that I have, but rather because of what God is telling me about me. Very similar to what we read in Colossians.

Look at what God is telling you in his word about you. So the people of God are a people who need to come and stand and present themselves before God. But this can only happen, verse 9, if there are priests present. Without priests, it is impossible for the people of God to be able to stand before God because sacrifices and offerings have to be made and the priests are the ones who have to make them on behalf of the people. Without them, no one can stand. No one is able to present themselves before the Lord. No one is able to draw near. And then, of course, the psalmist then remembers, verse 11, that the Lord swore to David a sure oath from which he will not turn back. David made an oath that he would work hard to do what God wanted to be done. But now the Lord has also made an oath to David. And so what he's trying to do is get to try and cause these people to remember, look at what God has said. Let's hold him to his promise. Now, of course, God doesn't need to be held to his promise. But that is rather how this psalm functions. That is rather how the prayer functions. You're holding God to his own word. But as we know that this promise of a son that will come from his body, second half of verse 11, that one of your sons of your body, I will set his throne.

If your sons keep my covenant and my testimonies, I shall teach them. Their sons also forever shall sit on your throne. But as we know, David's throne does not last forever. And as we know, Solomon's throne does not last forever. But in the eyes of the people listening to this, what is the one thing that they would have been expecting when looking at Solomon? Here is the king that will last forever.

Here is the kingdom that will last forever. Because it looks as if the promise is going to be fulfilled in David's son. And so when David has a son, Solomon, then suddenly these promises are going to be fulfilled. The trouble is they are, but they're not through David and they are not through Solomon. [23 : 04] They can only be fulfilled in the son that is to come, the son of David, Jesus Christ, that is to come. And what the latter verses in this psalm shows us is that God does keep his promises, but according to his will and according to his covenant and according to his testimonies. And it's not as if he's bypassing David and Solomon, but rather the world is allowed to see that David could never be the good and perfect king. That Solomon also could not be that good and perfect king who would last forever.

It had to be someone who could serve the priestly function as well as a king. So the way this psalm is working is that the psalmist is asking God to reward us with blessing.

Now he's not saying, look at all the hard work that David has done, now bless us. But rather he is looking at the reason for the hard work. That David, what David desired was exactly what the Lord desired.

But what the Lord desired was that David would not be the one who would build the temple. It would be his son Solomon. David firms up his commitment by making an oath as if to say, I will not sleep, I

will not eat, I will not drink. I mean, this is the kind of thing that he is saying.

I will go out of my way to make sure that the ark of the might, the ark of the Lord's might, the ark of the covenant will have a temple to dwell in. Here I am living in a cedar house.

[24 : 47] If you go read 2 Samuel 7, which is the backdrop to this psalm. Here I am living in a cedar house while the ark of the Lord dwells in a tent. That doesn't seem right to me, David is saying.

David is saying this doesn't seem right. That God's glory, God's symbol of his strength and presence, the ark dwells in a tent. Well, I am here in this beautiful cedar house. I must build a temple.

And so he has a wonderful desire, exactly what the Lord is wanting. But it took the prophet Nathan to come to David and say, no. David received a divine no.

And I think that is a lesson in itself for all Christians in the will of God. That sometimes when we don't see the fruit to what our endeavors have done, and you must remember that our strivings don't always produce God's blessings.

That God's blessings do not always turn up in the same place where you have strived. I think that's the lesson here. You can work incredibly hard, incredibly patiently.

[26 : 04] You can do all the right things, or you have believed that you have done all the right things, and God's blessings are not turning up in the same place where you have worked hard. That's really very difficult to take.

And the only answer to soothe that kind of trouble is to understand that everything is in accordance with the will of God, not in accordance with your desire.

That what I desire is this. What God wants is something quite different. And now I'm having to figure out, well, where do I fit in, in light of God's will?

Where do I fit in, in relationship to the will of God and my desires? Am I just to forget them? Well, in 2 Samuel 7, the promise is made to David through the prophet Nathan that a kingdom will be built, a temple will be built, but it will be built by his son.

And his kingdom will last forever. And we think immediately, this has to be Solomon. But of course, it cannot be Solomon.

[27 : 18] Because Solomon's kingdom does not last forever. Now, at the time, the people wouldn't have understood that. They would have just looked to the son of David. They would have seen Solomon grow up.

They would have seen him become king. And now they have all of these expectations. But their expectations are in the wrong place. Because the son whose kingdom that will last forever is Jesus, the son of David, not Solomon, the son of David.

The promise will be fulfilled, but it will not be fulfilled in the way that the people are expecting it to be fulfilled. But what this psalmist is asking, and this is the real crutch of this psalm, is reward us.

Reward us with your blessing. Take into consideration David's desire. Take into consideration the fact that what he desired is exactly what you desired.

Take into consideration everything that he did and reward us with your blessing. And so when the Ark of the Covenant is eventually brought in and you have the temple, suddenly the people are blessed.

[28 : 25] Now, the people of God back here put a lot of emphasis on the temple, so much so that in Jeremiah, the people are so distant from God that as long as they have the temple, they believe they have the presence of God with them.

Because the presence of God is always linked to the symbols that God gives us. You have the Ark of the Covenant, you have the temple, you have the tabernacle, you have the temple. And the people understood that as long as those symbols which represent God are with us, then so too is God with us.

And what you have in Jeremiah is God trying to convince his people that because you have the temple does not mean that you have me. So what does God do in Jeremiah?

He takes away the temple. Because that was the only way for the lesson to be learned. Because they could not see past that.

So does God reward? Yes, he rewards. This is what it says in Hebrews. That he is not unjust so as to overlook your work and your love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints.

[29 : 36] God does not overlook the work of David. He does not overlook the desire of David. He blesses David. He blesses the people with his presence, but not in the way that David wanted it to

work out.

The blessing that they longed for came, but not in the way that they expected it to come. And so David has a desire to build the house, but he is met with a divine no.

It will not be you. It will be one of your sons. And your son, I will establish his kingdom forever. And of course, it doesn't take us long to read the Old Testament to realize that this isn't going to be Solomon either.

So who is it going to be? What do we need in order to draw near to God? Well, we need a place where sacrifices can take place. What else do we need to draw near to God?

We need a people who can make those sacrifices on our behalf so that we can draw near to God.

What else do we need? Well, if we're going to be able to stand before God, we need to be atoned of our sins.

[30 : 44] And therefore, this doesn't just rest on a son, it rests on a priest. And this is why it says in this Psalm, that verse nine, let your priest be clothed with righteousness and then let your saints shout for joy.

See, the people of God understood that if I am going to be able to stand before God, I don't just need a son. I don't just need a king. I need a priest.

I need someone who can actually present me before God in everything that needs to happen so that I'm able to stand because without a priest, I can't stand before God.

Without my sins being atoned for, I cannot stand before God. Without sacrifice being offered and made, the people of God are unable to stand before God.

And so what this Psalm is showing us here is that there is a need for both a son, a king and a priest in order for the people of God to be blessed.

[31 : 43] There is no other way for the people of God to be blessed without this son who is good, without this king and this kingdom that will last forever, and without a priesthood who's actually able to do the necessary things to make the people of God stand before him, namely sacrifice and offerings.

So when it speaks about the ark of the might being brought in and all of this, this is really about God's people being convinced that God is with them. But once God is with them, how do you approach him?

Once you know that God is in your presence, how do you approach him? Think of how Moses casually walked towards the burning bush and God had to stop and say, no further until you remove the sandals for your feet for the ground that you walk on is holy.

That whatever God occupies then becomes holy because his presence is holy. And this is why when you have those who touch Jesus in the New Testament, that Jesus doesn't become leprous because he is touched by a leprous person, that he doesn't start bleeding because he is touched by a woman who bleeds, but rather they become healed because he is holy, because he is perfect. In the same way the ground was made holy because God was there in the presence of Moses, take off your sandals for the ground that you walk on is holy. Jesus in exactly the same way makes people holy by his presence.

[33 : 24] This is why leprous people could touch Jesus and he was not affected in any way, shape or form by their leprosy because it's the holiness of God which purifies the people of God.

So what does that mean now that we're in the presence of God? Well, it means that how do we approach him? How does a sinful person approach a holy God? Well, I need a priest.

And that priest has to be right before God and that priest has to be able to make sacrifices on my behalf. And now we begin to see that this cannot be filled in the priesthood either.

And now we look beyond the priesthood to a person who not only must be king but who must also be a priest and who must be the son of David.

And so we are forced constantly to the beginning of Matthew where we read the son of David has come. In Hebrews we read he is the priest forever in accordance with Markizedek that he is the king.

[34 : 35] And now we are beginning to understand how it's possible to have a kingdom that will last forever because Jesus rose. And if the king rose then his kingdom remains.

And now we are the people of God living within the kingdom of God before the king who is also our priest. And as a priest he laid down the sacrifice which was his life so that we could be brought into the presence of God.

In other words this is no small thing that what you're reading here. Your access to God requires this understanding. In order for you to be actually in the presence of God and met with divine favor requires the king requires the son requires the priest and all of those are in the person of Christ Jesus.

It is true that the promises made to David the Davidic covenant are unconditional. But they're unconditional in the sense that they are promises that God will keep irrespective of what the people do or not do.

However as always in the Old Testament and the New Testament that we tend to forget that God also has a covenant of blessings and curses. We don't think like this because we tend to think everything now is under the realm of grace which it is.

[36 : 08] But one of the ways that God treats his people and one of the ways that he shapes his people is through blessings and withholding those blessings in accordance with how we live before him.

But there are some things that we just cannot do and so the people of God of old are constantly forgoing the blessings of God due to their own disobedience due to their own lukewarmness when it comes to God.

But the one blessing that they will not forgo is the one blessing that doesn't depend on them because it depends on Christ. And so you have the perfect son of God the perfect son of David the king who will last forever the priest who not only offers the sacrifice but is indeed himself the sacrifice so that we are able to sit here this morning before God and we think we've just come to church.

look at what it's taken. Look at what it's taken for you to be able to come before God this morning. Look at all the work and the planning and the structure and the history that it has taken for you to be able to sit here this morning and enjoy the presence of God.

And so what we see in this psalm is that the mediator the one who will bring us before God must be the son of David. He must be the king and he must be the priest.

[37 : 37] And this psalm doesn't tell us who it is. It simply points us to what we need. And it's not until we get to the New Testament and it's not until we get to Christ do we finally realize that all of these promises that God has made are yes and amen in Christ Jesus.

that all of these promises that God has made are held true because they are kept by the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Well here's the exhortation as we close.

How many of you pray like the psalmist? How many of you when you pray come before God and say I know your character.

I know your promises and I'm asking you to keep them. How many of you actually present yourself before the Lord in the confidence that you can because Christ has made it possible and stand before God unashamed because Christ has made it possible and say to God I know your character. I know your oath and I ask of you according to your steadfast love to show that love to me to my family to my unsaved members.

[38 : 55] How many of us actually plead in the same way the psalmist does here? In other words he is praying at a very divine position of being able to say if I'm a son if I'm the son of the king that I am able to stand before my father and ask anything that I want because I am not a foreigner.

I am not someone who's not allowed to be here. I am not someone who's simply asking for a favor but rather I am a son and I have been made a son through the son and because of that I can ask my father anything.

How many of us pray to the father with that kind of confidence where we understand understand our position where we understand the privileged position that God has given us and use that privileged position to come before God humbly he's still our God and say answer my prayer.

But here's the caution we all have desires and God knows our desires and he even fulfills them but God has a will and his will will be done on earth as it is in heaven and sometimes these two do not always tally they do not always run at the same speed or even in the same direction and sometimes and it is very very hard to accept that divine no from God it is very hard to accept the divine no from God but we are accepting it from a God who knows best we're accepting it from a God who loves and who cares and who knows what is best for his people so look again at what it has taken for you to be able to come before God this morning as a people who belong to him amen to be