Psalm 72: King of Kings

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[0:00] Well, if we could, this evening, for a short while, if we could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read in the book of Psalms, and with the Lord's help, we'll look at Psalm 72.

Psalm 72, we're going to walk through this psalm, but if we just read again at verse 17, words that are very familiar to us. Psalm 72 and verse 17, 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.

Now, Psalm 72, it's a psalm that's very familiar to us because we traditionally sing this psalm, or sing the closing words of this psalm, on the morning of our communion season. And we sing those words because, in many ways, they're the confession of the church of Jesus Christ. That in the church of Jesus Christ, we are saying that his name forever shall endure, last like the sun it shall. Men shall be blessed in him, in Jesus Christ, and all nations shall him call. And you know, they're powerful words, words. But they're also prayerful words. And I say that because Psalm 72 is a prayer. It's a prayer that was written, as it says in the title, it was written by King Solomon. But as we can see, King Solomon's prayer is a prayer for another king. But you know, at the time of writing this psalm, or this prayer, which was written about 1000 BC, the person whom King Solomon was praying for, he had not yet been born. And that's because, well, in Psalm 72, King Solomon, he's praying for the greater than Solomon.

He's praying about Jesus Christ. Solomon's prayer is all about the king of kings, who is Jesus. And Solomon is praying that the covenant promise about this covenant king, he's praying that it will be fulfilled. Because the covenant promise of the covenant king, that covenant promise was first of all, or it was given to Solomon's father, David. The covenant promise that was given to David was part of this covenant of grace, this line that you can trace all the way through the Old Testament that follows the covenant of grace. It was a covenant of grace that was, that promised the coming of the Messiah. And that promise, it was given, as you know, to Abraham. Then it was reaffirmed to Isaac, then to Jacob, then to all the children of Israel, then to Moses. And eventually it came to King David.

[3:13] And you'll remember in 2 Samuel 7, the Lord reaffirmed the covenant of grace to David. And the Lord assured David that the covenant promise of a Messiah will be fulfilled by a covenant king.

And the Lord said to David that the covenant king will be one of his descendants. We're told that the Lord said to David in 2 Samuel 7, And in those words of covenant promise, they were all about the covenant king, the true royal son of God, Jesus Christ. And in Psalm 72, Solomon is praying that the covenant promise will be fulfilled by the arrival of the covenant king. And you know, Psalm 72, it's a beautiful prayer, because it's a Christ-centered prayer. It's a Christ-centered prayer. And it's a prayer all about the arrival of the covenant king of kings, Jesus Christ. And you know, well, we all know that Christmas is upon us. And we all know that all the distractions that Christmas brings. But you know, I just want us this evening, I want us to consider Psalm 72 and see that it's all about the arrival of the covenant king of kings, Jesus Christ. Because, well, Christmas, it should always be about Jesus as king.

It should always be about his kingship. It should always be about his kingdom. Christmas is all about Jesus as king, his kingship, and his kingdom. And that's what Solomon is praying about in the psalm. He's praying about the king, the kingship, and the kingdom. The king, the kingship, and the kingdom. So if we look first of all at the king, Solomon describes the king. Look at the beginning of the psalm in verse 1. Solomon says, he prays, 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. Solomon, he opens his prophetic and messianic prayer with this plea for the royal son. And of course, Solomon, he's not talking about himself. We can see that straight away. He's referring to this greater than Solomon. He's referring to the true royal son, the covenant king, Jesus Christ. And Solomon says, that royal son, he says, is God's son. Solomon is praying that the covenant promise of the covenant king will be fulfilled. He's praying for God's royal son to come. And notice when Solomon describes this messianic king, this royal son, he describes him as righteous. He is one who has righteousness.

Now, as a royal son of God, we all know that Jesus would have is and would have been glorious. He is holy. He's full of honor and majesty. He's the royal son. He's the perfect son of God. He's the perfect king to rule over his people. But what Solomon prays for, or what Solomon highlights, he doesn't highlight the glory of the king or the majesty of the king or the honor or his, even his holiness.

No, Solomon prays about his righteousness. And you can, you can see that in the opening verses, verses one to three, Solomon mentions the righteousness of God's royal son. He says, 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 or righteousness. Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people and the hills in righteousness. Solomon is praying that the royal son will be the true king of righteousness, the true Melchizedek, so that he will act righteously and justly for all those who are unrighteous and unjust. Solomon is praying here that this royal son, this covenant king, this righteous king, Jesus Christ, he's praying that he will act on behalf of those who are, as he says here, those who are poor and needy, those who are unrighteous and unable to make themselves righteous before a holy God. And you know, Solomon is pleading with God that the Messiah will act on behalf of his people. That's what Solomon says in verse four. He says it in verse four, may he defend the cause of the poor of the people and give deliverance to the children of the needy and crush the oppressor. He says crush the oppressor. And well, who do you think the oppressor is?

[8:36] The oppressor is sin, Satan, and death. The oppressor is the curse that's upon us. The curse that has been with us since the beginning. The curse that has infected and affected every area of our lives and has brought nothing with it but pain, illness, sorrow, and death.

And yet here is Solomon and he's praying that the seed of the woman, the seed of Eve will come and crush the head of the serpent. He's praying that the covenant king of righteousness will come and crush the oppressor. He's praying that the royal son will come and destroy the power of sin, Satan, and death.

But more than that, Solomon is praying that the righteous king will make poor and needy sinners who have no righteousness of their own. He's praying that the covenant king of righteousness will make the unrighteous righteous. And you know, my friend, that's why the king of righteousness came.

That's why he came. Because when we come to the New Testament and we see the fulfillment of Solomon's prayer unfolding before our eyes, we're told in the letter to the Hebrews that Christ suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God by being put to death in the flesh and made alive in the spirit. Paul tells us that it was God the Father who made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. My friend, in this Christ-centered prayer, Solomon is praying. He's praying about Calvary's great transaction.

He's praying that there will be this great exchange between the righteous king and the unrighteous sinner. He's praying that the king would take the worst about you and me and lay it upon himself.

And Solomon is praying that the king of kings would take the best about him and lay it on us. He's praying that your sins would be transferred to the king of kings and his righteousness would be transferred to you. And you know, my friend, over a thousand years before King Jesus was born in Bethlehem. We see Solomon here. He's all, you could say he's on his knees and he's praying about Calvary's great transaction. That God's royal son, the covenant king of righteousness, that he would make you righteous by faith in him.

And you know, when we read Psalm 72, you know, you should think to yourself when you hear this, you should think to yourself, you are an answer to prayer. You're an answer to prayer. Not only Solomon's prayer, but of course the prayers of many others who have prayed and pleaded for you that you would come to know and enjoy the righteousness of the king of kings. You are an answer to prayer. Even a prayer that was made over a thousand years ago. But you know, Solomon, he doesn't stop there because he goes on to pray in verse five. He says, 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. Solomon goes on to pray that we who are made righteous by faith in the covenant king of righteousness, those who are justified by faith, Solomon prays that we will continue to fear the Lord as long as the sun endures. And you know, he says that we're to fear the Lord because our righteousness endures as long as the sun endures. And you know, this is something that we should never forget. Our righteousness doesn't ebb and flow. Our righteousness, it doesn't peak and trough.

Our righteousness, it doesn't rise and fall. Our faith might go up and down. Our feelings might come and go. But you know, we are as righteous today as we will be when we see our covenant king face to face.

You are as righteous tonight as you will be when you stand in glory. And you know, that's why I love the catechism. It explains our position so beautifully. It says that justification, justification or being made righteous. It's an act of God's free grace. It's an act of the covenant king of righteousness. Wherein what does he do? He pardons all our sins. He accepts us as righteous in his sight only for the righteousness of Christ. Only for the righteousness of the covenant king being imputed to us. Being imputed to us and received by faith alone. My friend, because of our king of righteousness, our righteousness never changes. You're as righteous tonight as you will be when you stand in glory. But you know, what Solomon prays here is so beautiful because he prays that those poor and needy sinners who have been made righteous by faith in the covenant king, he prays that we will flourish. He prays that we will flourish. He says in verse 7, in his days may the righteous flourish and peace abound till the moon be no more. It's a wonderful prayer, isn't it? That we who are made righteous by the covenant king, he's praying that we will flourish, that we will grow, that we will increase, that we will be strengthened by the grace of God in Jesus Christ. My friend, Solomon's prayer, it's a beautiful prayer. It's a Christ-centered prayer where Solomon is praying that the covenant promise will be fulfilled by the arrival of the covenant king. And so Solomon prays about the king. But then secondly, he goes on to pray about the kingship of the king. So the king and then the kingship. The kingship. Look at verse 8.

Solomon prays, may he have dominion from sea to sea and 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. Now in this section, Solomon prays for the kingship or the rule and the reign of the promised covenant king, Jesus Christ. And what Solomon is praying for is the sovereignty and the supremacy of King Jesus. And he's praying that his sovereignty will know no boundaries. Because he says in verse 8, may he have dominion from sea to sea, from the river to the ends of the earth. And you know, it's a wonderful prayer. Because the river that Solomon is talking about is the river Euphrates. He says from the river to the ends of the earth. Now the river Euphrates, and for the people of Israel, the river Euphrates was an important river because the river Euphrates had marked one of the boundary lines of the kingdom of Israel.

Where everything from the Mediterranean Sea out to the river Euphrates, that was within the promised land of Israel. That was the boundary line. The river Euphrates marked the boundary line. And that's where Solomon's rule and reign extended to. That's as far as the kingdom went. It extended all the way to the river Euphrates. But what Solomon is praying here is that the rule and reign of the royal son, the covenant king, he's praying that his reign will not only include the promised land up until the river Euphrates. He's praying that his rule and his reign will go from the river Euphrates out to the ends of the earth. He's praying that this messianic rule and reign of King Jesus, he's praying that it will know no boundaries and that it will have no restrictions.

He's praying that the kingship of Jesus will be to the ends of the earth. It will cover all nations. In which people in distant places and distant lands will bow down before this royal son and confess him to be the king of kings and lord of lords. And you know, when you read these verses, we can see that that's what happened. That's what happened.

You know, when we read the narrative of Jesus, the birth of Jesus in the New Testament, we're told in Matthew's Gospel that wise men came from the east. And they came from the east to Jerusalem. They came from Babylon, which was beyond the river Euphrates. They were strangers and foreigners. They were from outside the kingdom of Israel. They were strangers to the promise and strangers to the covenant. They were from beyond the river Euphrates. And yet they came asking, where is he who has been born King of the Jews? And you know, when these wise men eventually found the royal son, they did as it says in, as Solomon prayed in verse 11, may all kings fall down before him and all nations serve him. The wise men, they came and they found the royal son lying in a manger and they give to him gifts, gifts fit for a king, gold, frankincense and myrrh. And we see that Solomon's prayer, it was fulfilled. And we know that it was fulfilled because there were also people from

Tarshish and Sheba and Sheba who would bow down before this royal son. These are all distant nations that he's talking about that served, they once served foreign kings and they worshipped foreign gods.

[19:28] But Solomon's prayer was that these distant peoples, nations, languages and tribes, that they will come and bow down before King Jesus. All these people who were beyond the river Euphrates and yet Solomon is praying that they will come and they will bow before Jesus. And you know, tonight in Barbas, we are beyond the river Euphrates.

We are evidence of Solomon's prayer. We are as far away from the promised land as probably geographically possible. And yet we have come to know Jesus. We've come to love him. We've come to follow him.

We've come to bow down before him as our King of Kings. We've come to confess him as the Lord of Lords. And it's all because, well, this was Solomon's prayer. And you know, the true fulfilment of Solomon's messianic and prophetic prayer, the true fulfilment of it is that when Jesus rose from the dead and he said to his disciples, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

It was then when Jesus made that statement to his disciples as a risen and exalted Lord, he was given a kingship and a rule and a reign over all creation. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

And you know, it's when Jesus received his kingship over all nations. That's when he sent out his disciples. He sent out his disciples into all these nations to preach the gospel to every living creature.

[21:11] And you remember when Jesus ascended, it's in Acts chapter 1. Jesus ascended to heaven and he commanded his disciples. He said to them, you're to be witnesses for me.

From where? From Jerusalem. Inside the river Euphrates. From Judea, beyond the river Euphrates. To Samaria, he says, which is north. And he says, to the ends of the earth.

Cover the world, he says. My friend, we're to be witnesses for Christ because Christ's kingship knows no boundaries. And you know, we can have confidence as witnesses.

Not only because his rule and reign is over all the earth. But also because King Jesus has promised to go with us to all the ends of the earth.

He's promised to go with us into our homes and among our families. Where there is maybe separation because of the gospel. He's promised to go with us into our workplaces and into our communities.

[22:12] Where there is hostility to the gospel. Our covenant king has promised to go with us as we witness for him. Because his kingship is over all people and all nations.

And you know, that's what Jesus said. He said, all authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. And he said, go and baptize all nations in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

And then he says, I will be with you always. Even to the end of the world. It's a wonderful promise. And it's given in this, well, 3,000 year old prayer.

But you know, then you come to verse 12. And Solomon tells us what Jesus' kingship does for sinners. As we continue to witness for him.

He says in verse 12, Solomon prays that the royal son will help sinners.

[23:26] He will help those who are needy, those who need help, and those who need to be redeemed. And he will help them because he alone is the covenant king.

And you know, what Solomon is actually praying for here. Praying for the poor and the needy and those who need to be helped and those who are weak. It reminds me of when Jesus came to his own hometown of Nazareth.

And you remember that Jesus, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day. And he stood up to read. He stood up to read from the prophet Isaiah. He was given the scroll.

He opened the scroll. And he found the place where it says in Isaiah chapter 61. It says, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. Because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives. And recovering of sight to the blind. To set at liberty those who are oppressed. To proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.

[24:28] And you remember that it was then that Jesus just rolled up the scroll. Handed it back. Sat down. And he said, Today, scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.

And you know, that was the kingship that Solomon was praying. That Jesus, the messianic king, would have. Solomon was praying that the messianic king would have a kingship that brings good news to those in need.

And my friend, the kingship of this messianic king, King Jesus, it has brought good news to us. But the wonder of it is, is that the good news came to us in Persian.

He is our Emmanuel. He is God with us. He is the king of kings. And his kingship knows no boundaries. Because his kingdom is established forever.

His kingdom is established forever. And that's the last thing I want us to see in this psalm. Solomon's prayer is a Christ-centred prayer. He's praying that the covenant promise will be fulfilled by the arrival of the covenant king.

[25:41] And Solomon, he's prayed for the king. He's described the king to us, that he's a king of righteousness. He's described his kingship, that it knows no boundaries. But lastly, Solomon prays for his kingdom.

So the king, the kingship, and the kingdom. The kingdom. Look at verse 15. He says, 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. You know, Solomon brings his prayer to its conclusion.

He focuses his attention upon the kingdom of the king. He's prayed for the king and his righteousness. He's prayed for the kingship of the king that has no boundaries.

[26:39] But now Solomon prays for the kingdom of this messianic covenant king, Jesus Christ. And like his kingship, the kingdom of the messianic king, it has no boundaries.

The kingdom has no boundaries. The kingdom is not governed by time or space. It's a kingdom that endures forever. But notice what Solomon says in verse 15.

He says, 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.

Solomon prays about this royal son. He says, Long live the king. Long live the king. He wants his name to be exalted. Long live the king.

He prays that the messianic king will be acknowledged in his kingdom. And that those in his kingdom will worship him as the king of kings. But you know, I love when Solomon prays.

[27:45] He says, May prayer be made for him continually. And blessings invoked for him all the day. May prayer be made for him. And of course the question arises, How do we pray for King Jesus?

How can we invoke blessings on the royal son? How can we do what Solomon is saying? Pray for him? Because, well, is he not the one who intercedes on our behalf?

Is he not our mediator? Is he not our advocate with the father? Is he not the one who blesses us as his people? And of course the answer is yes. But we have to see that Solomon's request is not for us to pray for the king as Jesus and pray for his blessing.

Solomon's request is that we will pray for the kingdom of King Jesus. And the king's blessing upon his own kingdom. That's why Solomon says, Pray for him.

Pray for him. Pray not for the king and head of the church. But pray for the body of the church. Pray for Christ's people throughout the kingdom.

[28:56] Pray that they would flourish. Pray that the kingdom would extend. Pray that his kingship would be known. Pray that his cause would be established throughout the world.

Pray for him. Pray for him, he says. And you know what's amazing? The greater than Solomon told his own disciples. Jesus said to his own disciples, he says, The harvest is plentiful.

The labourers are few. Pray ye therefore unto the Lord of the harvest, that he will send out labourers into his harvest. And that's what we're to do.

We're to pray for the harvest. By praying to the Lord of the harvest. And what Solomon is reminding us is that this is non-negotiable.

This is a divine imperative. He says, pray for him. Which means we must pray. We're commanded to pray.

[29:55] We're not to neglect our duty to pray. Solomon says, pray for him. Pray for him. And we're to pray that the harvest field would flourish.

And that's the image Solomon gives in verse 16. He gives us an image of the harvest field. He says, 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. He's telling us to pray for the harvest field. Solomon prays that the church would be awakened to pray for its king and head.

And that his kingdom would extend. And that the harvest field would flourish with the salvation of souls. And you know, that's the prayer we should have going into a new year.

That's the prayer we should have going into a new year. The prayer that Christ would be exalted as king. That his kingship would be known. That his kingdom would extend. And that his cause would be established more and more in our congregation.

[31:05] And in our community. And even in our country. That's the prayer we should have going into a new year. That Christ would be exalted as king. That his kingship would be known.

That his kingdom would extend. And that his cause would be established more and more. But you know, the wonderful thing about this prayer of Solomon.

Is that he bases his entire prayer. Upon the covenant promise. The covenant promise. Was that all the nations would be blessed.

By the covenant king. Jesus Christ. And that's what Solomon is praying here. That all the nations will be blessed. By the covenant promise being fulfilled.

By the arrival of the covenant king. That's what he says in verse 17. May his name endure forever. His fame continue as long as the sun.

[32:03] May people be blessed in him. All nations call him blessed. My friend, Solomon's prayer of blessing for the messianic king.

His kingship and his kingdom. It's all according to the covenant promise. Of a covenant king. Solomon is praying according to the covenant of grace.

In fact, Solomon is praying that the name of the covenant king. Would endure forever. That's what he says. May his name endure forever. And last as long as the sun. May it endure as long as the sun.

And that all the nations would acknowledge him. As the blessed one. The blessed king and head of his church. May his name endure forever. And you know, is that not what Paul affirms to us in Philippians chapter 2?

Paul describes the covenant king. He says that this covenant king. He humbled himself. He went from the crown to the cradle. Way down to the cross.

[33:10] He, it was an act of humiliation. And once he reached the cross, he says, God highly exalted him. And gave to him a name that is above every name.

So that the name of Jesus, every knee will bow. In heaven and on earth and under the earth. And every tongue confess that Jesus Christ, that King Jesus is Lord.

To the glory of God the Father. And you know, that's what Solomon is praying for here. He's praying that everyone, everywhere, will bow their knee before this messianic covenant king, Jesus Christ.

And confess that he is Lord. And you know, it's no wonder Solomon concludes his prayer. He concludes his prayer for the covenant king, his kingship and his kingdom.

He concludes it with his great benediction. He says, blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel. The covenant 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. Solomon concludes his prayer with this beautiful doxology.

It's a benediction of praise to God for his royal son, Jesus Christ. And you know, in these words, Solomon is urging the Lord's people.

He's urging us to praise the Lord. He's encouraging us to praise the Lord. Because he alone is able to do wondrous things.

And he alone is worthy of praise. My friends, Solomon's desire and prayer is that the whole earth will be filled with the glory of God.

And that we as sinners, that we would always respond to the king, his kingship and his kingdom. That we would always respond to him by giving our double amen.

[35:11] Amen and amen. Blessed be his glorious name forever. May the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and amen.

Solomon's prayer. Solomon's prayer. And so in the midst of a busy festive period. And with all the distractions it might bring. Solomon's Christ-centered prayer in Psalm 72.

Solomon prays here. He prays for the covenant promise to be fulfilled with the arrival of the covenant king. And you know that's what Christmas is all about.

It's all about Jesus as king. His kingship and his kingdom. And that we are to respond to him as our covenant king. With our amen.

And amen. Well may the Lord bless these few thoughts to us. Let us pray. Amen. O Lord our gracious God.

[36:12] We give thanks to thee for our king. And that Lord we bless thee that we know him as our king. For how long in our life and how often we said that we would not have this man to rule over us.

And yet now Lord we bless thee that we have come to confess him as the king of kings. One who is Lord of lords. And that our desire as it was for Solomon.

Is that his name would endure. And last forever. That many more would come to know him. That many nations would bow down before him. And confess that he too is their Lord and king.

O Lord bless us we pray. Help us never to lose sight. Never to lose sight of who is on the throne. That who is sovereign. That who is overruling and ruling over in all things.

Help us Lord to keep our eyes firmly fixed on Jesus. And to see him Lord. As one who is risen. And exalted. And one who is coming again.

[37:15] That he has promised to come again. That he might take his people. To be with himself. That how he says to us. That where I am. There you may be also. Lord keep us then we pray.

And keep us singing. These songs of Zion. And praising our king day by day. Because he promises never to leave us. And never to forsake us.

Go before us then we ask. Remember us we pray. Remember especially Effie as well. As she undergoes her operation tomorrow. Be gracious to her Lord. May she know thy presence.

That she would know that underneath. Are the everlasting arms. Of a king who loved her. And gave himself for her. Lord do us good we pray. For Jesus sake. Amen.

We'll bring our service to a conclusion. By singing the closing words. Of that psalm. Psalm 72. Psalm 72.

[38:18] Verse 17. Page 314. In the Scottish Psalter. His name forever shall endure.

Last like the sun it shall. Men shall be blessed in him and blessed. All nations shall him call. Now blessed be the Lord our God. The God of Israel. For he alone doth wondrous works.

In glory that excel. And blessed be his glorious name. To all eternity. The whole earth let his glory fill. Amen. So let it be.

These verses. To God's praise. His name forever shall endure.

They too. This verse they Bowl. The soul of love I **THE** et the Rair to realize that his such never is a voulais human, For peace shall trust him for.

[39:31] Now blessed be the Lord our God, The God of Israel.

For he alone doth wondrous works, In glory hath excels.

Now blessed be his glorious day, To all eternity.

The whole earth let his glory fill, Amen, so let it be.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, The love of God the Father, And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, Be with you all, now and forevermore. Amen.