

God's King Reigns

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[0 : 0 0] as we turn to God's word let's pray together for his help let's pray our father we thank you for the words of the Lord Jesus when he says to us that your word is truth and as we rest on him this evening we pray our Lord that you would help us to take to heart your words that you would let their truth sink into us challenge us encourage us lift our hearts that we might see you afresh in your glory for we pray and ask in Jesus name amen amen well this evening as I say we're coming back to the beginning of the Psalms and at Psalm 2 and we thought last week about the way that Psalms 1 and 2 together form the great double doorway so to speak into the beauty and the majesty of the Psalms as a whole as I reflected on it another way to think about it maybe for the more artistically minded is to think of Psalms 1 and 2 as the sort of color palette the color scheme for the Psalms in the Psalms we find an incredible tapestry that displays life with God in all of its beauty and richness countless threads of emotion and experience woven together in God's revelation of himself all different colors shades and colors shades and patterns both the light and the dark but the whole book from one end to the other is defined by this single color scheme and the color scheme or the palette is what we find in Psalms 1 and 2 in the words of an author O Palmer Robertson together these two Psalms define the substance of essentially all that will follow throughout the rest of the Psalms and so last week we saw in Psalm 1 that we find blessing ultimately in the king who loves God's word and this week in Psalm 2 what we'll see is that we can take refuge in the king who rules God's world Psalm 2 shows us the world as we know it and it's not pretty and yet it also tells us who's in charge of it what's really going on now you don't need me to tell you that our world is not the world that we all want okay the past year the past year and a half has proven that again and again hasn't it politically we've seen a confusion conflict between nations politicians falling into disgrace on the world stage tensions between powers in some places terror morally we've seen often the vulnerable those on the fringes of society the old and care homes the young in education those suffering from various illnesses and diseases are often seemingly overlooked left behind in other ways we've seen much that is wrong being called right and so looking at all this we might ask the question why is the world the way that it is but Psalm 2 tells us that we won't ever understand what's going on in our world until we answer this question who is in charge

who is really king in this world oh man I'm done okay the nations rage and the kings of the earth plot together but God says verse 6 I have installed my king on Zion my holy mountain Psalm 2 says God's king is the one who reigns and God has promised him in verse 8 that he will rule over the nations to the ends of the earth and in the end we find there is only one good logical and wise response to God's plan for his world under his king so firstly then what is going on in the world well we see firstly the world rebels the world rebels read with me again from verse 1 why do the nations conspire and the people's plot in vain the kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the lord and against his anointed so we start with these big broad brush strokes don't we and notice the scale that we're working on the nations the people rulers kings of the earth we're looking at the world stage okay if we were to choose a backdrop for the psalm we might choose perhaps a view of the earth from space this is our world so what is going on in it well notice those words conspire plot rise up it's not a calm scene is it it's a busy scene there's an air of violence and and danger this is not what we'd call a safe space but it's not a few pockets here and there is it it's describing our world i wonder if you've ever heard somebody say something like this you know i just wish the world would come together as one the world would be united it's a wish that many people have wished well says the psalmist that wish has come true the world has come together in force he says but it's perhaps not the happy reunion that we imagine it might be see verse two where this great union is directed against the lord and against his anointed in other words this is a vision of a world united against a common enemy and to our shock and horror and surprise perhaps that enemy is god in the words of one writer this is a grand alliance against heaven what binds the world together is not peace but war now we can all see when we read the news that all is not well in our world we know that out there wrong things sometimes happen but we tend to imagine that those bad things happen in a world that is basically ticking along fine but here we find that the world is not okay the background is is very dark indeed you we have watched with sadness haven't we as the taliban set up rule again in afghanistan and over years as the uyghurs are put into camps in china and as things go from bad to worse in north korea perhaps like me you saw this unlikely headline this week kim jong-un calls for urgent action against climate change it's bizarre isn't it it's a foil against people seeing that the starvation of his people

is on his hands you in the west we tell ourselves that that those nations those situations are exceptions that prove the rule and one day if we fight enough wars and if we do enough trade deals and if we teach the world right and wrong then one day evil regimes like that won't exist anymore but friends this psalm reminds us that we do not live in neutral territory the problem is not political or intellectual or economic those are symptoms of a world that lives in open hostility against god and against his king to see that we need to notice in verse one see that phrase the people's plot in vain now that word plot it actually comes from the the same word that we saw in psalm 1 verse 2 last week the word translated meditate so the blessed one has god's instruction on his mind day and night while here in contrast we find that what is on the mind and filling the thoughts of the people's as a whole is removing god from his throne it's it's a picture of the very opposite situation to the blessed one you mentioned regimes earlier where we where we can clearly see that we can all see that but this is describing a rebellion that we find in every nation in every parliament in every city town and village a silent agreement that god and his king have to go let us break their chains and throw off their shackles let us be king let us rule let us be in charge now that is a summary and a definition of the bible's view of sin why do things go wrong in our world well certainly we sin against other human beings we cause harm oppression there's corruption there's abuse these things are evil but first and foremost our sin is against god and against christ the psalm is saying that all that is wrong with our world flows out of hearts in rebellion against the lord and against his anointed literally his messiah is the problem really rooted that deep well what did the world do to god's messiah we saw this morning didn't we he was in the world and though the world was made through him the world did not recognize him the kings and rulers and peoples of this world weren't satisfied until he was nailed to a cross we continue to see that same rebellion today in the way that kings and rulers treat their fellow image bearers okay if you want to see how a society values human life look at how it treats the most vulnerable the unborn the lonely the dying you history teaches us again and again that breaking off the chains and shackles of god's loving rule always ends up harming human life and endangering human life take away the image of god god and you lose human dignity but we also see the world's rebellion particularly in the way that a society treats not just people in general but god's people in particular in fact one of the first times that this psalm is quoted by christians is in acts

4 remember peter and john the people in the temple and the authorities threaten them not to speak about jesus again but when they were let go they got together with the church to pray and they pray these words why do the gentiles rage and the people's plot in vain against the lord and against his anointed see they saw this psalm reflected in their suffering with and for the lord jesus in other words this psalm should prepare us not to feel welcome in the world if we belong to christ you hear that we may be thought less of or lose friends perhaps in other parts of our world as we prayed earlier our brothers and sisters have their homes raided and churches burned families broken apart lose their lives for following christ during the crackdown on churches in china a few years ago the pastor of one of the churches put it this way the party wants to be the god of china and the chinese people but according to the bible only god is god is god so friends this picture of our world is dark and it is sobering and it is hard for us to take in but we cannot say that it's not true it's a reality which we're honest we can often forget you hear we are not living through the worst of times and let us not cry persecution where there is not persecution but to see the world as it is should seriously prepare us to suffer with christ perhaps more in the days that are coming than we have in the days that are past because the world rebels against the lord and against his messiah and yet despite the global rebellion we find that god is indeed still in control and his plan is still in play the world rebels but secondly we see the sun reigns the sun reigns you've given the the scale and depth of the world's hostility against god how might we expect god to respond well probably not like this in verse four the one enthroned in heaven laughs god laughs at this rebellion if it wasn't printed in our bibles it would seem irreverent for me to say you do we need to remind god that sin is no laughing matter well no soon we see that god takes sin very seriously but not because it is a threat to him no the world's schemes to overthrow him are laughable he is sovereign he is the king on the throne no amount of plotting and uprising can change that it's like thinking that we can put out the fire of the sun just if we blow hard enough you sometimes we look at the world as if good and evil are locked in this kind of cosmic struggle for power but here we find no cosmic power struggle only an all-powerful cosmic king the kings of the world rise up against them the king of heaven simply laughs but if god is so far above the chaos and the carnage of this world that he simply doesn't care about it you once i was in a taxi and the driver worked out that you know i was a christian and he spent the rest of the ride maybe 20 minutes asking questions like this

well where was god then when that person was killed and where was god when those people were abused when was where was god when that disaster happened in other words where is god in our world what is he doing if he is on the throne where is he you maybe those are questions that you have asked yourself maybe you ask them this evening well here we find that god does take the problem very seriously and he has a plan of his own the kings of the earth have spoken well now verse five the king of heaven speaks he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath saying i have installed my king on zion my holy mountain what is god doing in the world well god's answer to a world in chaos is the crowning of his king god's plan for the world is putting his promised king on the throne now who is this king well it is the same king the anointed the christ the messiah who was once put to death on the cross who god raised up from the dead and crowned and seated on the throne at his right hand jesus himself came to be king he opens his life work saying the time has come the kingdom of god is at hand see the word god speaks there in verse seven you are my son well where do we hear them again but at the baptism of jesus you are my beloved son says the voice from heaven that is god saying this one jesus he is my king he is the one who is seated on the throne verse eight we see the reach of his rule ask me he says and i will make the nations your inheritance the ends of the earth your possession verse nine we see the strength of his rule you will break them with a rod of iron and dash them to pieces like pottery god's promise to christ is that he will rule this world with unstoppable power there's no war to fight there's no battle to win just ask me says god ask me and i will give you the ends of the earth this is god's plan for the world this is where it is all going another author dale ralph davis puts it like this this is the decree that drives history but where then is his kingdom where is his rule in this world well it doesn't make the headlines but that shouldn't surprise us after all where was it that christ was crowned not in a palace but on the cross but on the cross where was his victory won not in a spectacular blood bath on the field of battle but in his own blood poured out on the cross where is the kingdom of this king well christ's kingdom is made up of those who recognize and receive and bow the knee to him as lord and today that kingdom does indeed stretch to the ends of the earth in every nation in every language he is being worshiped and he has conquered not by human force but by divine power we can testify to that this evening can't we you and i were once his enemies but in his grace by his spirit he saved us he has turned our hearts he's forgiven us our sins and now he calls us his friends brothers and sisters christ is the king who rules this world our being here this evening is evidence of it

[20:18] so does knowing that does knowing who is on the throne shape the way that we see the world and does it shape the way that we live in the world you when we see our own weakness or the threat or the reality perhaps of persecution it should feel natural to feel afraid or when we see the world seemingly spinning out of control well it would be natural to respond with despair but this vision of god's king gives us quite a different idea about where history is heading the battle rages on but the war is over jesus has won and today he holds the whole world in his nail pierced hands so knowing that he sits on the throne it gives us such security when we are shaken by what we see and hear and go through in life he is the prince of peace who we cling to in a world that is far from peaceful and we take refuge in this that one day his kingdom will fill this earth when he comes again with his kingdom but until then even in our weakness we can take heart and live confident lives for him knowing that he is the one who rules all the circumstances of our lives and he is bringing his kingdom i will build my church he says and the gates of hell will not prevail against it and in light of his reign we find finally that there is only one wise response to him the world rebels the sun rains but finally the wise turn and take refuge the wise turn and take refuge you how can rebels ever belong to the kingdom of god well read with me again from verse 10 therefore you kings be wise be warned you rulers of the earth serve the lord with fear and celebrate his rule with trembling you from our instinctive rebellion now we are called to be wise whoever we are from the greatest to the least think carefully he's saying about how we go on knowing who it is who is on the throne see putting our trust in jesus far from being an irrational leap in the dark it's actually the most logical response to the realities of our world see if god cannot be shaken from heaven and christ cannot be dethroned then what is there to gain by going our own way rejecting his rule and so god calls all rebels to lay down their weapons lay down their arms and to return to him start in verse 11 serve the lord with fear celebrate his rule with trembling the word for this is amnesty it's a call for enemies to return and to be reconciled without guilt without charge without reprisals it's an offer of free forgiveness and so god holds our amnesty to all forgiveness and reconciliation for anyone any one of us who has lived in denial of his rule notice this offer of forgiveness should spark both fear and joy in us fear and joy you know there's a part of our minds that can't get our heads around those two poles together it's hard for us to bring them together but those feelings i think come together in the words or or or reverence a wandering fear a solemn joy the thought of the king offering us forgiveness should send shivers down the spine so to speak so how then do we take hold of god's forgiveness well we see it there kiss his son

kiss his son this is a symbol of ultimate surrender to king jesus once we were against him now we are with him once we were opposed to him now we love him once we said to him you are not my king now we call him my lord and my god in a word we repent we repent kiss the sun and this is not a question for any of us that we can leave hanging kiss the sun we read verse 12 or or he will be angry and your way will lead to your destruction for his wrath can flare up in a moment we're reminded soberly that this is not the kind of king that we want as an enemy do not keep him waiting he is gracious and patient he is slow to anger he is full of love but we are reminded here perhaps uncomfortably that his patience will run out perhaps you perhaps you remember the scene from the chronicles of narnia where the four children are going to meet the great lion aslan and susan asks is he quite safe safe replies mr beaver who said anything about safe of course he isn't safe but he's good he's the king i tell you not safe not safe but good as the writer derrick kidner puts it we cannot take refuge from him but we must take refuge in him he is not safe but he is good and in him we find a place of safety for blessed are all who take refuge in him that's the bottom line of this psalm blessed are all who take refuge in him and so we begin we end where we began last week that word blessed blessed and we see that in the end the word loving king of psalm 1 and the world ruling king of psalm 2 are in fact one and the same king the blessed one jesus christ he in whom we find true blessing safety and refuge so let us turn to him now and take refuge in him and know and celebrate his rule and enjoy the blessing of his forgiveness together let's pray together god our father we thank you that when we were far off when we were your enemies when we were sinners you sent christ and he was crucified for our sin so that we might stand right before you today we worship you holy father that in your goodness you have forgiven all our sins lord you do not even hold against us the sins of tomorrow for you have cleansed us from beginning to end by the blood of the lord jesus christ we worship you that you raised him from the dead never to die again that sin did not have the last word for he reigns over heaven and earth and so lord we pray as the psalmist says that you would help and enable us to celebrate his rule today to rejoice with trembling lord as these truths sink deep into our hearts that they would produce in us an awe and a reverence of the lord jesus

lord forgive us we pray for our many sins and bless us in jesus name amen amen Amen.