

Introduction: Pg. ____

“True & Greater One” Psalm 1-2

I’m excited to launch our 7 week summer series we’re calling “True & Greater.” Each week we will look at a different Psalm, the longest book in the middle of the Bible. Please make your way to Psalm 42-43. Pg. ____

The Psalms were a collection of songs. Like good songs, they were massively influential, not only because the people of Israel, like Christians today, viewed them as God’s very words to them, but also because their poetic and rhythmic construction made them easier to be internalize. Like a song you hear over and over, these Psalms quickly worked their way into the fabric of everyday life.

If you have never read the Psalms, I want to commend that practice to you as a regular part of your spiritual diet. The Psalms teach us to worship, provide a guide for our prayers, reveal the character of God in vivid ways, uncover raw, real emotions, and as we will see, though these words were penned hundreds of years before the arrival of Jesus, they point us to Jesus without fail.

Background of Psalm 1-2

- Many scholars (Childs, Wilson, VanGemeren, etc) today believe Psalm 1-2 were strategically placed to serve as the introduction to the rest of the Psalms.
- Not only are their themes echoed through the next 148 chapters, but two other pieces of evidence back up this understanding.
 1. Both Psalm 1 & 2 lack a title, or “superscription.” providing context or theme for the Psalm. Psalm 3 is the first psalm with a title.
 2. The idea “blessing” bookends the first and last words of these two psalms. (Psalm 1:1 - 2:12) Blessed people living under the direction of the blessed King.

Read Psalm 1:1-2:12

As we reflect on these words, we are going to discover how they point us to Jesus, calling us to live like the True and Greater man, and love and serve the True and Greater King.

I. Live like the True and Greater Man. (Psalm 1:1-6)

- Psalm 1 calls us to a life of wisdom. It begins by saying... “Blessed is the man...”
- To be “blessed” is to live in a state of inner joy and gratitude that comes from God, independent of our circumstances.
- In other words, we can go through the greatest difficulties and trials in this life and still live in God’s blessing. We can be broke and be blessed. [You won’t hear that in every church you visit].
- But how do we get this kind of blessedness? Verses 1 and 2 go on to tell us we experience God’s blessing as we...
 - Move away from godlessness (patterns of life & people devoid of God)
 - Move toward godliness (patterns of life & people full of God).

How? Avoid godlessness.

- The blessed person keeps themselves from the way of life contrary to God’s design. They keep themselves free from the influence of those who do not love God. Verse 1 appears to convey an intensified descent into godlessness, moving from “walk[ing] in the counsel of the wicked, stand[ing] in the way of sinners, [and] sit[ting] in the seat of scoffers”
- The blessed person does not receive the counsel of those who set themselves against God’s moral direction, nor do they keep intimate company with those who have no regard for God, but scoff at God.

- We should pay careful attention to the company we keep. We should surround ourselves with people who will influence us toward the path of wisdom, not the path of folly.
 - And don't miss this... we can do so in such a way that we are still befriend and love those who do not love God.
 - After all, one of the most attractive characteristics about Jesus is how he was described as "a friend of sinners." (Luke 7)

T: Verse one tells us to avoid godlessness. There are some things we won't do, but what we avoid is only a small part of the journey, there is a pursuit as deep as the character of God, because we are pursuing a life that reflects him.

How? Pursue godliness.

- Through delighting in the law of the Lord. *Verse 2.*
- This psalm encourages us to meditate on the rest of the instruction ("law") in this song book, as well as the other Scriptures, in order to live wisely.

What is meditation?

- Meditation involves constant, repetitive exposure to the text of Scripture.
- **"But where is the meditating Christian? Most people live in a hurry. They are so distracted with the cares of the world that they can find no time to meditate." (Thomas Watson, 1669)**
- Ex. Worry... Opposite... Eastern Meditation – yoga empty your mind...
- We meditate on the Bible, because it is described through the metaphors of light, lamp, mirror, fire, sword, and bread. All of these help us understand that God's truth counsels us, changes us, and sustains our lives spiritually to give us everything we need to live our lives for God.

What should be the extent of our meditation?

- The phrase day & night is a "merism," which expresses totality through contrasting parts: day and night and everything in between.
- We should constantly fill our mind with God's truth, so that we can internalize it and live it!
- PIC: It's the difference between an actor reading a script for the first time and a script being ready for production. The first time reading through a script it's probably going to feel and sound quite foreign, choppy, and mechanical, BUT when it's time to pull back the curtain or go to filming, the script is in the actor's heart to the point where he or she is one with it.
- Do you prioritize knowing and living God's Word? Where are you today? Where do you want to be? What will it take to get there?
 - It may mean restructuring your mornings to start your day with God.
 - It may mean raising your level of intentionality to keep the truth in front of you (mirror, dashboard, smartphone, reminders, journals, whatever). Read it, reread it...
- It will not happen overnight, but we will get there the more we delight in it.
- The discipline of "day and night" is first fueled by our daily delight. When we delight in something or someone, we want more time with them. When we love God's Word because it reveals God, we will want more of it. And don't miss that! If we read the Bible in a mechanical way divorced of a real pursuit of the God it reveals, we've been derailed; dare I say, deceived?
- "Delight" fuels discipline, and discipline fuels delight.
- Remember that point of investment from last week. God is supremely invested in our lives, which is why he loves us so much. We will love the Word, the more we invest in the Word.
- Who loves Barry Park more today than last Sunday?
- The implicit purpose of meditation is to put the truth into practice. We must live it out.

Progression of Reading the Word

(I thought about this several years ago walking around the neighborhood in seminary.)

- **Read the Word. (Consume it!)**
- **Allow the Word to read you. (Live it!)** (mirror/obedience)
- **Then others will read the Word from your life (word and deed; Share it!)**

Here's a litmus test for you...

- If the Word is not coming out of you, it is probably not in you deep enough.
- If it's really IN you, it will come of you.
- How frequently are you sharing in the stuff of everyday life (anxiety, rest, fear, wisdom for work, relationships, you name it)?

T: When the Word is in us, it transforms us. Check verse 3.

What we have here is a picture of complete flourishing, a picture of life as full and free as we could ever desire, the way life out to be, the way God created man to live as his image bearers.

- One of the earliest leaders of the church, Irenaeus of Lyons (2nd century) once said: **“The glory of God is man fully alive.”**
- Verse 3 is man fully alive. Verse 3 is what we all would love to have.
 - Complete influence.
 - Relentless fruitfulness.
 - Wholeness, prosperity.
 - We are so alive that we are constantly imparting life to others.
 - You spend time with others and they feel the presence of God within you.
- I want to be like that.
- And to say we want to be like that is to say we want to be like the true and greater blessed man of Psalm 1, that would be the God-man, Jesus Christ.

There is only one person who has lived this psalm perfectly. Psalm 1 is pointing us toward Jesus. (the true and Greater Man, Adam, One, King, David)

- We know this is true, in part, because of what Jesus said to two of his perplexed followers who could not believe Jesus had to suffer, nor accept the incredulous reports that he rose from the dead. And so Jesus said: **“These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures” (Luke 24:44-45)**
- Jesus was the “radiance of God’s glory.” He is the only person since sin entered our world to be fully alive, displaying God’s glory in everything he said or did.
- And what the rest of the Bible will tell us is this: how you accomplish the how of avoiding godlessness and pursuing godliness is through turning to him. The way to God is through his Son. The way of living for God is through his Son. Side with him and you will experience life and fruitfulness. Strive against him and you will experience brokenness and ultimate death; you will be like chaff that the wind blows away.

T: Psalm 1 reminds us that we will all stand before God... Are you ready? You can get that straight today, by turning to God through Jesus, which is the theme of Psalm 2. . . Not only should we live like the true and greater man, but we also should

II. Love and serve the True and Greater King (Psalm 2:1-12).

Historical Context

- Psalm 2 is known as a “royal psalm.” It was a song written by King David to celebrate the anointing and coronation of a future king, perhaps his own son, Solomon.
- But it speaks in such expansive terms that it must be pointing beyond a mere mortal.
- That is why this psalm is one of the most quoted in the NT, pointing to the true and greater King, Jesus Christ.

T: Where Israel’s kings would continue to fail, God’s King, would succeed. I want to give us *three* responses to King Jesus.

Submit to the King (1-10)

Verses 1-3

- Comes across with a feeling of surprise as to why any group of people would conspire against God. All attempts to defy God and his Anointed One are in vain.
- Verse 3 explains the motive for their schemes. They want to be King! We want to be king over the King of Kings.
 - With hyperbolic language, we feel chained down, we feel restricted, we lack control.
 - This imagery may point to a yoke that placed around the neck of oxen to guide them.
- People don't typically have a problem with the idea of God, they don't just want a God that is in control. We want to be in control. We want to call the shots! That's why we seek the throne!
- Fundamentally, this is all of us!

How does God respond to the enemies who want to dethrone him? Verses 4-6

- He laughs! He scoffs at those who scoff against him.
- God is unassailable, and he ultimately will put his enemies in their place through the installation of his King. (Verse 6).
- With words like "thunderbolts" (Spurgeon), God says in verse 6: "As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill."

Verse 7-10 describe the extent of his reign.

- Verse 7 tells us that God's King is also God's Son.
- These are the same words that Jesus heard spoke from heaven at his baptism (Matt 3; Luke 3): "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased."
- It is on the basis of this relationship that God the Father establishes the kingdom of his Son to the ends of the earth.
- Jesus will bring complete restoration of God's rule (everything that was undone will be healed.)
 - "Joy to the world the Lord is come, let earth receive her King. No more let sin and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground. He comes to make, his blessings flow, far as the curse is found..."
 - We have always longed for a ruler, a deliverer, a champion who can restore peace and prosperity. The royal psalms are about God "establishing his rule on earth as it is in heaven." (N.T. Wright)
 - Trump. Obama, Bush, Clinton. George Washington (throwback) have not, cannot, will not bring what we long for.
 - Politics is not the ultimate solution out of our mess, though we should be politically involved as good citizens and elect leaders who will provide the closest echoes of the restoration we long for.
- Do you see how this works?
 - Democracy: "By the people, for the people."
 - Autocracy/Theocracy: "By the King, for the King." And the King's people (We are "vice rulers.")

T: Submit to the King. Verse 11...

Serve the King (11).

- If we place conditions on our submission to God and our service to God, we reduce him to a consultant, not a King.
- God, I'll follow your agenda as long as it does not interrupt my comfort. I'll serve you, as long as it serves me.
- Is God your King or your consultant? Consultants: offer advice. Suggested course of action that you may take or leave.
- But when Christ is King, we want to give our entire lives to serving him with (I love this) both fear and rejoicing. The ultimate respect and the ultimate joy!
- We want to be a church known for how we serve like the King has served us.
 - We serve one another. (Taking meals, bending an ear, offering prayer, meeting physical and spiritual needs)
 - We serve our neighbors. Serve Medford: I was so proud this week. RHC, you owned it. The neighborhood took notice. The city was amazed by the great work we put in (shout outs from Mayor Burke and everything). But that's not what excited me the most, nor was it the huge crowd on Friday night for Movie Night...

- Loved seeing people from the neighborhood...
- One of our guys I assumed from the neighborhood was actually connected through RHC.

T: Serve the King, but don't just serve him. Love him.

Love the King (12).

- *Verse 12*
- Kiss the Son (affections)
- Love is the basis of this relationship and it fuels every aspect of the relationship.
 - I spend time with him because I love him.
 - I serve him because I love him.
 - I submit to him because I love him.
 - I love him because he first loved me!
- We love because he first loved us. We are not coming to a King who rules as a tyrant. We are coming to a King who is our Father. He is effusive and abundant and relentless in his love for us. This King is the crucified King . . . died for us?!?!?!?
- Do you experience Jesus like this?

**“Thou art coming to a King,
 large petitions with thee bring,
 for his grace and power are such,
 none can ever ask too much.” - John Newton**

Conclusion:

- Experience blessing by taking refuge in him.
- Tim Keller: “There’s no refuge from the King [his reign is universal and it is sure]; there’s only refuge in the King [he offers us life].”

Pray. Set up Christ is Enough?