



Christmas
FROM THE
BOOK OF *Psalms*

DR. KURT TRUCKSESS

www.christ2Rculture.com

Friday, December 30, 2011

In, *Christmas from the Book of Psalms*, we examine four messianic Psalms. They give us snapshots of Christ frequently overlooked by the church. This is a fresh and challenging approach to Christ in the Christmas season. I pray pastors and students of God's Word are encouraged through this book.

For this work, I owe a debt of gratitude to many. First, I want to thank Jay Child's who preached a similar series that inspired the idea for this one. Thanks for your mentorship, challenge to pursue a doctorate and for setting a great example in ministry.

I would also like to thank Sheryl Fastenow, my secretary, for her editorial work. I have special thanks for Kiley Seligman. She is an additional editor who reviewed the manuscripts. She keeps me from stumbling over the errors of my grammatical ways. Thank you for serving Christ with me.

I would also like to thank the Faith Church family for their attentive ears and teachable hearts. I dedicate this work to you.

Because of God's Mercy,

Kurt

Dr. Kurt Trucksess - Sr. Pastor
Faith Church - EFCA
2805 Erie Ave.
Spirit Lake, IA 51360
712-336-3537 (office)

<http://www.faithefree.com>
<http://www.Christ2Rculture.com>

Table of Contents

Psalm 14 - God came to save fools	4
Psalm 45 - Who is Jesus?	12
Psalm 2 - Immediate and Unconditional Surrender	20
Psalm 110 - The Rest of the Story	27

Psalm 14 - God came to save fools

November 13, 2011

Good morning Faith family. It is not quite Christmas. In fact, it is not even Thanksgiving. I had to juggle some things around in our December calendar. As a result, I needed to bump one message from our Christmas series to this morning. We always say Christmas seems to come sooner every year. Now, even your pastor is making you feel that way.

So while this message is a little early, let it serve as an appetizer for the rest of the series in December. For Christmas last year, we did a series titled, *Christmas from the Book of Revelation*. We looked at snapshots of Christ from that exciting book. For Christmas this year, we are entering a series called, *Christmas from the Book of Psalms*. We will look at snapshots from this ancient song book. We have a lot to cover so let's dive right in.

Today, you can find support groups for just about anything. There are support groups if you struggle with alcohol or drug addiction. There are support groups for those who have gone through a divorce and support groups for those who are still single. There are support groups for the overworked and support groups for the unemployed. While support groups are good, today, they are proliferating like rabbits. It appears you can find a support for just about anything... even for things you never expected.

I recently ran across an online support group called, "The Clergy Project." This is a support group for pastors. It is not for any pastor but only for pastors who are atheists. Before this last week, I didn't think the words *pastor* and *atheist* belonged in the same sentence! As one pastor on the site wrote, "I am an active Methodist pastor who is also an atheist. Every week I feel like a fraud. Every week I struggle with the fact that I'm lying when I stand before my congregation." If that is the case, why hasn't he left? Later in his bio he explains he hasn't left the church because he is still looking for a comfortable exit strategy. In my opinion, he left a comfortable exit strategy a long time ago! Of course, the web site asked if you would kindly click the *like* button on their Facebook page. I didn't.¹

The last people we would consider atheists are pastors. While most pastors are hopefully not struggling to believe in God, many people, even some who attend church, are struggling to believe in God's existence. Do you think the Bible has anything to say about atheism? The Bible does talk to those who don't believe in God's existence. This morning, we will study one of those passages in the book of Psalms. It is Psalm 14.

¹ <http://www.christianpost.com/news/atheists-form-support-group-for-nonbelieving-pastors-58252/>

Psalm 14

The fool says there is no God.

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."... Psalm 14:1 (ESV)

Right up front these are God's word to those who claim atheism. They are fools. While all atheists are fools, not all atheists are the same. There are different types of atheists.

Intellectual atheists are fools.

Intellectual atheists are people like Mark Twain, Bill Mahre, Steven Hawking (who helped underwrite the *Clergy Project* web site) and Jodie Foster. Intellectual atheists are everywhere. Our kids are indoctrinated with intellectual atheism at school when they learn evolutionary theory.

Interestingly, I have noticed that intellectual atheists have a little bit of an attitude problem. Let me quote two intellectual atheists to show you what I mean. Ernest Hemingway put it this way, "All thinking men are atheists." I think that means he believes the rest of us are not thinking people. To come up with that conclusion I was doing some thinking so I don't agree with him. Jodie Foster put it this way, "How can you ask me to believe in God when there is absolutely no evidence that I can see?" I would come to the exact opposite conclusion. How can you not believe in God when there is so much evidence to see?

Why is it that some people can look at a sunset and see ample evidence for God's existence, while others can look at the same sunset and see no evidence that God is behind it all?

The answer to that question is found in Psalm 14:1. It is found in the meaning of the word *fool*. The word *fool* doesn't mean someone is stupid or they have a low IQ. A fool, like Stephen Hawking, can be a brilliant fool. The word fool in Psalm 14 is the Hebrew is the word *nabal*. You might remember the biblical story Abigail and Nabal. The poor guy was literally named, "the fool," and he lived up to his name. The word *fool doesn't refer to someone's intellect but to their will*. It means they are stubborn, unteachable, obstinate and intolerant. The Psalmist says anyone who says there is no God is just a stubborn, unteachable, intolerant person who has an authority problem. The Bible says atheists are fools not because there is a lack of evidence but because there is a problem with their will. They have a stubborn refusal to accept the conclusions of the evidence. Paul says the same thing.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in

their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools... Romans 1:18–23 (ESV)

Atheists are fools not because of a lack of evidence but because of a stubborn refusal to look at the evidence. When the will is bent against God, people become increasingly futile in their thinking and their hearts become darker. Rather than becoming smarter, when people rebel against the evidence of God's existence they become fools! The English transliteration for the Greek word *fool* used in Romans is literally the word *moron*. Here you have biblical precedence for calling somebody a moron, though I wouldn't recommend it.

Practical atheists are fools.

While this Psalm is an answer to intellectual atheists, in its original context, it was targeted to the practical atheists. It is targeting people who say they believe in God but they live like he doesn't exist. Practical atheists are people whose lives do not match up to their claims. The practical atheist is someone who knows all about God, but they don't want God messing with their plans for their life.

Practical atheists may even go to Faith University (Sunday School class) and be involved in a small group Bible study. Practical atheists may help out on Wednesday night at Awana. They make the claims of following Christ but when you look at their spending habits, their sexual habits, their marital habits, and their parenting habits, what do you end up concluding? They are living as if God doesn't exist. They are fools!

Let me give you some more examples. Does attending church every weekend sound a bit restrictive? After all, Sunday morning is a great time for golf. The greens are open because everyone else is in church. Sunday morning is a great time to be on the lake. Sunday morning is also a nice time to snowmobile in the winter. Some people tell me that Sunday morning is their only time to sleep past 10:30 a.m. Attending church every weekend sounds too restrictive for the practical atheist. They claim to comprehend God's incredible and undeserved love for them. They claim to understand that Jesus died in their place for their sins. But right now, the weekends are mine. God, get out of my way. Are you a practical atheist when it comes to your church attendance?

The practical atheist claims to love God but they keep lying to their friends, their parents, their boss and those in authority over them. They can spin lies faster than a Chinese clothing factory.

The practical atheist claims to believe in God but giving 10% of their check sounds over the top. They will remind you, we are in a struggling economy. They have bills to pay. They have new car payments to make. They can't afford to tithe.

Let's look at this from a different angle. The practical atheist is someone who tithes but says the other 90% is theirs and God better keep his hands off of it.

The practical atheist claims to want to honor God above all things but they are messing around with their girlfriend. They are doing everything but one final act. The Bible says in 1 Timothy 5:2 we are to be people of purity and treat younger women like our sister. If you wouldn't do it with your sister, don't do it with your girlfriend. Are you are a practical atheist? If God is convicting you, respond to him by repenting and confessing your sin. That is what the Christian life is about. It is conviction, repentance and clinging to the grace of God through Christ.

Some of you have felt pretty good so far. You are not an intellectual atheist. You have disconnects between your faith and life but you are repenting of them. You feel pretty good. News flash. God says everyone is a fool.

God says everyone is a fool.

...They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds, there is none who does good. The Lord looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one. Psalm 14:1–3 (ESV)

When I first read Psalm 14, I was excited. I was excited to listen to God give it to the atheists and tell them they were a bunch of fools. The problem is that after the first verse, I realized the Psalm is talking about me. Everyone is a fool. The outspoken intellectual atheists are only one kind of fool. Those who claim to love Christ but live in a way that doesn't match up to their claims are another kind of fool. Psalm 14 tells us all human beings, apart from the wisdom of God, are fools. If there is any doubt about this, let's turn to Romans 3 where Paul quotes Psalm 14.

What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one." Romans 3:9–12 (ESV)

Sound familiar? Paul is saying Psalm 14 applies to everybody. A fool is everyone who is born in this world and chooses to live in sinful rebellion against God. That is all of us.

Everyone is in rebellion against God. Our hearts are in deep-seated rebellion against God. Borrowing from five other Old Testament passages, Paul hammers this point home in Romans 3.

"Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive." "The venom of asps is under their lips." "Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness." "Their feet are swift to shed blood; in their paths are ruin and misery, and the way of peace they have not known." "There is no fear of God before their eyes." Romans 3:13–18 (ESV)

The first three chapters of Romans are a great for understanding the human problem. Those chapters make two fundamental assertions.

- 1) **We are alienated from God.** We were born alienated from God and because of that, we are under the penalty of sin. We justly deserve the wrath of God.
- 2) **We cannot turn to God.** We are all fools. *Everyone knows God exists because the evidence is before us in creation. However, because of what happened in the Garden of Eden, our will is so deeply damaged that while we can choose what to cook for breakfast in the morning, we cannot choose to seek after God.* According to the Bible, everyone apart from God's grace through Christ is stuck being a fool.

Some of you think we have a free will and we can choose God to save ourselves. That is not true. The Bible doesn't say we have a free will. It says we have a will that can make moral choices for which we will be held accountable. But our will is so deeply damaged that we can not choose to seek after God. Apart from God's grace in our life we will always be fools.

Some of you are thoroughly confused. You thought you chose God. The truth is God chose you so you could choose him. That is the way it happens in Scripture. Let's look at some examples.

Where does the Bible tell me I cannot turn to God?

The book of John

The book of John is full of statements that affirm this.

[No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. John 6:44 \(ESV\)](#)

[It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all... John 6:63 \(ESV\)](#)

Who takes the first step to bring us to God? God does. He hunts the sinner down and out of his free and undeserved mercy draws us to himself.

The Emmaus Road shows us how we recognize Jesus.

After the death of Jesus, two of his disciples were walking to a village named Emmaus. It is about 7 miles from Jerusalem. They were talking about the stunning turn of events in Jerusalem. At the beginning of the week, the crowd hailed Jesus as king in the triumphal entry. At the end of the week, he was crucified. As they were walking and talking, the risen Jesus came up and walked beside them. He asked them what they were discussing. Cleopas, one of the disciples, asked if he was the only one in Jerusalem who didn't know about these events. Apparently he thought Jesus was not checking his social media.

What makes this story strange is the disciples didn't recognize they were talking to Jesus. They walked and talked with him all afternoon and still didn't recognize him. Why couldn't they grasp the obvious? Was it because they were filled with grief? Did they all need a serious trip to the optometrist? The Bible doesn't leave us with those options, it tells us why.

But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. Luke 24:16 (ESV)

God simply did not let them perceive it was the risen Jesus they were talking to. Jesus engaged with them in conversation about what the Old Testament Scriptures taught about himself for the rest of the day. Jesus even joined them for dinner. It wasn't until one point in the meal when the light went on for them.

When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. Luke 24:30–31 (ESV)

What happened? Their eyes were opened by God. It was only because God opened their eyes that they recognized Jesus. Did they choose to open their eyes or did God open their eyes to recognize Jesus for who he actually is? You tell me.

The Damascus Road shows us how salvation begins.

A third example comes from the apostle Paul. If you read about him in the beginning of Acts, he was the Osama Bin Laden of his day that hunted Christians down and dragged them off to prison. It was a pretty good gig until God changed his plans in Acts 9.

But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting." Acts 9:1–5 (ESV)

A little later, Ananias needed some special prompting from God to even talk with Paul because Ananias was so afraid of him. Look what God says to Ananias.

But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel." Acts 9:15 (ESV)

Who chose who? Paul was acting like a fool until God laid him out flat. The disciples on the Emmaus Road were clueless they were talking to Jesus until God opened their eyes. Some of you hate the doctrine of Predestination. My friends, you should be on your knees thanking God for it. We are all fools who know God exists, but because we are so dead in sin, we cannot even lift a finger to turn to God unless he chooses to hunt us down and save us. Salvation begins with God choosing to save the fools.

Everyone has a Damascus or an Emmaus road conversion experience, maybe a little less dramatic but essentially the same. Either God hunts us down on the Damascus Road of life as we are going about our foolish rebellious business or we are not opposed to God but are clueless to who he is, until God

opens our eyes. Why does he do this for us? Not because we deserved it but to show his mercy and compassion that we do not deserve.

For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. Romans 9:15–16 (ESV)

Psalm 14 tells us that apart from God seeking us and reaching out to us, there is no way we could know him. We would live like fools forever. This is why Jesus came. Jesus is God the Father’s plan to save the fools.

Jesus is salvation for fools.

Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion! When the Lord restores the fortunes of his people, let Jacob rejoice, let Israel be glad. Psalm 14:7 (ESV)

Jesus is the hope of the fool. Psalm 14:7 says the hope for the fools will come from Zion. What is Zion? Zion is the hilly region Jerusalem was built on. In David’s day, it was about 14 acres in size. In Jesus’ day, it had grown to 500 acres. Today, it is about 50 square miles. Zion was where the redeemer would redeem the fools. How do we know that?

“And a Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who turn from transgression,” declares the Lord. Isaiah 59:20 (ESV)

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. Zechariah 9:9 (ESV)

We know Zechariah 9:9 applies to Jesus because Matthew 21 tells us it does.

Jesus didn’t come to be a good moral example. He didn’t come to teach us a class on ethics and morality. He came to save fools who were so dead in their sin that while there is plenty of evidence about God in creation, we cannot turn to God unless God does a supernatural work in our life. We are so bent in our foolishness that apart from an Emmaus Road experience or a Damascus Road experience, we can’t turn to him. My friends, apart from the grace of God, we are fools.

There are three things that hit us from this passage.

- 1) **If you know God, don’t be a fool and live like a practical atheist.** That is most of us. When we know what God says in his word about his will, but intentionally choose to do our own thing, that is being a fool. There is no question about it. When we know God’s will and go our own way, that is being a stubborn, hard-hearted, obstinate fool who won’t submit to God’s authority. If that is you, repent today.
- 2) **This Psalm helps us understand why atheists can’t see God.** It explains why atheists like Jodie Foster can be very intelligent but look at creation and see no evidence for God’s existence. Others of us can look at the same evidence and wonder how people can’t see God. Apart from God doing a

supernatural work in a heart, we are so dead in sin that we cannot even lift a finger to turn to God.

What are we to do about that? Share the truth about Jesus in as clear a way as we can, that is our responsibility. Then we pray for God to do his part, to soften the heart of the fool, so he/she can turn to Jesus.

- 3) **This Psalm calls fools to turn to Christ today.** I know everybody here does not love Christ. I know a number of you come because your parents make you or your wife is forcing you. You think Christians are cute religious people, but you don't seriously believe Jesus died on the cross to save you from your sin.

Psalm 14 is calling you to repent of your sin and trust in Jesus today. Stop being a fool. This morning, for the first time, can you begin to see Christ for who he is? Ask Christ's death on the cross to be the payment for your sin and ask Christ to be in charge of your life today. If God is working on your heart right now, make that decision.

Psalm 45 - Who is Jesus?

December 4, 2011

Good morning Faith family. If your family is like mine, this is a busy time of year. The Christmas tree is out, but it has been a week and we haven't found a chance to finish decorating it. Some of you still planned to hang lights on the gutters, after this weekend's snow, you can cross it off your list. Cindy and I are realizing we will do most of our shopping for Christmas online at night. We don't have time to run to Sioux Falls. With the busyness of Christmas, isn't it easy to miss Jesus? When Christmas Eve arrives too soon, we have barely thought of the significance of that day. There is not much time to think on the identity of Christ beyond a baby in the manger. Inherently, we know he is so much more than a baby. Who is Jesus?

A Muslim will say Jesus is more than a baby, he is one of Allah's holiest prophets. A Jehovah's Witness will say Jesus is more than a baby, he is Michael the Archangel. A Mormon will tell you Jesus is more than a baby. He is the elder brother of the fallen angel Lucifer. A Christian Scientist will tell you Jesus was just a baby, but as a man he lived out his divine ideal. We know Jesus was more than just a baby, but what else is he?

How we answer that question matters. Jesus claimed to be God. John 8:24 says that if we don't believe he is who he claimed to be, we will die in our sins. If we don't have the right belief about who Jesus is, we will be separated from God's grace and goodness for an eternity in hell. Those are Jesus' words. He is God with skin on. That is a lot more than just a baby.

Every human being has a choice to make. Is Jesus God in the flesh, or is he a fake? He cannot be a holy prophet like the Muslims say, because he didn't leave us that option. He cannot be Michael the archangel, like the Jehovah's Witnesses believe. Jesus didn't leave us that option. He cannot be the brother of the devil like the Mormons claim. Jesus said he was God. He is not just a human being who reached a divine potential like the Christian Scientists believe. Jesus said he is a man who is fully God. We all have a choice to make about Jesus. He either is who he claimed to be, or he is a liar. According to Jesus, if we don't believe he is who he claims to be, we will die in our sin.

This morning we are going to learn more about Jesus as we answer the question, "Who is Jesus?" Usually when we study Jesus, we go to the gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. But you might be surprised to know Jesus is talked about extensively in the Old Testament, particularly in the Psalms.

Of all the Old Testament books quoted in the New Testament, the most frequently quoted book is the book of Psalms. The Psalms are saturated with Jesus.

Not all Psalms talk about Jesus, but the ones that do we call Messianic Psalms. We are looking at some of them in this Christmas series. We will look

at Psalm 2, which talks about Jesus as the king in authority. On Christmas Eve, we will look at Psalm 110, which gives us the rest of the Christmas story we never hear at Christmas time. This morning, we are looking at Psalm 45, which gives us two snapshots. One is a snapshot of who Jesus is and the other is a snapshot of who we are because of him. Would you turn in your Bible to Psalm 45 and while you are getting there, I want to answer your most pressing question.

How do you find Jesus in the Psalms? The way we find Jesus in a Psalm is when we read the Psalm, we find elements in the Psalm that cannot be true of a normal human being. They are elements that can only be true of a divine human being.

To show you what I mean look at Psalm 45. Put your finger in the text at the heading before the Psalm begins.

Before we look at verse 1, let me explain this heading. It is a Psalm dedicated to an ancient music director called *the choirmaster*. This is an ancient worship pastor. It was to be sung to a tune called "Lilies." We have no idea what that tune sounded like. It is a piece of music composed by the Sons of Korah. This was a family of outstanding musicians and singers in Israel who passed the office of worship director from one generation to the next in their family line. It was a romantic wedding song originally composed to be sung at a wedding. So the hopeless romantics among us will love this. We are also told it is a *maskil*. That means it is a teaching song. This is interesting. While it was a romantic love song, the writer of the Psalm knew the Holy Spirit inspired this song so God could teach his people something they needed to know through the song. It is more than just a romantic love song. God is teaching us something about himself through it. Now let's look at the text.

My heart overflows with a pleasing theme; I address my verses to the king; my tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe. Psalm 45:1 (ESV)

Here we learn this romantic love song was written for a king to be sung at his wedding. Who is the king? We do not know for sure but it is a king in the line of David, possibly Solomon. Most Bible scholars believe it is a song written to celebrate Solomon's wedding to an Egyptian princess. That is a marriage we read about in 1 Kings 3. I am going to go out on a limb on this. I don't think that was the marriage this Psalm was written to celebrate. Solomon's marriage in 1 Kings 3 was a political alliance to a foreign wife. This Psalm does not feel like it was written for Solomon marrying a foreign bride who doesn't worship God. I think it was written to be sung at the marriage of Solomon and the Shulamite. That is the marriage we will study in the Song of Solomon in January. I wouldn't die on that one. It is just my gut feeling. Now it starts to get interesting.

The most handsome of men.

Remember that on one level, the writer of the Psalm is writing a romantic song to celebrate a king's wedding, but he also knows the Holy Spirit is inspiring him to teach God's people something they need to know beyond this earthly king's romance. Look how these two levels come as we see the king described.

You are the most handsome of the sons of men; grace is poured upon your lips; therefore God has blessed you forever. Psalm 45:2 (ESV)

I told you we recognize Messianic Psalms because they talk about things that could never be true of a normal human being. This verse ends by describing the king as someone God has blessed forever. How does that happen with an earthly king that dies? Here we see the first hint this Psalm is about more than an earthly king. It is also a hint that it is teaching us about a much greater wedding. The wedding of Christ and his bride, the church. Remember that Paul talks about this in Ephesians.

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. Ephesians 5:31–32 (ESV)

Paul says that our sexuality and the joy of intimacy in marriage is given to us by God to whet our appetite for a much richer joy and fulfilling intimacy that will be ours when we are finally with Jesus at the wedding supper of the lamb. This Psalm uses the institution of marriage, and a royal wedding, to teach us about Jesus and the joy that will be ours at the wedding supper of the lamb. Let's put our finger back in the text and unpack some more.

The Psalm says, *you are the most handsome of men*. In the earthly sense, if this Psalm was about Solomon he was a handsome man. David is described as being good looking, that was Solomon's father. Solomon's mother was Bathsheba. She was drop dead gorgeous. Solomon's brother, Absalom was described as good looking. I think Solomon was probably a stud. While good looks are true of Solomon, the real king this Psalm is talking about is Jesus.

In the gospels, we have almost no physical description of Jesus. This Psalm gives us a window into his physical appearance. Jesus was a good-looking guy. Sometimes people use Isaiah 52 and 53 to describe Jesus as a rather homely looking character because in those chapters it says he *had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him and nothing in his appearance that we should desire him*. As I read Isaiah 52 and 53 last week, and compared it to this Psalm, I see those descriptions of Jesus in Isaiah as applying to him *after* he was beaten and before his crucifixion. Read those verses in context and you will see what I mean. That is part of your homework for small group tonight.

Think about this. Would Jesus be good looking? Jesus grew up working construction as a carpenter with his dad. He walked everywhere he went. Jesus was a handsome man. He had a set of pipes for arms. He could have been on one of those magazines we get in mail as a model of men's clothing.

Not only did Jesus look like a stud, the words of his lips were gracious. The Psalmist says this king's lips were anointed with grace. On the earthly level, if this is describing Solomon, how was his speech? First, we know he was the wisest man in the world. 1 Kings 4:32 tells us he composed 3,000 proverbs and wrote 1,005 songs. Sounds like he is EF Hutton. When he speaks, people listened. But since this Psalm can only be completely fulfilled by Jesus, and we

know it is ultimately talking about Jesus, what does this tell us about Jesus' speech? Were his lips speaking words of grace?

In Luke 4, Jesus read part of Isaiah 61 to the synagogue. Luke makes a side comment about people's reaction to Jesus' words.

And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth..." Luke 4:22 (ESV)

Does that remind you of Psalm 45:2? While I was preparing this message, I was also studying Jesus' feeding of the 5,000. The feeding of the 5,000 took place in the wilderness because Jesus was trying to get away from people. The problem with Jesus' deep wilderness hideout is that it didn't work. 5,000 men, plus women and children, a crowd of 20,000 plus people took time off work, walked for miles and didn't even bring enough food so they were collapsing from hunger and exhaustion, all so they could hear Jesus do what? Teach! They were captivated by the gracious words that came from his mouth. In John 7, when guards were sent to arrest Jesus, they returned empty-handed and what did they say? "No one ever spoke like this man."

This Psalm says Jesus is the most handsome of men. His lips are anointed with grace. God has blessed him forever. At one level, it sounds like Solomon, but in total, it could only be true of Jesus.

A warrior with unusual weapons.

Gird your sword on your thigh, O mighty one, in your splendor and majesty! In your majesty ride out victoriously for the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness; let your right hand teach you awesome deeds! Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; the peoples fall under you. Psalm 45:3–5 (ESV)

This Psalm moves from talking about the the king's looks and speech to describing him in battle. We go from the good-looking gracious king to warrior king. In one sense, this talks about Solomon, or another king in the Davidic line. But we just learned, the only one who can completely fulfill this Psalm is Jesus. We could take this apart piece by piece, but this morning to save time I want to show you just one interesting element of these verses.

Some Hebrew scholars have noted this verse could legitimately be translated a little differently from the Hebrew to English. Instead of saying

"In your majesty ride out victoriously *for the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness.*"

A legitimate translation is

"In your majesty ride forth victoriously *[by means of]* truth, meekness and righteousness."

In other words, this king would be using truth, meekness and righteousness as weapons for battle! That sounds rather strange, unless the battle is not being fought with tanks and bazookas. What if the battle was

against deception, sin, wickedness and Satan? What would be the weapons you need for that kind of battle? Look how Jesus used those three weapons.

Who is the truth? Jesus said,

I am the way, the truth and the life. John 14:6 (ESV)

Did Jesus use meekness and humility as a weapon for battle? Philippians 2 tells us the ultimate act of humility in the universe was the means to the ultimate victory in the universe - Christ humbling himself to become a man and die in our place for our sins. Christ's meekness was the weapon he used to conquer sin, Satan and death.

Did Jesus use righteousness as a weapon? Remember Jesus' temptation in the wilderness? Satan desperately tried to get him to sin so he would no longer be righteous and a perfectly-fitting sacrifice for our sin. Jesus didn't sin. He kept his righteousness, and it became the weapon he used to crush Satan on the cross. Jesus used truth, meekness and righteousness to defeat Satan, sin, and death. Do you see how this Psalm is telling us about more than just an earthly king? The Psalm has told us about Jesus' humanity with his looks and his speech. It tells us how Jesus battles and the unique weapons he uses. Now it gives us another piece of his identity.

The man who is God.

Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness; you have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions; Psalm 45:6-7 (ESV)

If you had any doubt this Psalm was referring to Jesus, these verses should remove all doubt. There is no way an earthly king could be God. If you were here for our series in Hebrews, you remember studying Hebrews 1:8-9. In that first chapter of Hebrews, the writer of Hebrews makes the case that Jesus is superior to the angels. In Hebrews 1, he quotes these verses from Psalm 45 and says they refer to Jesus. If there was any question in your mind that this Psalm was about Jesus, the writer of Hebrews removes all doubt by telling us it is about Jesus. Put your finger in your Bible and look at this line by line. In verse 6, the king is addressed as God! So the king is the most excellent of men and he is God. He has a throne. He has a kingdom that lasts forever.

Between verse 6 and 7, how many people are called God? Two. There is the God with the throne and the kingdom in verse 6 and there is another God, who is superior to the former God, who anoints the first God with the oil of gladness beyond his companions. This is a reference to the different persons of the godhead. We see two people of divinity, but one is subordinating himself to the other. This is the son submitting himself to the father's plans.

Now it takes another interesting turn. It is said that this God-man-king combination who has a throne and kingdom that will last forever was anointed by his God. It is God the father anointing God the son. What does anointing mean?

Anointing means you are set apart to serve God in a special capacity or role. In the Old Testament the priests were anointed to serve in that capacity. Kings were anointed to serve God in that capacity. On rare occasions, the prophets were anointed and set apart to serve God. What role does Jesus play? He takes up all three roles and becomes the prophet who gives God's words to the people, the priest who intercedes for the people and make the sacrifice for sin and the king who rules over the people.

Jesus has the ultimate anointing of God in being anointed by God himself, not another human being and to serve in all three roles.

In case there is any doubt about this, let me teach you some Hebrew and Greek. Jesus is called the Messiah and the Christ. Messiah means the anointed one in Hebrew. Christ is not Jesus' last name. Technically Jesus *is* the Christ. Christ means the anointed one in Greek. So every time the Jews said Jesus is the Messiah or the Christ, they were saying Jesus is the one Psalm 45:7 is referring to. He is the one anointed to serve as our prophet, priest and king by God.

The king who came for us.

your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia. From ivory palaces stringed instruments make you glad; daughters of kings are among your ladies of honor; at your right hand stands the queen in gold of Ophir. Psalm 45:8–9 (ESV)

At this point, the Psalm is talking about the wedding ceremony. The king is getting decked out for the wedding and is putting on his cologne. What are the three spices he uses to perfume himself? Myrrh, aloes and cassia. Do any of those spices ring a bell? Remember back to Jesus' death. What were the spices the women brought for him in the tomb? Myrrh and aloes. It doesn't say in the New Testament account that they brought cassia, which is a type of cinnamon, it just says spices, plural, were used. Since this Psalm can only be fulfilled by Jesus, it appears cassia was one of the unnamed spices they brought.

What is this teaching us? While I think this point isn't as strong as others, it is worth mentioning. As we see this from the New Testament perspective, it appears the death of the groom is what makes the wedding possible. Jesus died for us to make the marriage supper of the lamb possible. Let's jump to the last verse.

The groom who gives us a new identity.

We will not have much time to study this properly today. You will study the second part of the Psalm in your small groups this week as you study who the queen becomes because of the king her groom.

I will cause your name to be remembered in all generations; therefore nations will praise you forever and ever. Psalm 45:17 (ESV)

The Psalm closes with another statement that could only be true of a marriage that is more than just an earthly king and his bride. This marriage will

be remembered for all generations and nations will praise the king and his bride forever.

When Christ returns and the marriage supper of the lamb takes place, as it is described in Revelation, that will be a magnificent and unrepeatable event that is on par with the crucifixion and resurrection. It is the moment when the victory obtained by the crucifixion and the resurrection are finally applied to us as we can be with Jesus. The blood bought bride, that is us, will be united to Christ, our groom, forever. For all eternity, that moment will be remembered and celebrated. For all of eternity you and I will be honored as the bride of Christ.

Conclusion

This is an amazing psalm. It gives us snapshots of who Christ is and who we are because of him. The question is, what should we do with all of this? When studying the Bible, there are two questions we want to ask when you look at a piece of Scripture. *So what?* and *Now what?* As I thought about those questions, two answers came screaming out of the text.

1. The truth about Jesus matters.

Psalm 45 is clear about the identity of Jesus. He is not just another prophet. He is not the brother of Lucifer. He is not a human being who achieved his potential. According to Psalm 45, he is the most excellent of man and he is God. That is crystal clear in verse 6. Underline it and put a cross next to it in your Bible to remind yourself.

We need to know and believe this truth. That is extremely important. In John 8:24 Jesus said that unless you believe he is who he claimed to be, you will die in your sins. In our culture we believe people don't just have a right to their opinion but that all opinions are equally right. All opinions about Jesus are not equally right. There is only one opinion that is right and one opinion that will save us today and for eternity.

This psalm screams that truth at us. We must believe Jesus is who he claimed to be. Believing anything else about him will do us no good. This morning, if you came in with a distorted picture of Jesus, today is the day to repent of that picture and trust in the real Jesus, the only one who can save.

2. As the bride of Christ, I have a wedding to look forward to.

If you have trusted in Jesus, you are engaged to him right now. We will finally be united with him at the great marriage supper of the lamb. Stop for a moment and ponder what this means. Jesus loves you. Jesus died to have you as his bride. Jesus' plans for you are good.

Christmas is one of the most depressing times of the year. The older we get, the more sadness fills the season. Loved ones are no longer with us. Maybe we celebrate alone. Statistics tell us depression and suicide are at a peak over the holidays. If you are one of those people wrapped in a cloud of darkness because Christmas will never be the same, this Christmas fix your eyes on who you are because of Christ. Jesus has chosen you as his bride. He

loves you. He paid the incredible cost of his death for you. Your wedding to him, the most joyful day of your life, is just around the bend.

Psalm 2 - Immediate and Unconditional Surrender

December 18, 2011

Good morning Faith family. Christmas is almost upon us. I hope you are able to take part of this season to enjoy Christ.

Fathers, I want to challenge you. It is your responsibility during this season to teach your children about Jesus. It is your responsibility to control the schedule, not be controlled by it. Fathers, be men, be good spiritual leaders of your home.

This Christmas season, we are studying Jesus from a different angle. We are seeing what the book of Psalms teaches about him. Earlier in the series, we learned the Psalms have a lot to say about Jesus. The book of Psalms is the most frequently quoted Old Testament book in the New Testament. This morning we are studying Psalm 2. As you turn there in your Bibles, let me tell you a story.

In February 1862, Ulysses Grant marched his army to Tennessee and surrounded Fort Donaldson. It was apparent Grant would win the ensuing battle. Inside Fort Donaldson, the Confederates held up under Gen. John B. Floyd. They launched a desperate counterattack that quickly fell apart. Realizing their defeat was inevitable, the Confederates sent word to Gen. Grant asking him for his terms of surrender. Grant replied with these famous words, "There are no terms except immediate and unconditional surrender." That is exactly what they did.

This morning, that is exactly what Psalm 2 tells us we must do. The only way to be reconciled to God and avoid the coming judgment is immediate and unconditional surrender to Jesus, the son of God.

Let me clarify some things before we look at the text. The Bible never asks sinners to invite Jesus into their heart. Inviting Christ into our hearts makes it sound like we are in charge, like we have options before us. It puts the decision to surrender to Jesus on the same level as deciding to have cream or sugar in your coffee. That is not biblical. The biblical picture is each one of us must repent of our sins, trust in Christ or face judgment. *We are not told to invite Christ into our hearts, we are commanded to repent of our sins, trust in Christ or face judgment.*

Psalm 2 is a Psalm that gives us a clear picture of Jesus not in his humility in the manger but in his authority after the resurrection. The message of the Psalm is simply this. Repent of your rebellion. Surrender to Christ or face the consequences.

Some of the Psalms we study in this series are difficult to outline. This one is easy. You can probably see the points broken apart as paragraphs in your Bible. They are: 1) The nations rage; 2) The Lord laughs; 3) The son describes the father's decision; 4) The rebels are warned.

The nations rage.

Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying, "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us." Psalm 2:1–3 (ESV)

The picture is the rulers of the earth are all congregating, and they are raging against God and his anointed one. This rebellion is not just against God the father, it is also against his anointed one. Who is that? A little language background will help us. We covered this earlier in the series. In Hebrew, the word messiah means, anointed one. In Greek, the word christ means anointed one. Who are they raging against besides God the father? Jesus, the anointed son of God.

In verse 3 we find the rallying cry of everyone. "Let us break off our chains and throw off our fetters." That is the essence of rebellion. We want no authority over us. We want no limits. We want to be able to make the rules; we don't want to live under anyones authority.

Isn't this the essence of rebellion? This is how things start with Adam and Eve. They have one rule about one tree, but they rebelled and refused to follow it. Nobody was going to tell them what they can and cannot do. No limits. No rules. You get to the nation of Israel and they said nobody was going to tell them they couldn't worship other gods. Nobody was going to tell them they needed to take a day of rest. They liked making money and worshipping it. Nobody was going to tell them what to do with their money. They wanted to keep their tithes to themselves. It was just pure rebellion, all under the guise of freedom.

Even when you get to the book of Revelation, people are given multiples opportunities to repent after they face God's judgment for their sin. Instead of repenting and acknowledging God's right to rule over their lives, they insisted on rebelling against God, all in the name of freedom.

Ironically, freedom is not found in independence from God. Bondage and death are the result of rebellion against authority. Kids, as you grow up, your parents will tell you to eat your vegetables, to get your sleep, to study hard, to love Jesus more than anything. You want your freedom. You rebel and do your own thing. You stay up until 2 in the morning. You eat Reese's Peanut Butter Cups for breakfast and skip your vegetables. You play Xbox instead of study. Does that rebellion against your parents produce freedom and happiness? No. Were your parents' rules to frustrate you or to help you succeed? It is the same when it comes to rebellion against God. God says save your sexuality for marriage. Rebellion says be free and express yourself before marriage. In which of the two options is bondage and brokenness found? Freedom is not found in rebellion against God. It is found in living under the authority of God and his son.

Let me switch paths. We are looking for messianic teaching in the Psalms. We are looking for what the Psalms teach us about Christ. This entire

Psalm is about Christ and how we relate to him. In Acts 4, Peter and John are preaching and battling with the religious leaders of their day, and when they face opposition to Christ, they see that opposition as Psalm 2 being fulfilled. In case there is any doubt that this applies to Jesus, Peter and John saw it as applying to Jesus.

...who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, “ ‘Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed’— for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. Acts 4:25–28 (ESV)

When we share about Jesus, don't expect people will embrace Christ apart from a supernatural work of God in their heart. We learned that in Psalm 14. Everyone is naturally opposed to Jesus. Psalm 2 teaches us to expect opposition when preaching Christ. A great example of this is Tim Tebow, the quarterback for the Denver Broncos, an outspoken Christian. In 2010, the NCAA made a new rule that banned messages in eye paint. Why did they do that? In 2009, Tim Tebow wrote John 3:16 in his eye paint during a NCAA championship college game. The camera zoomed in on his face so everyone could read John 3:16 on their television screen. In the next few moments Google experienced 92 million searches for “John 3:16.”

Just a few weeks ago Jake Plummer, the former Denver quarterback, talked about Tim Tebow in USA Today. While acknowledging his athletic skills he said he wished Tebow would stop talking about Jesus. Why does Tim get so much opposition to talking about Jesus? Why will people oppose and ridicule us when we tell them about Jesus? Psalm 2 tells us that the nations are in rebellion against God. Expect opposition.

I want to take a little aside in the text. Acts 4:28 also tells us the rebellion to kill Jesus was part of God's sovereign plan. The betrayal, the whole process with the Gentiles and the Jews was ordained by God. God sovereignly oversaw the events that led to Jesus' death. Why is this important? It turns many of our conceptions about God upside down. It helps us realize how much bigger God is than our thinking. It helps us realize how little we understand about God.

For example, would you agree that betrayal is evil? Would you agree murder is evil? While we know betrayal and murder are evil, we also know God willed Pilate and Herod to betray and murder his son. *“They did what your power and will decided beforehand should happen.”* They did exactly what God willed them to do. If you are like me, you are scratching your head wondering how this works. Theologians call this *concurrency*. Concurrency is when God seems to will two things that appear to contradict one another. It teaches us how mysterious and complex God is. We try to put him in a box to figure him out but it doesn't work. God, by virtue of being God, will have a lot of mystery about him. Let me give you other examples of concurrency.

In Exodus, God said he would take the Egyptians and turn their hearts against his people. God took the Egyptians and made them hate his people. Then God punished Pharaoh and the Egyptians for punishing his people.

In Jeremiah, God warned his people to repent. Finally, God had enough. He warned them that he would summon his servant Nebuchadnezzar to punish them. Nebuchadnezzar was a power hungry butcher. He was the leader of the most powerful empire on Earth but God called him “my servant.” God’s servant was summoned to come in and trash his people because they were rebelling against God. As soon as Nebuchadnezzar punished God’s people, God told Nebuchadnezzar he was in trouble for touching his people, and God punished Nebuchadnezzar for doing what God ordained him to do.

How does this work? I don’t know. It is a source of serious brain cramps for Bible students.

The Lord laughs.

He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, “As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.” Psalm 2:4–6 (ESV)

The scene in heaven is quite different from that on Earth. God is laughing. Man is raging, rebelling and shaking his fist at God thinking he is on the path to freedom. God is laughing saying, “Who do you think you are?” If you are here this morning rebelling against God and you think God has no right to tell you what to do, you need to know God is laughing at you. You are a piece of dust trying to defy the infinite creator God. The odds are not in your favor.

God has made his decision about who will be the king of creation. He says he has set his king on Zion, his holy hill. Earlier in the series we learned Zion was the original hill Jerusalem was built upon. God will install his son Jesus as ruler over the earth and over all authorities. This is not a democracy. We don’t get to vote. There is no discussion. God made his decision. Jesus is the king he installed over everything and everyone. Our job is to submit and honor Jesus. Who do we think we are to rebel against the son God has established as the ruler over creation?

On a pastoral note, some of you rebel against decisions God made about your life. God ordained your height, your looks, your parents and your intellect. Some of you are mad at God for not making you smarter. Some of you are mad at God for not making you taller. Some of you are mad at God for letting your car break down or allowing a tragedy in your life.

You think you have a right to tell God what he can and cannot do with your life. You question God’s goodness and love for you. God says, “This is not a democracy.” Just as he chose to set his son as king over creation, he has chosen the places and times where we will live. He chose our height, our intellect, our parents, our looks plus the adversity and blessings of our life. Submit to him in it. Stop rebelling against him.

The son describes the father's decision.

I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” Psalm 2:7–9 (ESV)

Now the son of God, the anointed one, describes the decision God the father made to install him as king over all of creation. “You are my son; today I have begotten you.” Strange language here. The second person of the Trinity is already God’s son, but yet he is begotten of God. What does that mean? Begotten is the term used for birthing. It is something created of like image and essence. We can only create things less than ourselves, like a desk or a research paper. A husband and wife can beget something equal to themselves, they beget children, of the same image and essence as themselves. This is referring to the incarnation. God the son is fused with human flesh and is born a man, yet, he is still completely and fully God. He didn’t leave any of it behind. There is a nice collection of New Testament passages that pick this up and apply it to Jesus.

For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”?... Hebrews 1:5 (ESV)

...this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you.” Acts 13:33 (ESV)

Jesus is the son of God. God the father has given God the son the right to rule over creation and God the son will rule over it. When Jesus asks the nations to be made his inheritance, God the father will give it to him. That is the decree of God.

...but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. Hebrews 1:2 (ESV)

When Jesus returns, he will not come as meek and mild. He will come to inflict God’s wrath upon those who are rebelling. Jesus shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel. Let me show you how this is picked up in the New Testament.

Revelation 19:15 describes the rider of the white horse, which is Jesus.

From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. Revelation 19:15 (ESV)

So the nations are raging, the Lord is laughing, the son describes the father’s decree that the nations will be his inheritance and he will break them and smash them to pieces. That is the state of affairs. So what are we to do about it? The rebellious are warned.

The rebels are warned.

Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him. Psalm 2:10–12 (ESV)

Who is talking here? It is the father talking, not the son. It is the father warning the rebellious people to surrender to the son because you don't want to see the consequences of rebelling against him. The father says *kiss the son*. This is not kissing like a married couple, this is kissing the feet. It means surrender to him and acknowledge his authority over you. So the image is the father is presenting his son as king of creation and telling us to submit to him or we will face the son who carries out the father's wrath and judgment.

Too often we think of Christ as the meek and mild dude. The Bible is filled with warnings that Jesus will not always be meek and mild. In the gospel of Matthew, Jesus warns us over and over about the judgment to come and that Jesus will be behind it.

Don't mistake this. These warnings are not given just to scare us. They are a gift. They are given to us out of love. Parents, why do you tell you kids not to stick their tongue in a light socket? Why do you tell them not to drink Drano? Do you give them warnings to to limit their freedom and ruin their day? No. You love them! Your warnings are a gift. Read the warning label or you face the consequences.

Sophie Regosin-Hodges was 14 months old when an overdose of Tylenol almost killed her. There are two types of Tylenol you give with an eye-dropper to children, Children's Tylenol and Infants' Tylenol. Unfortunately, some parents fail to read and heed the warnings on the bottle. Her mother gave her infant Tylenol according to the dosing instructions on children's Tylenol. The problem is Infant Tylenol is three times stronger than children's Tylenol. As a result of the overdose, her mother almost killed her. Sophie survives today because of a liver transplant. Mom should have read and heeded the warnings on the bottle.

Friends, Psalm 2 is the warning label for everyone who chooses to rebel against Jesus, the son of God. Don't do it. The son's judgment will be terrifying. It is coming. The warning label of Psalm 2 is a gift. Jesus used frightening language to talk about judgment and eternal condemnation. He talked about flames that never go out. He talked about a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth. It is a warning with real consequences.

Before we leave this text, I want to just give you two points of application that smack us in the face from this Psalm.

1. **God is sovereign over the nations.** God is large and in charge whether that is for the salvation of the elect or the damnation of the wicked. There is nothing outside of his control. Many Christians don't like to hear that. God's sovereignty shouldn't be a threat to God's people. It is only a threat to those

who persist in sin and rebellion. When you are facing tough times, take refuge in the fact that even though life feels out of control, God is still in control. Every adversity we face is an opportunity to trust God and bring him glory through our trust.

2. The only way to escape the coming judgment is to kiss the son. Take refuge in him. Just as he will rule with a rod of iron and smash his opponents like pottery, he loves us and died in our places for our sins.

Ulysses Grant made his conditions for surrender clear. Immediate and unconditional surrender was the only option. Psalm 2 says the same is true for each one of us. God laughs as we try to rebel against him and his son, that he installed as king over creation. The *only options* are immediate and unconditional surrender to him.

If this morning you have not surrendered your life to Christ and recognized he is in charge, today is the day to bow the knee and kiss the son. Recognize he will exercise his authority as king of the world and we begin by avoiding God's wrath by willingly acknowledging him as king over our life.

If you have known Christ for years, the message from Psalm 2 is the only way to freedom is found by surrender and delighting in him, not in rebellion against him.

Psalm 110 - The Rest of the Story

December 24, 2011

It is great to have you at our Christmas Eve worship service. My name is Kurt, and I am one of the pastors. This Christmas we did something a little something different. Instead of studying Jesus' birth from the Gospels, we are studying Jesus from the Old Testament book of Psalms. While it sounds strange to learn about Jesus from the Old Testament, we have learned the book of Psalms is dripping with information on Jesus. The writers of the New Testament knew that, that is why they quoted the book of Psalms more than any other.

Tonight we study Psalm 110. Why are we studying this Psalm? Psalm 110 is the most quoted Psalm in the New Testament from the book of Psalms. Psalm 110 is also the most quoted chapter of the entire Old Testament in the New Testament. The first verse of the Psalm 110 is quoted 24 times by New Testament writers. Why did the early church and the writers of Scripture quote this so frequently? It is packed with information about Jesus. That is why we are studying it tonight.

As I studied the Psalm, I kept thinking of my father-in-law's favorite radio program: Paul Harvey. He loved the way Paul Harvey would say his famous phrase. Do you remember it? (*...and now it is time for the rest of the story...*) Psalm 110 reads like a Paul Harvey program. At Christmas, we focus on Christ's first coming and his humility. Sometimes Christmas appears almost feminine as we think of a new born baby with a teenage mother.

That is good stuff but it is only *part* of the Jesus story. Psalm 110 tells us the rest of the story . It is an important part of the story that is often not told. When Jesus comes a second time he will crush, destroy and slaughter his enemies. He will massacre everyone who has not bowed their knee to him. I know that doesn't fit with the picture many of us have when we think of Jesus. Not many churches tell that part of the story. Some of you may even find this picture of Jesus repulsive, but it is the Gospel. We like to picture Jesus as Mr. Rogers with a cardigan sweater. We like to think of him as a soft-spoken therapist who dispenses warm fuzzies to makes us feel good about ourselves. That is not the picture of Jesus Psalm 110 gives us. As Paul Harvey would say, now it is time for the rest of the story. Psalm 110 gives us three snapshots of Jesus. They are: Jesus as king; Jesus as priest; Jesus as warrior.

Jesus is the king.

It wasn't just Christians in the first century who saw Psalm 110 as pointing to the Messiah. The Jews of the first century also understood Psalm 110 was about the Messiah. To show you what I mean, just look at the first verse.

The Lord says to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.” Psalm 110:1 (ESV)

How many people are involved? Three. There is David, the observer of the conversation, who writes it down. There are two different people called Lord. They are different words in the Hebrew for *Lord* but they are both divine names for God. One person who is divine says to another person who is divine to sit at his right hand, which is the position of highest honor, until all his enemies are made his footstool. At this point, Psalm 110 is evidence for two different people of the Godhead. The question is, how do we know this applies to Jesus?

Jesus says Psalm 110 is about him. In Matthew 22, Jesus was talking with religious leaders who were trying to stump him in a public game of Bible trivia. Jesus destroyed them, which did not make these guys look good. The Pharisees just tried to knock him out with a question about paying taxes to Caesar. The Sadducees tried to knock him out with a question about a guy’s wife at the resurrection. Jesus pointed out they didn’t even know their Bibles, which was an extremely effective insult. The religious leaders are in the corner licking their wounds trying to come up with another stumper question when Jesus turns the table and asks them a question.

Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?” They said to him, “The son of David.” He said to them, “How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying, “ ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet” ’? If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?” And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions. Matthew 22:41–46 (ESV)

Is it true that Jesus was a son of David? Yes! He came through David’s earthly line. But here Jesus says the Christ will be more than just from the line of David. God calls him Lord. Jesus said, the Christ will be both the son of David, and according to Psalm 110, he will also be the son of God. That’s Jesus!

A couple of weeks ago we asked an important question: Is it a big deal what you believe about Jesus? Today, many people say we shouldn’t get hung up on doctrine. Just embrace Jesus for who we think he is. We should be tolerant of those who don’t see Jesus the same way we do. We think trying to champion a particular view of Jesus is unloving and intolerant. Folks, that is not being intolerant. It is being honest!

When Jesus came to this planet, he made extravagant claims. He claimed to be God in the flesh. He applied Psalm 110:1 to himself. Those are extreme claims. That is why the religious leaders of the day wanted to kill him.

When someone shows up and claims to be God, they are forcing you to make a decision. Either you decide they are a lunatic with a hardboiled egg for a brain or you have to believe them. There is no middle ground. To think Jesus is a good teacher or he is just someone that offered nice moral sound bites is not

an option. He didn't leave us that option. He claimed to be God in the flesh. He told us what is at stake if we don't believe he is who he claimed to be.

...unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins." John 8:24 (ESV)

If we don't believe Jesus is who he claimed to be, we will die in our sins. What does that mean? We will die unreconciled to God. We will face judgment for our sins and eternal damnation. Jesus will not be our savior, he will be our judge. That is why the decision we make about the identity of Jesus is so important. If we reject Jesus as he truly is, we are guilty of rejecting the king. We have become an enemy of the king, and God the father will eventually submit us to the king. We will be his footstool, the mat on which he wipes his feet. Understand God the father will eventually force everyone to submit to Christ.

That isn't a very Christmasy picture, but it is the rest of the Jesus story. In his first coming, he came to save us from our sin. He is coming again a second time to slaughter those who have rejected him. At that time, God the father will force everyone into a position of submission to Christ since he is the king of creation. We either make him our king through his first coming now or he will be forced upon us at his second coming later.

Jesus is a priest.

If the last snapshot of Jesus was terrifying, this snapshot is encouraging.

The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." Psalm 110:4 (ESV)

You are wondering, who is Melchizedek and how does this apply to Jesus? Let's start with Melchizedek. He is a minor character that only shows up three times in the Bible. He first comes on the scene in Genesis 14 where he shows up out of no place and disappears. One thousand years later he shows up in Psalm 110:4. Then we hear about him 1,000 years later in the book of Hebrews. That is it. Hebrews 7, which talks about Melchizedek, explains his role.

Melchizedek was king of Salem. Many Bible scholars think Salem was an ancient name for Jerusalem, but we are not sure about this. Genesis 14 tells us he was also a priest of God. What makes this interesting is he shows up long before the establishment of the Aaron priesthood for the nation of Israel. He is a unique priest we know little about. In Genesis 14, Abraham gives him a tenth of everything he acquired after a battle. That is a lot of cash. Abraham is convinced he is an important guy. The writer of Hebrews comments on Melchizedek by saying *he is without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, like the son of God, he remains a priest forever.* Some think Melchizedek was a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ. We don't know that for sure.

Psalm 110:4 says the Lord that God the father is talking to in verse 1 will not just be king over all creation but he will also be a priest that reigns forever. God has sworn this and will not change his mind. There will be no further

development of this. No alteration of this. Jesus will be a priest forever. What does a priest do? The priest is the go between for God and the people. The priest is the one who offers sacrifices for the sin of the people to bring them back into a relationship with God. The book of Hebrews says Jesus came and offered himself as the once-for-all sacrifice for our sin. He is the one who brings us together with God by the sacrifice of himself for our sin.

Now here is a good question. What did Jesus save us from? Some of you are hoping Jesus came to save you from a bad marriage. Others hope he came to save you from a bad job or a bad boss. Others of you are hoping Jesus came to save you from an average life. The Bible has a very different answer. Jesus came to save us from God. He came to save us from the wrath of God that burns hot against our sin and rebellion. Every one of us deserves the wrath of God to be poured out against us. Some of us are more outspoken rebels, others of us are quiet rebels, but we are all rebels. Every single one of us is born in rebellion against God and we would rather do our own thing than submit to God. We are on a trajectory headed straight for the Lake of Fire. Jesus came to be a priest and offer his life as the sacrifice for our sin. He came to die in our place for our sin and save us from the white hot wrath of God that we deserve.

Friends, until you get this straight, nothing in this book, especially the Christmas story, will make any sense. The main problem in the world is not troubled marriages, whether a Democrat or Republican is in the White House, global warming or financial decay. The No. 1 thing we need to be saved from is the wrath of God that we deserve for our sin. This is such a huge problem that the only way to take care of it was for God to take care of it himself. That is why Jesus also came as a priest. Jesus is the only thing that can protect you from God's white hot wrath against you for your sin. That is why Jesus came.

Jesus is a warrior.

This Psalm tells us Jesus is the king over all creation. It tells us God the father installed him as king so there is no court of appeals. Next we learned Jesus is the once-for-all priest. He is the only one who can shield of us from the white hot wrath of God for our sin. A wrath we fully deserve. In the last snapshot of Jesus we see him pictured as a warrior.

The Lord is at your right hand; he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath. He will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses; he will shatter chiefs over the wide earth. He will drink from the brook by the way; therefore he will lift up his head. Psalm 110:5–7 (ESV)

What will happen at Christ's second coming? The rest of the Gospel story is quite crystal clear. He will shatter kings, judge the nations and filling the earth with corpses. What does this mean?

When Jesus comes back, he will judge every human being who has not submitted and surrendered to him as Lord. Jesus is either your savior or your judge. That is the way God the father set it up. He will judge religious people who do religious stuff. He will judge kind grandmothers. He will judge junior high

students. He will judge everyone who has not surrendered, repented and believed in him as his or her Lord and savior.

Jesus' first coming was humbling and comforting. The rest of the story is that Jesus' second coming will be terrifying for those who have not submitted to him. Is this an easy doctrine? No. It doesn't really preach well on Christmas Eve, but it is the rest of the story. It is not fair to tell only part of the story. The reason Jesus came to Bethlehem the first time was to save us from his wrath when he comes the second time.

God the father is really angry at us for our sin. He has a right to be. He is just. He will punish us for our sin, unless we have asked Christ to be our king and the priest who stepped in to take the wrath of God we deserve to experience.

Many of you have either read or heard of a book called "Love Wins." In that book, the author tries to make a case that everyone will eventually go to heaven. To make his case, he ignores and reinterprets clear teachings of Scripture, most of all, the words of Jesus. Jesus talked more about hell and judgment than he did about heaven. He was clear that there are two real and permanent places for eternity.

And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." Matthew 25:46 (ESV)

There are no other options.

Whoever believes in him (Jesus) is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. John 3:18 (ESV)

I like the way Mark Twain put it. "It is not the stuff in the Bible I don't understand that bothers me. It is the stuff I do understand that bothers me." This is something the Bible is clear on.

- 1) There will be a day of judgment.
- 2) There is real eternal life or eternal punishment.
- 3) The only way to eternal life with God is through Jesus being our king and priest.
- 4) Everyone else who rejects Jesus will be justly judged and punished for an eternity in hell.

That may not be the way you would have written the Bible, but you didn't write it and neither did I. God wrote it. This is the rest of the Jesus story we often don't hear.

Application

What should we do with this as we celebrate Christmas?

Tell the rest of the Jesus story - This is a challenge Psalm 110 gives to those of us who have known Christ for years. Remember when you first followed

Christ? Remember when you were fired up to tell people about Jesus? Then real life sets in. We don't talk about Jesus in public because people might think we are weird. We could be labeled a Jesus freak. If we do talk about Jesus, we portray him as Mr. Rogers with the cardigan sweater. We don't talk about the rest of the Jesus story with Jesus as king and judge.

If that is you, this Christmas Psalm 110 is calling you to repent. Only telling part of the story is tinkering with the gospel. It isn't honest to only talk about the first coming and not talk about the second. It is God's story. We don't have a right to change it. Yes, Jesus was born in Bethlehem as fully God and fully man. Yes, he died on the cross in our place, for our sins. Yes, he rose again and those who have trusted him will rise just like he did. But the rest of the story is that God has installed Jesus as king over creation and soon the father will extend Jesus' right to rule. Jesus will return again as a warrior to judge everyone who have not submitted to him and who insist on rebelling against him. That is the rest of the story. Don't be afraid to tell it.

The next challenge of this Psalm is for those of you who don't know Jesus.

Make Jesus your king and priest - What does this Psalm tell us we must do to be ready for his return? Let me make this simple.

- 1) **Confess my rebellion against God.** Stop playing games. Stop blaming others. Stop lying about it. Confess it.
- 2) **Repent of my sin.** Repent literally means to head in the opposite direction. Listen to me. If a person says they have repented but they have done nothing to try to change their sinful behavior, they have not repented. Repentance is seen in our lives. That doesn't mean perfection. It means getting serious about heading in the opposite direction.
- 3) **Believe in Jesus.** This happens at the same time as we repent of our sin. We turn from our sin and we turn to Jesus. We believe that Jesus died in our place, for our sin. He is the king of the universe and he is the one who has the right to rule not just all of creation but he has the right to rule my life.
- 4) **Obey the king.** Once we have repented and believed, then we must obey what the master asks of us.

My friends, while tonight we celebrate the birth of Jesus in his first coming, I submit to the most quoted piece of Old Testament Scripture in the new, Psalm 110. It tells the rest of the Jesus story about Jesus' second coming.

Jesus is the king over all creation by decree of his father. Make him the king of your life tonight as your savior. He will be king over everyone and everything when he returns to execute judgment.



Dr. Kurt Trucksess is ordained in the EFCA. He enjoys reading, writing, time with his family and wrestling with his sons. His favorite topics of study are ancient rhetoric and preaching. Feel free to contact him at ktruck@gmail.com or visit his web at www.christ2Rculture.com

© Dr. Kurt Trucksess. You are permitted and encouraged to reproduce and distribute this material in any format provided that: (1) you credit the author, (2) any modifications are clearly marked, (3) you do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction, (4) you include the web site address (<http://www.christ2Rculture.com>) on the copied resource.

