

Psalm 72

Incense - God is with us

1 Read Psalm 72

Ps 72 ends Book II. v18-20, "prayers of David ended"

2 Pray

3 Introduction

v1-v2, Justice and Righteousness,... Righteousness and Justice

What is the difference between Justice and Righteousness?

- **Justice**: Fairness. A king righting all wrongs, bringing fairness.
- **Righteousness**: 100% Goodness. A king thoroughly Good.

The 2 are inseparable. But their emphases are different: Justice is about governing others; Righteousness is about governing self. (perhaps I can settle a dispute between my kids fairly, while I myself am still guilty of the same thing). In a God-ward king the 2 will be inseparable ...e.g. see v2, 'judge' with 'righteousness'. This is a cry for a thorough goodness in both how the king treats others and how he behaves himself. = **"Integrity"**

4 Solomon - hope for a King

FCF: Don't we all know it? Politically, (own country - Justice by a thread, 2 options in the US - Righteousness?); in our employment; schools; in our homes - a timeless plea. **We are so poor at being kings, and queens.** Such that, we need democracy, and constitutions written that don't change their minds, and Magna Carters that kings must obey.

So we understand that such a song as Psalm 72 exists. There would be something dreadfully wrong if no one was calling to their God, "Give the king YOUR fairness, O God!" or "Give my husband YOUR goodness, O God!"

This is an appeal for a desirous King...

The appeal can be broken down into 3 appeals, for

- A king with **Integrity**/ Character (1-4): *as seen*
- And if so, that he would have **Eternal Rule**/ Duration (5-7): *see v7*
- And if so, that his rule would be **Unchallenged**- secured; No one would be able to overthrow this/ Extent (8-11): *see v8[expl 'River']*

4.1 Review and Applicable Observations

Christmas series - Matthew 2: Magi, beginning an eternal stream of worship. Bringing gifts of Gold (for a King), and 2 costly spices, Frankincense, and Myrrh. "True worship begins with Faith in the revelation of God's Son". Today we need to see that only Jesus Christ satisfies our appeal for the perfect king! And may our faith in Him be strengthened as we see this truth again, so that the intensity of our worship will increase!

Now I'd like to make 2 relevant observations important for some personal application later on.

Observation 1: The plea in Psalm 72 is urgent; it is for Now.

The next sermon will take us to Isa60 which looks at the Heavenly rule of Jesus, King of Heaven. But this song doesn't look forward to that Age. Yes, Heaven is our Hope, and it is guaranteed by the Blood of Jesus for all who turn to Him for forgiveness and salvation. But Psalm 72 recognises the dire need for Right Ruling in **this** world. [note v7 - while the sun endures, contra Isa 60:19. Will there be calls for justice in Heaven? No, because all wrongs will have been righted!] The plea is for now. Primarily, it seems, because Bad Ruling is destroying people, into poverty, injustice, defencelessness, oppression, - economically, emotionally, relationally - the world is a parched wasteland, where little trickles of righteousness and justice are prone to quickly evaporate without the governance of a strong and good king. [Illus: drunkard mess on the beach - what would the world be like without law enforcement?! The police were not necessarily doing it out of the goodness of their hearts but because the law dictated their job.] And it's no good saying, "Well, I'm secure!" (like bystanders watching a drunkard) Because you are part of the fabric of society, which is crumbling - you're not secure, and neither is your neighbour. We can be grateful for the remaining threads of justice in this country - but even this hasn't saved us from

the atrocities Psalm 72 cries against.] Observation 1: The plea is for Now, not Heaven.

Observation 2: The pray-er. See v2 "*your people*" (God's people). This is a prayer for Israel's king. The royal son. So here's the important Observation - Who's praying the prayer for this king? **v1 superscription** = "*Of Solomon*". That wise king, who stunned the Queen of Sheba by his great wisdom and wealth, *is praying for himself!* v18-20, "prayers of David ended" - fits well with Solomon's accession to the throne. What do you think of that?! If our president penned and sang these words - Wow, I would be so encouraged. Solomon said the following when God brought him the throne: **1 Kings 3:5-10**

So, we have observed that: The plea is urgent, and it is reflexive - *the king himself feels the gravity of ruling rightly, and offers himself to be filled with God-like character!* It's right. It is more than commendable - it's In the Image of God - it is God's will (1Tim 2v1-4).

But even the best of us are all very poor at being kings.

Look at **v3** - 'prosperity'= well-being... but not through corruption and selfishness - v3b "*in righteousness*" - 'Let the hills and mountains that surround Israel be a testimony to God's reward for righteousness!' Solomon began well, but he reneged on his own commitment - through a series of compromises - and the most devastating chapter of Solomon the son of David's life, is 1 King 11:4-8(+9 - God was angry). And in 2Ki23:13, what once was hoped to be *mountains of righteous prosperity*, become called "*the mount of corruption which Solomon the king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth...Chemosh...Milcom*", which, generations later, King Josiah broke down. A sincere beginning was no guarantee of a good innings.

4.2 Our Story - Failing Kings and Queens

And such is our story - Kings and Queens, created in the Image of God to steward His *good* and *fair* influence over and through all the world - fail over and over again. Be careful to mock the failures of those in power. You have not maintained faithfulness to God, nor been fair to your neighbour. You have disappointed those who

trusted you, neglected the opportunities for kindness, turned a blind eye to injustice... because, you were tired, you were irritated, you were unaware or ignorant, sometimes powerless, sometimes vengeful. And abdication is easy. Countless times we renegade on our commitment to what's good and fair. Those things take 2nd place to ego and comfort. Solomon's influence affects an entire nation. Even the world. And *our circles* suffer under *our influence* too. What's your "fatal flaw" that your community "sukkels" with? We're really all very poor at being kings and queens. Imagine a family with a perfect father. A church with a perfect pastor. A school with a perfect headmaster. A country with a perfect president.

It has been observed that Frankincense, the 2nd gift brought to the Christ Child, was a fragrance commonly offered on Israel's altar, for a pleasing aroma before the Lord. Could it be that the True King of the World, the One sent by God Himself, would be the Frankincense of Israel's worship - the only pleasing aroma before God?!

Heb 10:5-7

Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; 6 in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. 7 Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book."

5 King Jesus in Psalm 72

Psalm 72 looks to Solomon for a King who has eternal, unchallenged integrity. But in retrospect we see the shadows of King Jesus - the Fulfillment of that Hope.

- read v7)
 - whose days will be until the moon be no more? Not Solomon! Rev 1:17b-18, "*Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and the Grave*"
- read v11) and v17)
 - before who will all kings fall down and worship?
 - and whose Name will endure forever? (**Php 2:8-11**)

- Who has God's righteousness and justice?
- and in whom will people be blessed? (**2 Cor 5:20-21**)

Another kind of appeal: Just as there is an appeal from man to God - ***Give us Your King***, there is an appeal from God to man - ***I am your King, Be reconciled to Me!*** FAIRNESS: our sins are punished, GOODNESS: our sins are punished on Him. (See 14b, *"precious is their blood in his sight"*) The perfect combination of Justice and Righteousness - did we ever see it coming!? Are you reconciled? Come to Him in faith today, and join the eternal stream of Worship due a Worthy King!

Jesus Christ is thoroughly good - The King of Integrity

6 Application: Celebrate Christmas through Right Ruling today

Back to our 2 observations - the appeal is For **Now**, and it is **Reflexive**. We're very poor at being Kings and Queens - but **God changes that** when He forgives our sins and places His Spirit within us. So we like Solomon can pray the same to be true for our own lives. *"Gold - a King is born today, Incense - God is with us [NOW]"* We ourselves, (reflexively), become tools of His righteousness and justice in this world today, Now. Kings and Queens who serve like Christ serves!

- Last week we saw that The worship of Jesus Christ begins with **Believing**.
- Today - see that worship continues with **Doing!**
- The greatest act of worship we can do is to **receive** Christ,
- the second greatest is to **carry out His will** in our circles of influence.

This plea is for now. To the degree that the people of God steward Christ's rule is the degree to which this plea will be answered in the here and now;... the degree to which lives will be spared destruction and pain, and society will taste the glory of Christ the King.

Christmas is about "God with Us now". If you want to celebrate Christmas, commit yourself to King Jesus, to bring His presence into your circle - your family, your friends, your work, your clubs, your town, your country - in whichever sphere God will place you. That is

fitting Worship. Will you do that? "Lord, Be my King again; Lord I commit again to bringing your rule,... your fairness and goodness into my home, my circles, with Integrity!"

Jesus is the pleasing Frankincense before God. May we be the aroma of Him.

2 Cor 2:15-16

For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, 16 to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?