

The King is Coming

19th Sun. after Pent. – 10/08/23 – Mt. Calvary Luth.

Text: Psalm 24:7-10 (LWML Sun.) Past. Keith Besel

vv. 8 & 10 [Where the same question is repeated,] **“Who is this King of glory?”**

v.8 answers, **“Yahweh, strong and mighty, Yahweh the mighty warrior”**, and v.10 answers, **“Yahweh of armies, He is the King of glory!”**

Introduction

✘ This Psalm, written by the great King David, speaks of a far greater king than David – or any earthly king could ever dream of being. Five times in four verses, He is referred to as being synonymous with Yahweh. He is “the King of glory”.

→ In the earlier verses, David identifies this King’s realm as “the earth...and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein” (v.1) for no other reason but that He is the one who “founded” and “established” (v.2) it all in the first place.

✘ But then David asks the question that is always pondered upon by all who are not the king. “How accessible is this King?” “Is He just sitting on His throne, closed away from His people?” “Does He even care about us lowlifes, or does He actually want to interact with us and have some kind of meaningful relationship?” “Is He ruling only for His own glory or does He rule for us; for our good?”

→ David asks the question in verse three, “Who shall ascend the hill of Yahweh? And who shall stand in His holy place?”

I. The Universe’s Two Stories

✘ Throughout Holy Scripture, the true believers of Yahweh have acknowledged that the universe has two stories, so to speak; two levels of existence that David speaks of in this beautiful Psalm before us today.

→ There is the lower level – the track of human history that is deeply and constantly rutted with sin, and there is the upper level, where God the Creator sits and reigns, supreme and unopposed over all.

→ But as David says these two levels of existence are not isolated from each other. In fact, they intersect continually.

✘ That is not, however the way that everyone in the world believes things are, is it? No, the common assumption and majority understanding of mankind is that we humans; we are in control of our own destiny; that we are our own kings and queens and rulers – so much so that it even creeps into the lives of many who claim to believe that God is their King when in reality they have deceived themselves.

→ The ways that this false understanding actually shows up among us are too many to list, but here are a couple: 1) When “bad things” happen, if our default conclusion is that “God must not care about me” or “He must not be the loving God that He claims to be or He would have stopped it from happening” that’s when our emotions are actually taking over and redefining God and His involvement with us instead of embracing the true King of Glory who invites us as we hear in our Gospel Reading today, “Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mat. 11:28).

2) When our fear of rejection or desire to be accepted by everyone takes hold and we buy into the commonly declared mantra that “all people everywhere are children of God so it doesn’t really matter what you believe”, then again we have sought to take charge of defining for

ourselves what is true and we deny God's Word in our Epistle Reading from 1 Peter 2:10 that clearly describes all people before coming to faith in Christ as being outside of God's family. It says, "Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."

- ✘ The Good News highlighted there in that verse though is that we who believe in and embrace the true Triune God; the one that David identifies in Psalm 24 using God's personal name of Yahweh – we know that even as He is the "King of Glory" on His heavenly throne, He is also actively and intimately guiding the track of human history toward the goal that He has set; toward His pre-determined final day of judgment and salvation!

→ And He has been caring for and guiding our track from the very beginning of history when He promised Adam and Eve that He would send an heir in human flesh to buy them and all sinful flesh back from the curse that our sin and disobedience brought upon our souls ever since that first sin when Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit in the Garden.

→ As Luther in his Small Catechism defines it from Scripture, none of us are innocent of sin, for "sin is every thought, desire, word, and deed which is contrary to God's Law". And so, yes, we have ourselves to blame for the fact that there is a separation; a division between this earthly level of existence and God's upper level in perfection.

II. The King of Glory Comes

- ✘ But thankfully, as King David leads us to understand again in verse three, that separation is not insurmountable, as long as we humble ourselves to the rule and reign and plan of Yahweh, that is.

→ David asked, "Who shall ascend the hill of Yahweh? And who shall stand in His holy place?" Verse four sounds daunting; it actually shows that the way to Yahweh is in fact impossible to those who want to believe they are in control of their own destiny. This is what verse four says may approach the King, "He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully."

→ "But Pastor," I know you might be thinking, "that leaves every single human being out, because none of us have hands or hearts that are not soiled and contaminated by sin," which is true. But verse five puts the cleansing work of souls and the work of bringing the King together with His people into the correct realm. It says, "He will receive blessing from Yahweh and righteousness from the God of his salvation."

- ✘ And how do you and I and every soul that is saved "receive" the blessing from Yahweh so that we can come up into His saving presence? By the fact that He first came down to us, in the form of human flesh and bone; in the human birth of God the Father's Son, Jesus on that first Christmas more than 2000 years ago.

→ Yes, it's Jesus, as a 33-year-old man, here in this earthly track of time, having lived His entire life to perfection; never committing even one sin ever; He's the one who willingly had every single one of your sins and mine and that of every man and woman ever to live placed upon Him as 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, "[God] made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God."

III. The King of Victory

- ✘ And now David, in verse seven, speaks of the gates to God's Sanctuary, the place where His subjects enter into His presence, which is often understood to be our hearts and minds and he says, "Lift up your heads...and be lifted up...that the King of glory may come in".

→ Yahweh, through Jesus has done the work. He is, as verse eight says, the King who is “strong and mighty”. The Hebrew literally says He is the “mighty warrior” who waged war in a face to face; bloody and deadly battle, even allowing His and mankind’s enemy, Satan to think that he had won the war when Jesus gave up His life on the cross, was pierced for our transgressions and was buried in a borrowed tomb.

→ But what Satan prematurely saw as his victory, and what unbelievers still see today as a sign of God’s weakness, you and I boldly know that it is the greatest display of Yahweh in verse ten as the Victor and King over all armies everywhere. What’s often translated as “Lord Almighty” or “Lord of hosts” is literally in the Hebrew, “Yahweh of armies”. This is the picture of the King of glory leading His army of angels, after they have won the battle, up into His eternal throne room.

→ And guess what? You and I as His people; we are not left out of the fanfare! No, Psalm 24 calls us all, in the Holy Spirit’s gift of faith to “lift up our heads” (v.7) and “ascend” (v.3) into the loving, caring, ruling, protecting and saving presence of “the King of Glory” where we bask in His victory; as recipients of His righteousness at this moment and forevermore.

⊗ How and when do we do that? You’re doing it right now! You see, the Temple in Jerusalem; the place where God promised to be physically present among His people as their King was on the highest point of Mt. Zion. And from that time on, we Christians have understood that no matter the actual geography, we always “go up” into worship; we “lift up our heads” (v.7) in joy to receive our Savior’s gifts of Word and Sacrament; to be blessed by Him and strengthened as our Epistle Reading says, as His “chosen race”; His “royal priesthood”; His “holy nation”; His “people for His own possession” (1 Pet. 2:9) right here in His Divine Service of Word and Sacrament.

IV. The King’s Missionaries

⊗ And what is our purpose while we remain here in this earthly track of the universe? 1 Peter 2:9 continues, “that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him” – that’s our “King of glory”, “who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light”.

→ In other words, our King honors you and me with the charge; with the privilege of being His emissaries; His representatives; His missionaries to the rest of this sin-darkened world. He wants every person; every single soul to join in the celebration and glory of His victory over sin and death for us.

⊗ And that role as Yahweh’s missionaries is what we remember and celebrate today when we remember and speak of the work of the LWML; the *Lutheran Women in Mission*. In our bulletin today, on the white insert, there is a list of 31 organizations or needs that these women around the country desire to help and come along side so that more people can receive our King’s love and help; so that they can hear of His epic battle and be brought into His eternal victory for their souls as well.

→ He is not just a King “up there somewhere”, separated and distant from you and me and our struggles and issues here in the earthly level of existence. No, He is with us in the body and blood of Jesus, given and shed on the cross and now fed to us in Holy Communion for our strength and help and forgiveness. He is with us in the waters of our baptism where He opened up His arms and embraced us with His Spirit and adopted us for eternity into His family.

Conclusion

⊗ A fearful little girl, sleeping alone in the darkness of her room, cried out to mom and dad as a storm rolled across her Midwest-town. “Mommy, Daddy, come in here,” she cried in the dark of night, as the storm cracked and roared as if it was in the room with her. Mom and dad consoled

her and reminded her that they were right across the hall in the next room; that God is in the room with her so she doesn't need to be afraid. But awakened again and again by the rolling and roaring storm, she finally said to her parents as they entered her room, "I know you said God is in here with me, but I need someone in here with skin on them."

➔ Dear Christians, as you and I look through the heavenly eyes of the King of glory, in the darkness and storms of this sinful world, we clearly see the promise, providence, provision, and protection of God for His people in Jesus. He is Yahweh; the King of Glory with skin on Him; the God, who not only took on flesh but also the sin of all humanity in His body and died to pay for the sins of this entire earthly part of God's great universe.

➔ And He has now placed not only the women of the LWML, but every one of us here in this world, with human skin to be His missionaries; to lift up the eyes of more and more people every day to see their King coming in victory for their redemption and life as well, now and in eternity. Amen.