

The Heart of a King

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We come to a time of year where we remember the coming of Christ, of course, and when you think about the life of Christ in a book in fashion, the earthly life of Christ, you realize that it's bracketed with references to the fact that he was King. Herod was seeking him and he asked the magi, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews," in Matthew 2:2, and when Jesus was crucified at the end of his life, the charge against him referred to the fact that he was the King of the Jews, and so we have this emphasis on Jesus being King. Theologians speak about the threefold office of Christ, he is prophet, he is priest, and he is King, and it's the idea of Jesus as King that will help us think rightly as we approach our text for this evening. It's not a typical Christmas text but it's where we come to in the natural study of our Psalms as we continue on that.

Psalm 101 is our text for tonight and I invite you to turn there as we consider this Psalm that describes for us the heart of a king, the heart of a king, and when it is applied to Christ, you see it in its perfection and we'll see that as we go along here this evening. Psalm 101 says, "A Psalm of David." Beginning in verse 1,

1 I will sing of lovingkindness and justice, To You, O LORD, I will sing praises. 2 I will give heed to the blameless way. When will You come to me? I will walk within my house in the integrity of my heart. 3 I will set no worthless thing before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; It shall not fasten its grip on me. 4 A perverse heart shall depart from me; I will know no evil. 5 Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, him I will destroy; No one who has a haughty look and an arrogant heart will I endure. 6 My eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me; He who walks in a blameless way is the one who will minister to me. 7 He who practices deceit shall not dwell within my house; He who speaks falsehood shall not maintain his position before me. 8 Every morning I will destroy all the wicked of the land, So as to cut off from the city of the LORD all those who do iniquity.

Now as we come back to the Psalms after having been away from them for a couple of months or so, however long it's been, it's a good opportunity for me to remind you of things that I've said as we've gone through the first 100 Psalms over the past few years. We're accustomed to thinking about the Psalms as personal devotional literature and we

think of Psalm 23, maybe Psalm 1, in those contexts, and we think about that which applies to our own personal hearts in ways that encourage us and strengthen us for the day or the week or the trial that's at hand, and the Psalms do have that affect upon us, they are good for that purpose, but what I've tried to point out as we've gone through the Psalms over the years is to help you understand this, is that there is a diversity to the Psalms and not every Psalm is designed to serve that direct purpose. Some of the Psalms have other purposes that they are serving and Psalm 101 is like that. As we come to this Psalm, we find that the words are somehow not, they just don't seem quite to fit for us as a personal believer in our own sphere of relationships, and there is a reason for that that we'll see as we go along.

I believe, it is my opinion that the inscription to this Psalm is a very important key to interpreting it properly. It says simply that it is "A Psalm of David." Now beloved, think with me for a moment. When David was writing this Psalm, he was writing as a king. He was not writing in the context of a personal, humble believer, as you and I are, David held a particular office and held a particular position in the plan of God as he stood as the king over the covenant people, and that meant that he had certain privileges and responsibilities that transcend anything that you and I personally know in our own individual private lives, and so if we remember that this is a Psalm written by a king, it will help us understand and receive the Psalm in a proper way. What David is expressing here, just by way of a little bit of summary for you, David is expressing the ideals, the goals, the aspirations of royal behavior, of royal attitudes toward the throne. How does the king think his position as the one who mediates, as it were, in a sense, between God and his people, the one who mediates the rule of God on earth, as David did in his days in Israel. How are we to think about that and more particularly, what is in the heart of the king as he does this.

Well, what David is expressing here, this is a very noble Psalm that we're about to see here, what David is expressing is as he considers his position before God and before the people, he says, "As God's anointed king, my heart is set upon holiness and justice," that holiness and justice would mark his reign and what's beautiful to see in this is that in Psalm 101, he is expressing his personal commitment in the presence of God to carry out those ideals and it all flows from the nature of God, as the framing verses show. This is another aspect. I'm glad to be able to be back in the Psalms and remind you of these things that we've talked about so many times. So often the Psalms are framed by key words or key phrases and Psalm 101 is no different to help us understand the theme that's being expressed, and here what we see bookending this Psalm is the name of the Lord.

Look at it there in verse 1. "I will sing of lovingkindness and justice, To You, O LORD, I will sing praises." There is a God-ward focus on Yahweh, a God-ward focus on the promise-keeping God, on the nature. Yahweh particularly expresses the nature and the attributes of God and David says, "I'm singing of lovingkindness and justice to You, O LORD, as I write this Psalm," and then you find that covenant name of God at the end of the Psalm as well in verse 8 when he says, "So as to cut off from the city of the LORD all those who do iniquity." So he opens up with expressing this theme of holiness and justice

in light of the person of God, at the end he expresses this holiness that results in the destruction of the wickedness in the name of the Lord.

So beloved, what I want you to see is that everything that is being said in this Psalm is flowing from David's meditation on who God is and what his responsibilities before God are. And what is it that David is after? What is it that he is committing himself to? What is the heart commitment of this king? Well, we'll see it in two sections here and the first section speaks about truth in the ruler, truth in the ruler by which I mean his own commitment to personal holiness. And David here in this Psalm as we open it, as we consider this first section, truth in the ruler, David is expressing heart commitments vertically to the Lord.

Look at this, I think this is just so key in verse 1 he says, "I will sing of lovingkindness and justice, To You, O LORD, I will sing praises." He is addressing this as a prayer to God and you see that again in verse 2 when he says, "When will You come to me?" And so he's praying to God, addressing him in the second person. "God, I'm addressing this to You. I am expressing my heart to You as I write this Psalm." That's really critical to understand as you go through the Psalm, is this idea of commitment, his principles, that which he wants to guide his entire reign are expressed in the many "I wills" that are found in this Psalm. We won't go through them here at the start because to do so, I'd just have to read the whole Psalm again to do that. I just point out this "I will" so that you can notice it as we go through the Psalm and you see the commitment that it's expressing. He says in verse 1, "I will sing." Verse 1, "I will sing." Verse 2, "I will give heed. I will walk." And so you see these "I wills" expressing his commitment. So what David has done here is very meaningful. He's opened this Psalm with his meditation on the loyal love of God and on the righteousness of God, the holiness of God. What David is saying is, "What I want to do as I consider who You are, O Lord, I want to apply the reality of Your perfections to the nature of my reign. I want my reign as king to be marked by loyalty and fidelity to the very nature of who You are."

Now let's just pause here for a moment while we're considering this as the meditation of a king, as it obviously is, as we'll go along, it'll be even more clear, but for us to see, for us to find a pattern even in our own spiritual lives, that this is something worthy for us to emulate. As we meditate on the attributes of God, on his holiness and on his love, for example, we realize that Scripture calls us as individual believers to have attitudes that develop a disposition to want to reflect that in our own lives so that in the epistle of Peter, quoting from the book of Leviticus it says, "You shall be holy as I Myself am holy." The holiness of God carries over into our lives. We love him and we submit to him and that means that we want more than just him to take care of us, him to comfort us in our difficulties, we want his attributes to have a defining force in our lives. "I want to be holy like You're holy, O Lord." In 1 John 4:7-8 it says, "Beloved, let us love one another for love is from God." And so a proper meditation on the attributes of God leads us to certain ethical commitments that we make in dependence upon him. That's what we do as believers. Here with David there's an even heightened broadened spectrum of the implications of it because he is king and has authority over the realm of God's people, and so this becomes particularly important but David is meditating on the character of

God, praising God, and saying, "I want to live my life and exercise my royal authority in a way that is consistent with Your attributes, O God."

Look at it again in those first 2 verses when he says, "I will sing of lovingkindness and justice, To You, O LORD, I will sing praises. I will give heed to the blameless way. When will You come to me?" So his commitments, as we say that he's speaking about truth in the ruler, and again something with direct, immediate application to us as well, is that David's commitments to praise and worship of God, his commitments start with his own personal integrity. Look at it there in verse 2 when he says, "I will give heed to the blameless way. Lord, I commit myself to pay attention to the manner in which I live." He says, "I want to gain wisdom as I walk through this life." And when he says that he's going to give heed to the blameless way, he's not asserting that he has a capacity to live a sinless life, that's not what he's saying here at all, rather the blameless way is referring to a pattern of righteous living by an imperfect believer in an imperfect world. In the scope of biblical revelation, what he's saying is, "God, I want to walk before You in humility and in repentance. I want to walk before You and one that is in conscious submission to You, I want to live in obedience to You, I want to live in dependence upon You."

So here he is and just see the beauty of this and remember that we're gonna talk about Christ at the end of this message, here he is as king saying, "Lord, I am dependent upon You and I submit myself to You." I mean, we're accustomed to petty political leaders boasting in their positions and lording it over people. Scripture talks about that, doesn't it? The Gentiles love to lord it over their subjects. David is saying, "That's not my goal here. My goal preeminently, Lord, is to live in submission and dependence upon You; that I want to walk before You in humility and repentance."

So this is the spirit of it and notice at the end of verse 2, there's that interesting question that almost seems out of place in the midst of all the "I wills" that come before and after it. He says in verse 2, "When will You come to me?" and what he's expressing there is the idea of dependence. "Lord, these are my heart commitments. I want to walk in the blameless way. Lord, when will You come to me? When will You come and help me?" He's expressing this idea that, "I cannot do this in my own strength and power. I need divine help. Lord, I need Your strength to be able to live this way." And so he's asking for grace to live with integrity. He's saying, "I need help to do this." And again, this is the spirit of the Christian life as well. "Lord, I have these resolutions. I want to live and honor You. I want to please You with my life, and yet, Lord, I realize that if it's left up to me, I'm going to fail, I'm going to stumble. My life is a track record of that," we say honestly when we're looking in the mirror and speaking honestly about ourselves.

So we say, "Lord, while I have this resolution, I need Your help in order to carry it out," but here's what I want you to see, beloved, and this is where I think a lot of Christians stumble and excuse themselves and justify themselves and accept mediocrity in their lives in a way that they should never do. The fact that you and I are conscious of our weakness should not lessen our resolve to live a holy life. The fact that you and I are conscious that we stumble in many ways as even Scripture tells us about ourselves, does not mean that our desires should transcend our experience. It's okay, in fact you should

have desires for holiness that exceed what you actually attain to in your life so that you live out these commitments with a resolve that says, "This is what I want out of life. This is what I commit myself to," even as you're saying, "But, man, am I weak," and that tension in your mind leads you to a prayer of dependence, "Lord, when will You come to me? Lord," in other words, "Lord, help me. Come and strengthen me by Your grace that I might live in a way that transcends my natural abilities; that I might live in a way that displays supernatural power in my life that goes beyond what I would otherwise do."

Now those things said and if we really understand what's being said here, it's gonna step on our toes, on all of our toes, yours and mine, and I know that some of you in particular need to hear this even as I do. He says at the end of verse 2, "I will walk within my house in the integrity of my heart." David here is writing as king. He's a king and yet he's praying vertically before the Lord. As a king, he had a measure of uncompromised autonomy that's foreign to our experience. We've talked about this in the past, that kings in this time period, I nearly said the first century thinking of Christ, but going back to David's day several hundred years before the time of Christ, they had an autonomy that they were the law. They had autonomy and there were none to really question them in the exercise of their authority. And so David didn't have to say this based on external constraint of what others were requiring from him, what he's saying from the depths of his heart and where his commitment to holiness starts.

Look at it there again at the end of verse 2, "I will walk within my house in the integrity of my heart." And beloved, this is where it stings, this is where we need to hear this the most, especially for those of us that are married, those of us that have children, those of us that have parents, what we need to remember and understand is that true biblical holiness starts at home. It starts in the private realm of your life that no one else sees; that perhaps your spouse won't betray to others but that your spouse sees. The fact that others don't see it in the world does not mitigate the fact that the core of biblical holiness and the core, the commitment to biblical holiness starts in the privacy of our own home. It starts in the realm where no one else sees.

We've said this to our kids many times over the decades now, it's hard to believe that I can talk about the lives of my kids in terms of decades, I don't know where the time goes. We told them this many many times: it doesn't matter what people think about you outside, the real test of your confession of Christ is found in the way that you live at home. And beloved, this affects the way that we do ministry here at Truth Community Church also. One of the things that we do, this is just kind of an aside, a tangent, this is for free, not that anybody's paying to be here anyway, but it's just a manner of speaking, is that when young people who are still living under the authority of their parents' home come to us and want to be baptized, well, we're always very happy to welcome those conversations but when they come to us, we talk to their parents before we agree to baptize them. We say, "Do you see reflections of conversion in their lives, in their private lives at home? Do you support their desire to be baptized because you see evidence of conversion in their private lives?" You see, it's easy for people to fool people outside, elders reading a baptism application, we don't really, we can't know the intimate details of a life, but the parents can and one of the ways that we try to honor principles like this

is that we will go and we will ask the parents to affirm their child's desire to be baptized with a parent somehow saying, "Yes, although they're imperfect and they stumble, we love them but we see in them a desire that somehow reflects a desire to walk within their house in the integrity of their heart. We see it in the home." And that's what we love to hear as elders, is that this child professing a commitment, a conversion to Christ, is reflecting it in that most private place where it's so easy to let your guard down and to not be what you profess to be.

So holiness begins at home. It's more than what the public sees and gives us an opportunity for all of us here this evening to just step back and say, "You know, what kind of person am I within those walls? What kind of person am I behind closed doors? Do I display a temper? Do I display dishonesty that I would never show outside?" Ah, ah, that hurts, doesn't it but this is where we start to understand something about the nature of true biblical holiness and our desire for it, that we want it in the most intimate part of our lives, not simply what draws the applause of men. So David is expressing this commitment to walk within his house in the integrity of his heart.

Now let's just say a word historically about David and acknowledge something upfront here. In David's life we know from reading Scripture, in David's life in 2 Samuel we find that he failed in this commitment, didn't he? He sinned with Bathsheba and committed horrible acts to try to cover up his sin and let that go on for months in his life, and he failed, he stumbled. Beloved, what I want you to see here as we're contemplating this Psalm, Psalm 101, whatever else we say about David's own personal life, it does not mitigate or undermine the high ideals that are expressed here in Psalm 101. The fact that he failed in carrying out the commitment does not invalidate the ideal. It doesn't lower the standard simply because he didn't keep it perfectly throughout his life, and in the same way, when you and I stumble in our walks, that doesn't mean that we should lower our standard and accept sin or accept mediocrity as the ongoing pattern of our life, it simply calls us, like it did to David, to confession and to repentance and to seek a cleansing from the Spirit of God based on the atonement of Christ and also a renewal of those commitments going forward that though we live it out imperfectly, we would never let down that ideal that we seek after.

David says, "I want to walk within my house in the integrity of my heart." Many commentators have pointed out, and I think they're probably right, that this indicates that Psalm 101 was written in the early days of David's reign before these other personal stumbles took place. This is David expressing his thoughts early on in his reign about what he wants to mark his reign as king, and then later life, he stumbled along the way, but David having set forth those positive ideals, "I will walk within my house. I'll give heed to the blameless way," he then expresses it in a negative way. He sets both the positive commitments and the negative resolutions as well.

Look at verse 3, he says, "I will set no worthless thing before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; It shall not fasten its grip on me. A perverse heart shall depart from me; I will know no evil." Now as you're reading this, he's still speaking in very personal terms, isn't he? In terms of who he will choose for his companions, who it is that will

work with him, and what his attitude is toward those who violate the covenant, who turn away from God, who do not live in faithfulness to the work of God that has been done amidst the people. David is saying, "Whatever else they do, I will be pure. I will not look with approval on sin." He says, "I hate the way that others fall away. I'm not going to do that." And so he's expressing these commitments, remembering that he's doing so in this conscious sense of dependence, "Lord, when will You come to me?" And remember lest we discount David's resolutions here in light of the fact that he did sin later in his life, remember that Scripture itself describes David as a man after God's own heart; that God viewed him as a man who is expressing these commitments in sincerity even though his life did not conform to them perfectly.

And what he's saying here as king now, this becomes very important. He says in verse 3, "I hate the work of those who fall away. A perverse heart shall depart from me." David here while he's expressing his commitments is also realizing something very vital about the nature of leadership. David realizes that his leadership will be influenced by the people who gather around him, and we'll talk about this more in the second section of the Psalm. But what David is expressing here is that, "The officials who serve in my kingdom," in American terms we'd talk about, "those who serve in my cabinet, those who are my department heads, the officials who share in my kingdom will share my devotion with me or I will send them away."

Now this, again, has very practical ramifications for you and I. David understood that bad company corrupts good morals, 1 Corinthians 15:33. David understood that he would be influenced by those who come around him, and not just the personal impact that it would have on him but also the fact that this would set a standard for the rest of the kingdom, what kind of men held positions of prominence and positions of authority under his leadership, and David says, "I am not going to have men of perversity and evildoers serving in my realm, serving in my kingdom." And Scripture speaks about this in so many places.

Go back to Psalm 1:1, the very first verse of the Psalms, and I just want to impress upon you in these next few moments the importance that Scripture places on the nature of our associations, the people that we engage with, the people that are within the circle of those who influence our lives. And, oh, is this important! In Psalm 1, verse 1, "How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!" The entire Psalter opens with this principle of associations and says, "This man is blessed, the one who does not associate and come under the sway of the counsel of unregenerate, ungodly people." It's a matter of critical importance.

Look in the Proverbs, chapter 13, verse 20, Proverbs 13:20 and the application of this just goes everywhere. Proverbs 13:20, "He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will suffer harm." And then in a similar vein, Proverbs 22:24-25 where it says, "Do not associate with a man given to anger; Or go with a hot-tempered man, Or you will learn his ways And find a snare for yourself." The application of this goes everywhere. For the sake of David's Psalm, he's saying, "I am going to surround myself with men of integrity. I'm going to surround myself with men that share these

heart commitments that I am expressing before You, O God." When it comes to our personal life, this affects everything. It affects who your friends are. It affects where you gain your education. It affects who you let teach you. It affects who you want to be your intimate friends from whom you get counsel. And for you young people in particular, it is just so vital for you to think carefully about who you are bringing into your circle of acquaintance and circle of friends because they will influence you, and it is well said that you can judge a man by the company that he keeps. Well, you young people sitting in back there, look at your friends, look at your circle of acquaintances and take an honest look and assessment of who it is that are becoming your friends, who it is that you want to spend your time with and hang out, because the prevailing condition of their lives is an indication of the trajectory that your own life is upon. Oh, do we need to take heed to these things because Scripture warns us so much, that your companions will shape the direction of your life.

Over the course of ministry, over 20 or 30 years, I've had opportunity to counsel young men and young women about the nature of dating relationships that they were pursuing and, you know, what do I think about this person or that person. Well, look, if you are in a dating relationship with someone who is not seriously committed to seeking Christ, I have to ask you, "What are you doing? Why would you even want that?" You say, "Well, I'm lonely." But, yeah, you're lonely but where is that going to lead you in the end? You say, "Well, I'll influence them for Christ." Well, Scripture warns us that the influence has a way of going the other direction. Israel was warned not to adopt the practices of the heathen nations around them because they would become like them if they did.

So we just have to take this principle of associations so very seriously and to contemplate what it is that we are doing, so much so, so much so that I don't hesitate to say it's better for a man or a woman to spend their life alone than to spend it with someone who does not love Christ, someone who is not even born again, and to bring into the circle of your affections and your emotions somebody who does not share a commitment with Christ, this is just contrary to biblical teaching at a most fundamental level.

I'm so glad that you young men are in the room here to hear me say this. This affects who you want to pursue as a life partner, you know, and rather than looking at the outward beauty of a physical form, you need to consider what is inside that person's heart, and is that person's heart consistent with these heart commitments that I've made as a Christian, and to not let anything violate that, to not let anything turn that back because there is more at stake here than horizontal relationships for a few years. This is a matter, this is what worship looks like. This is what devotion to God looks like. This is what sanctification and commitment to Christ looks like. It's a vertical matter of, "Lord, I want holy influences in my life. I want godly people influencing me and directing me and giving me counsel. For Your sake, O Lord. To You, O Lord, I sing praises. To You, O Lord, I lift up these heart commitments." So that the vertical dimension of this shapes what we look for, what we want, and what we court in our horizontal relationships. There's no avoiding this. There's no avoiding this.

And I will say this, that in days gone by I remember hearing speakers saying things, you know, like the average, once a person becomes a Christian, you know, after two or three years they don't have any meaningful relationships with unsaved people. I don't know where they get those numbers from but they're saying it in a negative guilt-inducing way as if we've lost interest in the salvation of our unsaved friends. Well, I think there's more to be said about that kind of principle than what is typically said in those environments. You know, I think there's something natural that says that, "The people that I'm attracted to changed when I changed." When I was converted, I had no Christian friends, speaking personally, I had no Christian friends at the time that I was converted, and yeah, as the years went by, I had all kinds of unsaved acquaintances but the circle of people that I spent my time with changed to those that shared the heart commitment to Christ, that shared a love for the word of God. I was in a whole new realm and so, of course, there was a natural separation that took place. The people that knew me in my unsaved condition lost interest in the kind of man I was becoming, and what they lived for was no longer of importance to me, and so on what basis was there going to be an association to take place? And I just say that not to say that we shouldn't have unsaved friends but just to resist that mindset that would make people feel guilty for having a circle of acquaintances that were sharing their spiritual commitments to Christ. That doesn't make any biblical sense to me.

So we see truth in the ruler in the first section, second section, truth in the realm. Truth in his realm, is what we want to say. Truth in the ruler and now truth in his realm. As we come to this second section in verses 5 through 8, remember that David is king because he's speaking in pretty severe terms here and he says in verse 5, "Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, him I will destroy; No one who has a haughty look and an arrogant heart will I endure." What David is saying here about going after and isolating and even destroying people like this, is based on this premise, remembering that he is king. The people who surround the throne by way of counsel, of influence, of derivative authority of the king, the people who surround his throne would affect the environment of the entire nation. There was a lot at stake here and civil leadership attracts those who slander others to ingratiate themselves to power. Deceit is common, as we see in political life all around us on both sides of the aisle. And what David is saying here is, "I will not tolerate that realm and that kind of intrigue in the circle of influence around my throne." And David's commitment to destroy them is not excessive, beloved, because – watch this – they have the potential to poison the entire kingdom and David is responsible for the well-being of the entire kingdom and David says, "People with sinful dispositions like that, with deceitful characteristics like that have the potential to poison everything and I'm going to drive them out because the realm of God's kingdom cannot be marked and influenced and pulled away like that." And beloved, if you read through the history of the kings, the northern kingdom in the Old Testament, all of the kings were evil, and in the southern kingdom of Judah, only a few isolated handful of kings were righteous, had any desire or any commitment to following after the law of God. And we see as we read through the history, the sad result of kings refusing to exercise these ideals that David expressed. They were sons of David and they did not follow in these commitments and everyone suffered as a result of it, to the point that they were carried off into exile and

lost their kingdom as a result of it. That's how much was at stake. That's how important all of this is.

So the fact that we live in a society that doesn't make much fuss about right or wrong and therefore when we see a man truly committed to holiness in what he says in Scripture, says, "Man, that sounds sharp. That sounds severe." Understand that the problem isn't David, the problem isn't the writer of inspired Scripture, the problem's us. The problem is we've been affected too much by the environment in which we live that we would look on a commitment to holiness as something that was too severe. And what David understood and what he's expressing here is the removal of corrupt officials would promote a righteous kingdom, and his kingly responsibility requires him to protect that realm. Sin is that serious. The principle carries over into what the New Testament says about spiritual leadership within the realm of the church. Mark out a divisive man and don't associate with him. See a lazy man, in Thessalonians it talks about, you know, don't associate with him. Don't give him room to start to affect others.

And so we have to take this seriously so that, as we come back to Psalm 101, the idea of discord, conflict, squabbling, all of these things are the fruit of arrogance and since David is king by the anointing of a righteous God, David must honor righteousness in his realm. You see, it's God is righteous, it's God's kingdom, and David is God's king so what he's saying is, "God, there needs to be a commitment to righteousness that filters its way through even to those who serve around me in my kingdom." And in the realm of the time the king had to exercise his influence to preserve righteousness, in verse 6 he goes on to say by way of positive contrast, he says, "My eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me; He who walks in a blameless way is the one who will minister to me. But he who practices deceit shall not dwell within my house; He who speaks falsehood shall not maintain his position before me." He's saying that, "My court must have integrity. The people who serve alongside me must manifest faithfulness to God. Those are the ones who will serve alongside me in the kingdom. Those who lack that kind of integrity will be sent away."

And he ends on this note of confrontation when he says in verse 8, "Every morning I will destroy all the wicked of the land, So as to cut off from the city of the LORD all those who do iniquity." Well, the authorities tell us that kings would hold court in the morning in those days. What David is stating is he will judge and rule righteously. When disputes come before him, he will uphold righteousness in determining what's before him. If someone deserves to be executed, he will execute them. He will carry out capital punishment, a power given to those with civil authority but not given to individual believers.

And as he's expressing this, beloved, look at verse 8 with me again, as he's expressing this, he's contemplating the entire scope of his reign. He says, "Every morning I will destroy all the wicked of the land," referring to the entire nation, "So as to cut off from the city of the LORD," the capital city of Jerusalem, "In the entire scope of my reign, O God, I will drive the wicked out so that righteousness can flourish."

Lofty, isn't it? Noble. Heart commitments from this king. And yet as we've said, David failed, right? David didn't carry it out. His son Solomon, the wisest man, wisest king the world had ever known, stumbled, fell, went in with foreign women and failed it as well, and Scripture honestly records that these men, despite their high aspirations, fell short of the glory of which they spoke, and then they fell short of glory and everyone that came after them was even worse and it leaves you kind of with this sense of disappointment. Your shoulders sag a little bit as you read about it and say, "Oh, oh, if only there was a righteous king who would actually live out these ideals that are expressed in Psalm 101." Well, that sense of history and that sense of failure points us beyond the earthly kings of Israel from days gone by and they point us to the ultimate son of David who would ultimately be the one to fulfill these things, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Look at Isaiah 9:6-7 and by contrast as we consider Christ in light of these things, the glory of Christ is going to transcend all of our thoughts as we close here this evening. Speaking of Christ prophetically, Isaiah said in chapter 9, verse 6, "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this." And then in Isaiah 11, a couple of pages over, if you will, in verse 1, "Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And He will delight in the fear of the LORD, And He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear; But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, And faithfulness the belt about His waist."

Oh, beloved, if this doesn't make Christ look sweet and magnificent in our hearts. In his first coming, in his first advent, Christ lived a perfectly righteous life during his 33 years on earth. He manifested and modeled this righteousness in his first coming. Scripture tells us that he's coming again, that there is a second coming, and when he comes a second time, he will establish a kingdom on earth and his throne will be in Jerusalem, and the nature of his reign will be one marked by righteousness and justice. And beloved, where David failed, where Solomon failed, where all the kings of Israel fell short, Christ will fulfill it. Christ will succeed. Christ will carry this out in perfection in his reign and there will be no disappointment, there will be no failure. Christ will succeed in a way that David did not so that when we read Psalm 101, we realize that its ultimate fulfillment is yet to come, it's yet to be displayed in a way that it's lived out on earth from the throne in Jerusalem, but Christ will one day do this. This is the kind of King that he will be, a King zealous for the glory of God, a King perfect in the integrity of his heart, a King that drives out all wickedness so that the righteousness of God is displayed in all of its glorious splendor to those under his reign.

Jesus Christ has the true heart of God's King and he will never fail and so today with joy, we recognize, we bow down, we submit to him, we anticipate that second coming when his glory is displayed over all the earth to be seen, as Habakkuk 2:14 and other places say. And we long for that day, we long for that fulfillment when the King over all the earth is truly God's King without flaw. And yet as we come to today, we can take this a step further as we reflect on what the significance of these things is for our own lives. Beloved, God is righteous and if you are in Christ, Christ is your King, Christ reigns over you, and the question is whether the commitments and the aspirations of your heart are settled on this kind of corresponding righteousness that we've seen displayed in Psalm 101. This is the commitment, these are the heart resolutions that are worthy of our King. Are they yours?

Let's pray together.

O Father, make us people after Your own heart. As Your Spirit works within us to renew us, to sanctify us, Father, we invite, we ask, we depend upon His work to make us those who walk in private and in public in the integrity of a heart that truly knows You. Father, give us wisdom as we choose our life companions, our life friendships, who we associate with, what kind of influences we will invite into our lives through the education and educators that we choose. Father, let us never yield or take common part with those who practice deceit and speak falsehood. You're the God of truth, how could we ever do such a thing? Father, let there be holiness in our lives that is befitting of the holy One who saved us and of the Holy Spirit who works without our hearts. And Father, as we anticipate the second coming of Christ, we long for that day when He reigns and where this righteousness of which we have spoken today, where that righteousness is displayed and all of the deceit and slander and wickedness that marks the world in which we live, Father, by the power of the rod of Christ it's driven out and righteousness is established and Your glory is put on full display. We long for that, Lord. In the meantime, we thank You that You've saved us out of our own sin and wickedness. We confess our own shortcomings, our own failures to live up to our own ideals, our own biblical commitments, Father, and so ultimately we're brought fresh to the cross of Christ where all of our sins were atoned, where mercy and justice kissed each other and, Father, in Christ we find our all and seek our cleansing and seek a renewal of our hearts that we might better live this way going forward as we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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