

The King of Glory Among Us

Psalm 24:1-10

Halifax: 22 September 2019

Introduction

Today we will continue our sermon series in Mark's Gospel, but not in Mark.

- It is time for us to take up a new Psalm of Focus.
- For those that are visiting or not familiar with what I am talking about,
 - We have a custom here of adopting a Psalm of Focus that relates to our current sermon series.
 - Every couple of months or so, we take up a new Psalm of Focus to sing each week in connection with a sermon series, and today we are taking up Psalm 24.

I have chosen Psalm 24 because in Mark, we are at the place where Christ, having just revealed His majesty as the Son of God by a number of miracles like calming the sea and raising the dead, now, in Mark 6:30 – 8:30, reveals that He Himself is God's provision for His people.

- This is seen in two feeding miracles and in words about the wrong kind of leaven, and it all comes to a head in chapter 8 when Peter and the other apostles confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.
 - They realise that He is the King of glory, the Messiah, who has come to save them and lead them to the Father.

Psalm 24 is fitting for this part of Mark because in this Psalm we sing of Christ our provision who, as the King of glory, gains access to God for all of us.

Listen as I read Psalm 24 to you now. This is the word of the living God, given to you for your edification and comfort:

Psalm 24:1-10: «A Psalm of David.» The earth is the LORD'S, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein. ² For He has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the waters. ³ Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? ⁴ He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully. ⁵ He shall receive blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his

salvation. ⁶ This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face. *Selah* ⁷ Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. ⁸ Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. ⁹ Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. ¹⁰ Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory.

May the LORD add His blessing to the reading and the preaching of His holy word.

The structure of this Psalm is fairly simple.

- First, it shows us that everything and everyone belongs to God.
- Second, it asks who can go up to His holy dwelling place.
- Third, it tells us that the King of glory is welcomed there.

Let's consider these things.

I. The first two verses assert that everything belongs to God.

A. You see that nothing is excluded.

1. First, it says, **the earth is the LORD's**.

- The earth itself belongs to Him.
- The reason is given in verse 2—**He is the one who founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters**.
 - As the founder of the earth, He is clearly the owner of the earth.
 - Only those who are blinded by their contempt for God are capable of denying the obvious fact God made all things—it is common for it to be denied, but that doesn't make it any less absurd.
 - The earth is His own possession because He founded it.
 - He has situated the continents upon the oceans, just *where* He wanted them to be and just *as* He wanted them to be.
 - He is the one that formed the dry land—every inch of it belongs to Him.

2. Verse 1 adds that not only the earth, but all its fullness belongs to the LORD.

- He filled the earth with all sorts of interesting and amazing things... oceans, mountains, valleys, forests, plains, rocks, herbs...
 - And all sorts of creatures—living creatures—birds and creeping things, four-footed beasts, cattle, fish... all are His because He made them.
 - The fullness and complexity of the earth is remarkable—if it shows His imagination, wisdom, and goodness... and it is all His possession.

➤ But that is still not all that belongs to the LORD...

3. The first verse also tells us that every inhabitant of the earth belongs to the LORD... **the world and those who dwell** in the earth.

- There is a special sense in which the redeemed are said to belong to the LORD, for He has restored us to be His people and to have Him as our God.
 - But whether you are redeemed or not, you are still His possession by right of creation—you are His because He made you.
 - You can reject Him, but you are still His possession and you must answer to Him as one who rejected your master and His goodness.

B. That everything belongs to God certainly has implications for us.

1. First, it means that everything you have belongs to Him.

- a. You are living in someone else's house and using someone else's things every day.
 - Yes, He has entrusted property to you in distinction from other people—He prohibits stealing from each other because He has given to each of us our portion of His things for us to use...
 - but that does not change the fact that He is still the owner of it all.
- b. In His grace, He actually made the whole earth for us—all of it.
 - But we are to acknowledge and live as those who have all our wealth and our ability to obtain wealth from Him.

- We should give thanks for our daily bread and we should depend on Him through prayer to provide for us.
 - How good He is to have filled the earth with so many things for us to enjoy—how ingenious and considerate He is toward us—how kind and how gracious.
 - He designed all these things and is the one who determined that there would be hearing and seeing and touching and tasting and that we would have things to hear and see and touch and taste.
 - You need to be sure that you use it all for His glory and in ways that please Him.
 - If you do not, you do not live well in this world but are like the beasts who know not God.
2. That all people belong to Him also has huge implications.
- a. That you belong to Him means that you are rightly His subjects and that you have your lives from Him and for Him.
- The fact that we may not acknowledge that does not change it.
 - No one has the right take their own life or the life of another unless the LORD Almighty authorises it.
 - And He only authorises it in certain situations—such as self-defence, just war, as an act of civil justice administered by those appointed to govern—but certainly not the killing of unborn children, suicide, personal vengeance, or even negligence that endangers us or others.
 - For example, the Bible teaches that you are responsible for failure to put a rail around a rooftop deck if someone is injured.
 - We all belong to Him.
- b. Belonging to Him also means that all of you are to serve Him as your God and your LORD.
- You are to obey Him unconditionally.
 - If He says to keep every seventh day holy, you are to do that.
 - If He says no sex outside of marriage, you are to do that.
 - If He says love your neighbour as yourself, you are to do that.
 - If He says have no other gods before me, you are to have Him alone as your God.
 - If He tells you not to curse you must not.
 - If He tells you to honour your parents, you are to do that too.
 - Your whole life is rightly to be an offering of service to Him, for He is worthy, and He made you.
 - Failure to do so leaves you subject to retribution.
- c. Belonging to Him also calls for association with Him—communion with Him.
- Before Adam and Eve fell, they walked with God in the Garden of Eden.
 - They were living in His house—the Garden was His temple where He connected with them.
 - He revealed His glory to them so they could know Him, He gave them instruction to guide them, He gave them grace to live gloriously, He received their worship and their thanksgiving and their offerings.

- We were created to have communion with God in His house.
 - He establishes His house in our midst—which means that He makes Himself accessible to us as creatures...

TRANS> But Psalm 24 asks us a searching question.

- Here we are, God's own possession... all of us...

II. But who among us may go up to His holy place?

A. Verse 3 puts the question to us like this: **“Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place?”**

1. The holy place is the name of the place where God makes Himself accessible to us.
 - It is the place He established among us as His house, His dwelling... because, you see, He is too grand for us to comprehend Him.
 - To meet with us, He always has to accommodate our limited ability to see and understand Him—
 - What I mean is that He has to present Himself in way that we can understand—in a way that is suitable to our capacity as mere humans.
 - For example, He *speaks* to us in the holy place by His word—
 - God the Father does not have to speak to God the Son and God the Spirit--there is level of communion between the three persons that we cannot comprehend any more than a worm can comprehend our speech.
 - Think of your communication with a dog... you can use words to a certain extent, but the dog will not understand if you read your biography to it.
 - You have to present yourself at the level the dog can understand.
2. But ***if*** the holy place is the place and the way that God connects with us, why does Psalm 24 ask **who may ascend into His hill... or... stand in His holy place...**
 - as if we might not be able to go to see Him, or as if once we got there, we might not be able to stand before Him? as if we might be rejected?
 - There is a good reason for this...
 - We have indeed been barred from God's house because of our sin.
 - We are defiled and unclean because we are sinners who live contrary to His ways.
 - Our first parents (along with all who come from them) were expelled from God's house (the Garden of Eden) because of transgression.
 - God walked with them in the garden until they sinned.
 - He gave them all the trees of the Garden to eat, but to make sure that they loved and recognised Him as their God, He forbade them to eat from one—only one—of the trees.
 - He told them that if they did, they would die—they would no longer be allowed to live before Him—which is spiritual death.
 - They ate. Therefore, He expelled them from His house and barred them from that holy place as those who had made themselves unfit to live in His house.

- B. But here in this Psalm we speak of how a person can come to God's house and be accepted—
- answering the question, **“Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD and who may stand in His holy place?”**
1. Verse 4 says: **“He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, Nor sworn deceitfully.”**
 - All that is required is that we be completely free of sin and defilement—simply what a person ought to be...
 - a. Our hands are the instruments by which we do things—we might steal or we might give, we might help or we might hurt with our hands.
 - So *clean hands* simply means that we have not done wrong in our lives in any way... nothing contrary to God's will in our deeds, but rather always what is pleasing to Him as our God.
 - He does not want those that do evil, and so who have hands that are defiled, to come into His house.
 - b. A pure heart refers to what we are within.
 - We can't see the motives and the desires of others, but God can see all; and He will not have those with sinful thoughts or motives before Him.
 - So here again, there is nothing complicated about this requirement—it just means that you are entirely sincere, and free from any thoughts that would be displeasing to God.
 - c. Next, it says that you must not be one who has lifted up your soul to an idol, or to vanity—a word often used for idols.
 - This means that you are wholly and completely devoted to God—for He is worthy.
 - It means that you have no intention of giving yourself to another but of serving Him in all your relations and living with Him as your chief good.
 - d. And finally, that you have not sworn deceitfully...
 - This speaks of your speech—that you have not spoken in some way that spreads lies—in a way that distorts the truth or gives any kind of false impression about you or God or your promises...
 - that you have not spoken in any way that is contrary to truth.
- So again, there is nothing complicated or extreme here.
- God only accepts those who, like Him, are not defiled.
 - There is no requirement for super intelligence or strength or beauty—just that we be without sin if wish to come before Him.
2. Verse 5 assures us that if this is so, God will fully accept us.
 - It says of the one who comes to His holy place with clean hands and a pure heart that: **he shall receive blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.**
 - a. Blessing means that He will give you what you need to be happy.
 - You are a creature, and whether fallen or unfallen, you need God's blessing to be happy and even to fruitful.
 - God loves to bless those who come to His house—it is His delight to give them those things that make for their happiness.
 - He surprises them with all sorts of gifts and graces.

- b. He also gives them *righteousness* from Him as the God of their salvation.
 - The means that He finds them pleasing and acceptable and says so... He regards them as righteous.
 - As I mentioned before, He does not require some great intellect, wit, skill, attainment, or strength, for He knows that we are mere creatures.
 - He counts as righteous and delightful to Him all who are simply undefiled by sin and corruption—clean hands, a pure heart, a soul not lifted up to vanity, one who has not sworn deceitfully... that is all.

TRANS> But of course there is a huge problem for us.

- We are the sons of Adam.
 - We have not met God's simple requirements for acceptability in His house.
 - We have filthy hands and a corrupt heart... we have lifted up our souls to idols and we have twisted truth and failed to keep our vows.
- Who can ascend to the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in His holy place?
 - Not the likes of us, for the scripture has confirmed that we are all under sin.
 - We are all defiled.
 - But there is marvellous news.

C. In verse 6 the LORD describes a generation that may indeed come before Him.

- He says, **This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face.**
1. Here is a generation or category of persons characterised by seeking God!
 - They are persons in this sinful fallen world who look to God to give them the clean hands and the pure heart and the soul that has not gone after vanity and the tongue that is true.
 - They seek Him to give them what they do not have.
 - They seek the face of God—yearn for His favour, for His acceptance of their persons before Him.
 2. They are called “Jacob.”
 - He is the man who sought God at Peniel when he finally realised that blessing would not come from his own sweat or clever maneuvering through life...
 - but only from God's gracious blessing.
 - And he, like us, had every reason to expect God's blessing because he knew the promises that God had made to his fathers, Abraham and Isaac.
 - He finally came to see that he could not manufacture blessing, but must receive it as God's free gift.
 3. What had God promised and what had He instituted, even at that time, for His people?
 - His holy place, at that time, was no longer a garden with a rule that proved allegiance by means of a forbidden tree.

- God's holy place was, for Jacob and his fathers, an altar that they approached with repentance, with washing of their bodies; an altar on which they offered sacrifices that represented dedication and atonement for sin.
 - This was all developed fully and elaborately with priests and detailed regulations when Moses came, but already God's holy place was a place of provision for sin...
 - It was a place where God provided tokens of cleansing from defilement so that worshippers could come before Him with clean hands, a pure heart, a soul cleansed from idols, and a tongue cleansed from deceit... as those washed by what God provided for their washing.
- God's holy place has provision for sin because God will never be depicted as a God who is okay with defiled people in His house.
 - Sin is never acceptable to Him.
 - Therefore, sinners who come before Him must come as those who seek His promised cleansing from their sin.
 - Then they will receive blessing from LORD and righteousness from the God of their salvation—the God who saves them!

TRANS> But the Psalm does not end here.

- There is a pause with the *selah*—and then there is something wonderful that is sung by God's worshipping church!

III. In verses 7-10, we speak of our King who is God's provision for our acceptance with God.

- Do you remember how I said before, that even in Jacob's day...
 - God's holy place was a place that had an altar where sacrifices were offered that represented total dedication and that atoned for sin?
 - It had also been promised from the beginning that God would provide to us a Son of Righteousness to redeem us.
 - He would be a mighty one who would overthrow Satan to free the sons of Jacob (the generation of those who seek God for salvation) from Satan's dominion.
 - As the years went on, it was revealed that He would be a king, the son of David; and that He would be a priest after the order of Melchizedek...
 - And it was revealed by Isaiah that this King Himself would be the offering for sin represented by the sacrifices.
 - This, of course, is Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the King of glory, who made Himself an offering for our sin and who was raised for our justification and acceptance with God.
 - And here in Psalm 24, we sing of Him and of His acceptance before God upon which our acceptance depends.
 - We can enter into God's house because He, our Saviour King, was accepted in God's house as our King who represents all who, like Jacob, seek the face of God.
 - Let's follow along...

- A. In verse 7, we summon the gates of God’s house to let Him come in!
- **Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in.**
1. The picture here is of a king who is so exalted that the tops of the gates have to be raised so that He will not have to stoop to come through them.
 - This, together with His title *King of glory*, show that He is much greater than King David.
 2. And look at the gates into which He enters.
 - These are not merely the gates of Jerusalem.
 - This King is entering into the everlasting doors—not into a city or a temple that *represents* the presence of God, but into the very Presence.
 - By Him, the temple is moved from earth to heaven—
 - Though the church is still on earth, it is also in heaven because our King is there at the right hand of the Father.
 - We are seated with Him in the heavenly places, and have access to the Father by Him.
- B. Seeing His greatness, it is asked, **“Who is this King of glory?”** (v. 8).
1. Who is the King of glory that has come to gain our acceptance at the everlasting doors to God’s house?
 - That is the question that arises when His glory is seen.
 2. Look at the rich answer!
 - In verse 8 reads: **“Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.”**
 - a. This is an unmistakable assertion of His deity, for He is called LORD twice.
 - The word LORD when written in upper case letters—all caps—translates God’s sacred name—so sacred that the Jews would not pronounce it or write it out—the name Yahweh.
 - It speaks of Him as the eternal, self-existing God.
 - *He* is the one who enters the gates of God’s house and brings the whole church in with Him.
 - He, the very Son of God, is the one who brings us to the Father.
 - b. And look, He is described here is a great warrior as well.
 - He is **the LORD strong and mighty** and **the LORD mighty in battle.**
 - 1) The eternal might and power of Yahweh was needed to deliver us from all of our enemies...
 - Only Yahweh could be the Son who would crush the serpent’s head and rescue us from his (Satan’s) dominion.
 - Only Yahweh Himself could overcome sin, being tempted in every way that we are, yet without sin—
 - so that even through all His trials and suffering in human flesh, He maintained clean hands and pure heart, not once did He lift up His soul to vanity or swear deceitfully.

- Only Yahweh the mighty One could conquer death, hell, and the grave—going there with our sins and yet rising again with victory.
 - Only He, Yahweh, is able to deliver us from bondage to sin so that we would even come to Him for salvation, so that we would continue with Him, and so that we will be made like Him.
- 2) Don't give me some saviour is a mere man—a moral example—a great leader...
- We are in need of the mighty Son of God, Yahweh strong and mighty.
- C. Look at what the generation of Jacob does—we who seek the LORD—when we hear who it is that enters the holy place for us His church!
1. Just as verse 6 twice said that we are the those who seek Him, so we ask again that the everlasting gates would open to Him:
 - **“Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in.”**
 - We are forever barred from God's blessing and favour apart from His admittance—we are forever excluded from God—cut off from His presence.
 - Let Him pass through those everlasting doors that we who seek the LORD may all go in by Him.
 2. And because it is beyond dreams that the One who came to us and who is our King, a Son born to us, is the very Son of God, we also ask once more (v. 10)...
 - **Who is this King of glory?**
 - And we give again the marvellous answer with a slight variation:
 - **The LORD of hosts [Yahweh Sabaoth], He is the King of glory.**
 - This speaks of Him as supreme over all powers and authorities.
 - It reasserts that He is Yahweh, the self-existing One.
 3. How marvellous that God has given us such a One to be our King and Saviour.
 - Truly, He is able to bring us to the Father.
 - No one else could do it.
 - By Him, we come into God's holy house and by Him we are accepted as those who have clean hands, a pure heart, a soul not lifted up to vanity, and a tongue that does not swear falsely.
 - Let us rejoice with appropriate confidence.