

# The King of Kings

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Good morning. My name is Matthew Capone and I'm the pastor here at Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church and it's my joy to bring God's word to you today. If you are new or visiting with us, welcome. We're glad that you're here.

And we're glad that you're here not because you are filling a seat, but because we're following after Jesus together as one community. And as we follow after Jesus together, we're convinced that there's no one so good that they don't need God's grace and no one so bad that they can't have it.

Which means that we're glad that you're here to listen to what God has to say to us because God has something to say to everyone. He has something to say to you, whether you've been a Christian your entire life, whether you've been a Christian for a few years, or whether you're still not sure whether you want to be a Christian.

God has something to say to everyone and everyone needs to hear what God has to say. You know that we've just started a series in the book of Psalms. And the book of Psalms is the hymn book, the prayer book of God's people originally in the Old Testament and has now become the same for God's people in the New Testament.

And if you've been with us for a while, you know that I like to give sort of a quick, maybe one-sentence, two-sentence way of summarizing a book. So, Philippians, we talked about the fact that it was partnership in the gospel together.

[ 1 : 1 9 ] And Nehemiah was God's wall in his word and his ways, turning back from sin and repentance back to God. And I have had a lot of trouble coming up with a short way of summarizing the Psalms for you.

And part of the reason I've had trouble coming up with a short way is because the Psalms, as a hymn book and a prayer book, talk about all sorts of different things. I would love to tell you that there's one theme that ties it together, except that there's lots and lots of themes.

And I would like to tell you that there's one topic, except the Psalms covers all sorts of situations that we find in the human life. And so it's hard to summarize it quickly or shortly. And so what I'm going to do is I'm just going to give you different aspects of it Sunday after Sunday.

So one thing I'll tell you about the Psalms is this. The Psalms are poetry. One thing that's helpful about poetry, if you know poetry, if you study it, if you love it, is that poems often make complicated things simple.

Poems make complicated things simple. Sometimes they take things that seem chaotic and they order them for us. So we love the fact that there's rhyme or rhythm in a poem.

[ 2 : 2 5 ] There's stanzas. Those stanzas give an order and a rhythm to things that might not otherwise have order or rhythm. And so part of the joy of the Psalms is these are often very short. And they're very short passages that make complicated things simple.

So as we come to Psalm 2 this morning, we're going to look at something that's very complicated. And God's going to tell us that it's very simple. There's many things that we face in life that seem complex. One of them is it feels like often when we live in this world that evil is winning.

Maybe it feels like that some of the time. Maybe it feels like that most of the time. Sometimes it feels like evil forces are the most powerful forces. And so it's tempting for us, whether we're Christians or we're not Christians, to be discouraged.

And even more than that, more specifically, we see evil rulers. People who have power and influence. Who, instead of loving God, hate God. And instead of following what he has told us, they come up with their own ways.

And so what is God's answer to evil rulers? How are we supposed to think about the power of evil in this world, especially when we see it with kings and presidents and princes and CEOs?

[ 3 : 38 ] That's the complicated question that this psalm asks and answers. And so we're going to turn to it now. We're in Psalm chapter 2, starting at verse 1. And remember that this is God's word. And God tells us in another part of the psalms that his word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path.

In other words, God has not abandoned us. He's not left us alone to stumble in the dark. But instead, he's given us our word that we would know the way to walk. And so it's because of that reason that we read this passage.

And so please read with me Psalm 2, starting at verse 1. Verse 7.

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. Verse 10. Now therefore, O kings, be wise. Be warned, O rulers of the earth.

[ 5 : 10 ] Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the son lest he be angry and you perish in the way. Please pray with me as we come to this portion of God's word.

Father in heaven, we thank you that once again you have not left us to walk alone. Trying to figure out by ourselves how to live in this world that's full of evil and sin.

Sin that we see inside of ourselves and outside of ourselves. But instead you come and you talk to us clearly. Day after day after day. And so we ask that you would send your Holy Spirit this morning.

That he would help us. That he would help us to see and to know and to understand everything that you have written for us about you in your word.

We ask these things not because we deserve them. But because Jesus deserves them for us. And so we ask them in his name. Amen. If you remember from last week we looked at Psalm 1 and we saw that there are two ways and only two ways to live life.

[ 6 : 21 ] One of them is walking in the counsel of the wicked. And the other would be meditating on God and his law and his ways day and night. And if you remember you may recall that this word for meditating from Psalm 1 is literally muttering.

That the people who meditate on God's word they know it so well that they speak it under their breath in all kinds of situations. Now Psalm 1 and 2 are introductions to the psalms and they go together.

And part of the reason we know that they go together is that there's a play on words that happens here at the very beginning of chapter 2. Verse 1. Why do the nations rage and the people's plot in vain? That word plot is actually the same Hebrew word that showed up in Psalm 1 for meditate, for muttering.

In other words, some people in Psalm 1 are muttering God's words. They're meditating on God's words. Other people, these kings in Psalm 2, are muttering in vain.

They're muttering against God. Some people are muttering God's way. Some people are muttering against God. And this is highlighting for us what all of us know, which is that we live in a world that is filled with kings.

[ 7 : 28 ] We have kings. We have rulers. We have powerful people. Maybe they are actual kings of an actual country. Maybe they're presidents. Maybe these people are CEOs of large corporations.

Large corporations, by the way, are becoming more and more powerful to the point that sometimes they do rival countries in their abilities and their influence. We also know not only that they are powerful people, but also often that these powerful people are very selfish.

We have a world that's true. What's true of Psalm 2 is still true in the world today. We have kings and nations and powerful people that still rebel against God.

We have kings who take diversity. And rather than using it as a gift from God, knowing that he is the one who created it.

They use it as a tool to oppress one people over another and set different races against each other. We have rulers who have decided that it's their job to change the definition of marriage.

[ 8 : 30 ] We have rulers who don't necessarily change the definition of marriage, but they change its intention. They take what God meant to be a blessing to the entire world, and instead they make it something that's about us and our self-fulfillment.

We have kings who use their power to become rich while oppressing the poor. We have kings who use their power to create advantages for the rich and obstacles for the poor. They're not just oppressing the poor, but they're making it almost impossible for someone who is poor to no longer be poor.

And then we have kings who come specifically after God's people and his church. We have kings who try to silence God's people when they speak God's truth. And then we have kings and nations who use their power to kill and destroy life rather than to protect it.

And so while the Psalms are an ancient book, they're also incredibly modern. Because we have kings and nations that are always setting themselves against God, and that is just part of living in this world.

Part of living in this world is knowing that we're going to have people who are powerful and in authority, who are going to do exactly what we see in verses 1 and 2. They're going to set themselves against God.

[ 9 : 44 ] So our question is this. How do we respond to evil kings? How do you respond to evil kings?

Do you respond with fear? Maybe you respond with discouragement. Maybe there's anger. Sometimes appropriately so.

Maybe there's tribalism. You retreat just to hang out with people who agree with you about everything. Maybe we circle the wagons, batten down the hatches. Maybe we decide that we're victims and everyone's out to get us.

Maybe we get on Facebook and let everyone know how victimized we feel. How do we respond to evil kings? How does God respond to evil kings?

We've seen in verses 1 and 2 that they exist. Really verses 1 and 3. How does God respond in verses 4 through 6? God doesn't respond with fear or discouragement or tribalism.

[ 10 : 53 ] God laughs. Verse 4. He who sits in the heavens laughs. The Lord holds them in derision. When God looks at the kings who are rebelling against him, all he can do is think, that is really cute.

Bless their hearts. I want you to imagine for a second. So let's say that we, I mentioned earlier that Grant and Sarah helped start our youth Sunday school.

Now they've mainly been going through the Westminster Shorter Catechism. But let's say they decided they were going to have another project. And maybe they recruit all the other Sunday schools in the church. And they decide what they're going to do is not just study God's word together, but they're going to do something a little bigger as a bonding experience.

They're going to take down Fort Carson. Now don't laugh. This church has a lot of resources. I've looked in the nursery. We have hand puppets.

We also have a fire engine. We have a Lightning McQueen look-alike car. We have a dump truck and a school bus.

[ 12 : 09 ] There's also a farm in one of the nurseries, so we can take that with us. It's not just the nursery, okay? We had some of our youth yesterday were on the riding lawnmower. So we've got that as well. So if we pull all our resources together, we could have, let's say, it was Phillip and Annabelle who were on the riding lawnmower.

So one of them takes the front, takes the lead with the riding lawnmower. And then we can have some other folks behind with some of the trucks. And we could go to gate three. Because we're going to take it, we're going to take Fort Carson by storm.

What would the guards at Fort Carson do if they saw a riding lawnmower and a bunch of our kids with their trucks coming behind to take down the gate?

Would they shake in fear? Would they be discouraged? Would they post on Facebook about how oppressed they are? No, they would laugh.

And if we really decided we were going to take that gate by storm, it would not end well. Psalm 2 tells us that God laughs.

[ 13 : 19 ] And those who want to take him by storm, for them it will not end well. If you think that this story that I've told you is silly, you are correct.

Because it's silly, because it's not ridiculous enough. In other words, people, the nations, raging against God and his ways is actually more ridiculous than our youth deciding that they are going to take Fort Carson by force.

God sits, verse 4, and he laughs. Where is he sitting, by the way? He's sitting in the heavens. Where are the nations? Verse 2, the kings of the what?

The kings of the earth. God has a strong tactical advantage. There is no greater high ground.

He who sits in heaven laughs. The Lord holds them in derision. And so what do we do when we live in a world that is filled with evil kings?

[ 14 : 34 ] First of all, we need some perspective. And this psalm helps us get it. It gives us perspective. It's easy to live in this world in this moment and forget that there have been other nations and other times and other peoples that don't exist anymore.

It's tempting to believe that who's powerful now is the most powerful and will always be powerful. And so this psalm helps us get some perspective. First, it tells us the nations will not reign forever.

It gives us encouragement. Nations rise and fall. We don't need to shake and fear when we read the news because ultimately the Lord will reign over everyone and everything.

The Lord will reign over everyone and everything. And so there's great encouragement in this psalm. In fact, I would tell you that is the main application of Psalm 2 if you are a Christian.

Be encouraged. God is the great king. The nations will not reign forever. However, there's also great challenge.

[ 15 : 40 ] And there's great challenge because the nations will not reign forever. And so if you're a king, if you're a powerful person, I don't think we have any actual kings with us today.

I'd be happy to be corrected if I'm wrong. But some of you are powerful people. All of us are powerful in one way or another. And if you are a king, congratulations. You're in charge of a very small part of a very small planet for a very small amount of time.

Anyone that's raging and plotting in verses 1 through 3 is in charge of a very small place on a very small planet for a very small amount of time.

And so no matter how powerful you are, you know, even the most powerful kings, some people are great kings, some people are small kings, some kings have a little power, some kings have a lot of power.

Compared to God, they have no power. Some kings have a lot of power, some kings have little power. Compared to God, they don't have any power.

[ 16 : 48 ] And so the nations will not reign forever. There's encouragement for God's people and discouragement and challenge for anyone who forgets that God is the most powerful king.

God laughs in verses 4 through 6 and then we find out in verses 6 through 9 why it is that he laughs. Verse 2, the kings of the earth set themselves. Verse 6, God says, guess what?

I can set things up too. You want to set yourselves against me? Well, I have a king too. I've set that king on Zion, my holy hill. He talks about this king as his son.

This language in the ancient Near East would have talked about someone who represents the interests of the father. So this son is a representative of God on the earth. Originally, this psalm would have been sung in the Old Testament so it would have been talking about the king of Israel.

And yet, these promises that are talked about of the king are things that were not fulfilled by any Old Testament king. So we see in verses 8 and 9 this king, the son of God, the one who represents God's interests on the earth, who represents God to his people and to the world.

[ 18 : 03 ] The nations are going to be his heritage. Verse 8, and the ends of the earth his possession. Verse 9, he's going to break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. And so as people in the Old Testament read this, their hope and their confidence was that one day, even though they were just one nation, God, through his king, through David and the kings who came after him in the Old Testament, would one day cause Israel to rule over the nations.

And so that the king of Israel, the earthly king that the Old Testament people sang about in Psalm 2, would look forward to not just another king, a king one day, but would look forward to the king.

That was the hope of God's people in the Old Testament. They trusted and hoped that that would happen, they just didn't know how it would happen. But they looked forward to this king and this kingship and while they were looking and hoping and knowing and trusting and having confidence that this would happen, they saw not that happen but the very opposite, right?

Rather than being over the other nations, this is part of how they got themselves into the problem of Nehemiah, the other nations became over them because they did not follow after God. And so there's this vision over and over in the Old Testament, this promise that one day all things are going to be made right and this king is going to come in God's reign.

His promise here, the word that he's spoken, this decree of verse 7 is one day going to become true. And while the people in the Old Testament thought that this would come through a political liberator, instead it happened in a very different way.

[ 19 : 31 ] This king of David, this one who is going to fulfill, verses 7 through 9, ended up not being a political ruler. However, it was a descendant of David and it was Jesus.

And when I talk about Jesus, some of us perhaps think all kinds of different things. This is not long, flowing, pale Jesus from a picture. This is not storybook Jesus.

This is Jesus, a historical person who lived in real space, in real time. He was born in a town. He was born in a town called Bethlehem, which was five or six miles south of the city of Jerusalem.

And then he grew up in a town called Nazareth, which was 64 or 65 miles north of Jerusalem. Okay, he was a real person. Jesus had brothers and sisters.

He was probably an oldest, unless Joseph had children from a previous marriage. The Gospels tell us he had four brothers. We hear of two sisters.

[ 20 : 31 ] He may have had more than that. And so when I say Jesus is the fulfillment of this, I am talking about a real man who lived in real time and real space, who had real brothers and sisters, a real mother and father.

He walked on the earth. He lived in this world for 30 years. He worked with his hands. He was a carpenter or a builder. And this man, who as we talked about before Easter, came into Jerusalem on a donkey rather than a horse, is the one that is going to be the king that the Lord has begotten from verse 7.

Now I told you last week, I think, or maybe I mentioned it in a Friday email, that the book of Psalms is quoted in the New Testament more than any other Old Testament book.

So the New Testament quotes the Psalms more than the 38 other books of the Old Testament. Not only is the Psalms the most quoted Old Testament book in the New Testament, but Psalm 2, this Psalm, is of all the Psalms, the one that's most quoted in the New Testament.

This is the top-hit Psalm. And the reason it's the top-hit Psalm is because author after author applies this Psalm to Jesus. It happens in Hebrews chapter 1.

[ 21 : 46 ] It happens in 1 Corinthians. It happens twice in the book of Acts. When people are preaching, they say, and this is the fulfillment, that Jesus is the one who has come to fulfill Psalm 2, verses 7 through 9.

It doesn't just happen, by the way, in the letters that people write in the New Testament. It also happens in the Gospels. And it happens in the Gospels when Jesus is baptized because we hear a voice of the Father speaking from heaven and he says what?

This is my son. It's an echo of Psalm 2 and also 2 Samuel 7 when David is anointed. The Lord said to me, you are my son.

Verse 7. In other words, at Jesus' baptism, he was anointed as the Psalm 2 king. And everyone else throughout the rest of the New Testament saw Jesus as the Psalm 2 king.

And it's even echoed more than that in Matthew chapter 28 when Jesus sends out his disciples. He says, go therefore into all nations.

[ 22 : 51 ] Right? Verse 8. Ask of me and I will make the nations your heritage and the ends of the earth your possession. When Jesus said that he almost certainly had Psalm 2 in mind.

And so, what do we do with evil kings? God laughs. And God laughs because he has a great king. He has a king that's greater than all the other kings.

And so, there's a sense in which we can laugh as well. Now, I'm not saying that there aren't things to be afraid of in this world.

There aren't things that we need to pray for earnestly. We're told to pray for rulers in 1 Timothy 2. There aren't things that we should be cautious about and wary of. But God is our great king.

And he has sent us Jesus as his great king. There is no other king in all the nations who can challenge him. In fact, he is going to, verse 9, break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

[ 24 : 06 ] And so, that leaves us just like we had last week with two options in verses 10-12. And our two options are this. We can either take refuge or we can rebel.

It tells us in verse 12, blessed are all who take refuge in him. So just like we saw one path is following after God in Psalm 1, it's the same in Psalm 2.

There are those who take refuge in God. And then, there are those who rebel against God. We saw that in verses 1-3. And then we see a final warning in verses 10-11.

This is sort of the final warning that someone gives. Hey, if you don't stop, we're going to have to take care of you. We're going to send the dogs out. We're going to open fire. Whatever analogy you want. This is the final warning to the kings in verses 10-11.

Be warned. Be wise. Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling. We either perish or we take refuge in God. We either perish or we take refuge in God.

[ 25 : 15 ] We either rebel against God or we find safety in Him. If we rebel, we will be destroyed. If we take refuge in Him, we will be saved.

And this is something that even as people in the Old Testament look forward to it, we look forward to it as well because it's partially fulfilled now in Jesus' first coming and will be fully fulfilled in His second coming.

And so our hope as Christians is in Jesus' second coming that He would come back and be the King that rules all the nations. And so our final question, our last question that this psalm poses to us is are we rebelling or are we finding refuge?

If we're finding refuge, that means that we have faith in Christ. And I've said faith in Christ many times. I've never given you a full definition so I'm going to give you that now.

Faith, this comes from Charles Spurgeon, has three components to it. It is knowledge, belief, and trust. Faith is knowledge, belief, and trust.

[ 26 : 26 ] And so faith is, first of all, knowing what is true about Jesus, that He was a real man in real space in real time who came and He died. And the reason He had to die is because of our sins, that God was pouring out His wrath on the earth, bringing full and final justice to everyone who rebels against Him.

But that for anyone who has faith and trust and hope in Jesus, Jesus' death as a perfect man pays the penalty for our sins. And so faith is, first of all, that knowledge, what is true about Jesus.

Second of all, it's actually belief. Many people know the facts about Jesus. There are people who are not Christians who could have told you what I just told you. They would say, Christians, believe this. And so faith is not just knowledge, it's also belief.

It's believing that those things are true. Actually believing that we are so sinful that we have no hope outside of Jesus. Believing that He is the one who can save us. So knowledge and belief and then trust.

Trust is knowing, not just saying these things are true and believing them, but then living our lives as if they are true. We can say we believe something, but if our lives don't reflect it, it shows everyone that we don't actually believe it.

[ 27 : 34 ] And so faith in Christ is knowledge, it's belief, and it's trust. It's knowing what's true and then living out of that truth. If you ever want to talk more about any of those things, I'm happy to talk to anyone after the service to talk more about faith in Christ if that's something you have questions about, if that's something you're confused about.

But that is what it means to take refuge. That's what's being talked about in verse 12. Blessed are all who take refuge in Him. And so there's those who take refuge and then there are those who rebel.

We're told that those who do not take refuge will face God's full and final justice when His King returns. When Jesus comes back to the earth, He is going to bring God's justice on everyone who does not have faith in Christ.

Christ. This is something that's challenging for many people in this particular country and this part of the world to think of a God of judgment. And yet this is what would be true of any great king.

If someone tried to attack Fort Carson right now, not with a riding lawnmower but with something that's actually powerful enough to take down gates, we would not complain about them being destroyed by Fort Carson.

[ 28 : 50 ] We would not say, how could a loving fort, how would a loving fort, how could they judge and destroy these people attacking them? Right?

No. That is what great kings do. How much more the great king? How much more the great king?

And so if we have objections and problems with God's judgment, it means two things. First, we underestimate how much, how great our sin is. We don't actually believe verses one and two that when we sin, we are setting ourselves against God, that we're raging against him and plotting against him.

And second, we're underestimating what a great king God is. And so there's two options. We either take refuge and are saved or we rebel and we are destroyed.

If we take refuge in God, then when we look at the kings, we can laugh with God. When we take refuge in God, we can laugh with God.

[ 30 : 00 ] And so that's our hope and our confidence and our trust. The final passage that I didn't mention, which alludes to Psalm 2, is from our reading from Revelation, our New Testament reading this morning, which almost quotes verses 8 and 9.

talks about him ruling with a rod of iron and dashing them in pieces like a potter's vessel. That this picture of Revelation 19 is of Jesus' second coming.

That he is coming back, not in his first coming to bring salvation through his death, but in his second coming to bring salvation through his judgment. That he's going to save his world from all the sin that has destroyed him.

So I promised you at the beginning, this psalm was going to make complex things simple. Evil rulers are complicated.

And the question of what to do with them and how to respond to them is complicated as well. And God, in this psalm, makes it simple for us. We either take refuge and are saved, or we rebel and are destroyed.

[ 31 : 05 ] And if we take refuge in God, then when we look at the nations and evil rulers, we can laugh with God. That's our hope and our confidence and our trust.



Please pray with me. Dear Father in heaven, we thank you for your word that guides us and nurtures us and nourishes us. Ask for anyone who does not have faith in you, that you would be at work calling them to yourself, that they would understand the great salvation that you offer and also the great judgment that is to come.

I ask that you'd give us the encouragement that comes from knowing that you are the great king and you rule over everyone and everything. And we ask that you'd drive this deep into our hearts so that we'd have the confidence and the hope that comes from knowing it.

And we ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen. I invite you to stand for our closing.