

Psalm 2

The Meditating Man and the Raging Nations

Introduction: If you were here with us last week you know that our service was very different. for starters I only taught for 30 mins...which was a miracle in and of itself. we did something different last week which was to sit quietly and think, chew on Gods word and respond in confession, prayer for forgiveness, praise and worship... we are doing this because this is the main intention of the Psalms.

Now where the Psalms do contain doctrine about God, and we can study them, they are not primarily for teaching but for worship..

Eugene Peterson writes - "Our habit is to talk about God, not to him. We love discussing God. The Psalms resist these discussions. They are not provided to teach us about God (these people knew God, through the teaching of the Law (Torah)) but to train us in responding to him. We don't learn the Psalms in until we are praying them."

Obviously there are a great many things that we can learn about God, God's world, ourselves, salvation and many other things through the Psalms but the point is that the Psalms were originally meant as prayers and songs for the nation of Israel and the Church.

So this is what we are doing for the next number of Sundays. we are learning to be still before God, to think on his word, to mull it over, to allow it to hit us where God intends to hit us - right in the heart. Then to respond. Our initial reactions to God's word are not always the right reaction..sometimes we are angry with God, frustrated, afraid, bitter, flippant, somber when we should be jovial, jovial when we should be somber.. In the Psalms we find: Delight. Fear. Anger. Joy. Grief.

Depression. Gladness. Loneliness. Love. and Loss. And this is just a small sampling of the range of emotions in life, ones that the Psalms fully describe. But while the Psalms allow us to express our raw emotions they simultaneously seek to shape them into righteous ones. With the Psalms we can approach God with brutal honesty, seeking to be rooted in truth and ready to submit to him.

Tim Keller says, "On the one hand, the Psalms actually show you that you can be unhappy in God's presence. The Psalms, in a sense, give you the

permission to pour out your complaints in a way that we might think inappropriate, if it wasn't there in the Scriptures. But on the other hand, the Psalms demand that you bow in the end to the sovereignty of God in a way that modern culture wouldn't lead you to believe."

And that's what we are seeking as a church to be molded and shaped as we contemplate God's truth together, and respond in appropriate worship.

Psalm 2

**"Why do the nations rage[a]
and the peoples plot in vain?"**

**2 The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers take counsel together,
against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying,**

**3 "Let us burst their bonds apart
and cast away their cords from us."**

**4 He who sits in the heavens laughs;
the Lord holds them in derision.**

**5 Then he will speak to them in his wrath,
and terrify them in his fury, saying,**

**6 "As for me, I have set my King
on Zion, my holy hill."**

7 I will tell of the decree:

**The Lord said to me, "You are my Son;
today I have begotten you.**

**8 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,
and the ends of the earth your possession.**

**9 You shall break[b] them with a rod of iron
and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."**

1. A Different type of Meditation

1. The verb that dominates the action of Psalm 1, meditate, is picked up again in Psalm 2, but used in a context that requires the translation, "plot." Why do the nations conspire, and the peoples plot in vain? "Mediate" in Psalm 1, and "plot" in Psalm 2 are the same verb. And it is the same action: a murmuring, absorbed,

ruminating interest over the word of God, realizing that this is the important word, the word that determines all existence.

2. But while Psalm 1 directs us to approach this word with delight, receiving it as life giving, psalm 2 shows people plotting against this word, devising schemes for getting rid of it so that they can be free of all God-interference in their lives. These people see God's words not as javelins penetrating their lives with truth(Torah), but as chains that restrict their freedom. They put their minds together to rid themselves of this word so that their words can rule.

2. The Raging Nations

1. These aren't just any people, these are powerful, impressive people.. they are both numerous (nations and peoples) and prominent (kings and rulers). These people command most of the armies of the world, direct the advances of science, run school systems, preside over governments, and rule in the market places.
 1. What can we do? Don't you feel helpless, weak, insignificant??
 2. The issue here is size: we require an act of imagination that enables us to see that the world of God is large - far larger than the worlds of kings and princess, prime ministers and presidents, far larger than the worlds reported by newspaper and news media, far larger than any philosophy...far larger than anything we can imagine.
 3. We need a way, says, Eugene Peterson, a convincing, usable, accessible tool for realizing the largeness of God in the midst of the competing bigness of the world. If we fail here, prayer will be stunted; we will pray huddled and cowering.
 4. Psalm 2 answers our need by presenting Messiah (God's anointed one. Messiah is God's person in history. God is not exclusively in the business of dealing with souls, he is also active in cities. Messiah is God's invasion of the secular, his entry into the world where people go to school, go to work, go to war, go to San Francisco...Messiah may not look like much to the watching world.. think of Moses, or David, obviously Jesus the ultimate Messiah - what did people say about him? "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" He had no form of comeliness that we would desire him, the prophet says, there was nothing kingly about his appearance, he wasn't impressive or intimidating to look at - yet he is power, wisdom and righteousness from God incarnate. By means of Psalm 2 we

observe Messiah, God personally involved in this world, often incognito, but here and ruling.

5. Psalm 2 is connected with the Cross of Christ by the Apostle Peter in Acts 4:25-28 which means that the final way in which we see the powers that be formed against God and his anointed was when Rome and Jerusalem met in the middle of history, at the center of the world the world to destroy God's Anointed, Jesus Christ.
6. Peter and the early church prayed this prayer in the face of persecution, **“Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, 25 who through the mouth of our father David, your servant,^[d] said by the Holy Spirit, “Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? 26 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed’^[e]—27 for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, 28 to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. 29 And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants^[f] to continue to speak your word with all boldness, 30 while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” 31 And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.” -Acts 4:24-31**
1. Sometimes we wonder what we can possibly do against the powers that be.... Putin just signed into law that there can be no evangelism outside of the state sanctioned Church of Russia.. harkening back to the religious persecutions through the communist party under what was coined “The Iron Curtain”. Even here in the US -Churches in Iowa are being threatened with a lawsuit that they can no longer teach the Bible’s views on sexual ethics and sexual identity (The language of the Iowa laws is so broad that it would include a prohibition on sermons, theological

expositions, educational speeches, newsletters, church worship bulletin text, or other statements from the church and its leaders that did not align with the state's view of gender identity or use "gender inclusive" language.) I believe this is just the beginning of what will become the new norm. Yet, doesn't this sound so similar to what we see here in Acts..

2. The question is -what can we possibly do in these times... not only that but it's clear to see that there are other disturbing things going on all around us.. racism, the refugee crisis, ISIS..At times the World seems so large and dangerous.. especially if we look at the seeming insignificance of the church... what can we do?
3. When we look at Psalm 2 and Acts 4 it points us to the quiet Sovereignty of God... The Rulers don't know it but they are playing right into God's plan.. they are crucifying God's Messiah and simultaneously crowning him King over the nations.. think about the royal robes, the crown, the declaration in greek, latin and aramaic -THE KING OF THE JEWS... God was at that very moment setting his king on his holy hill... **"He who sits in the heavens laughs". Think about how insane this is that in God's weakest, most vulnerable moment he was in fact destroying the kingdoms of this world and the powers that held the universe in captivity under sin...**
 1. "For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength." -1 Corinthians 1:25
 2. Fulfilling the scripture "even the wrath of man shall praise you" and the promise of Romans 8:28 God is working all things together for good.

3. Contemplation #1

1. **Confession** -Confess your fears at the raging of the nations - whether these fears are grounded or ungrounded..they need to be confessed. Or Maybe confess your frustration with God for not working in the way and at the time that you want him to. "Lord I doubt your power; I doubt your goodness." (5 Mins)
2. **Read Psalm 46 - "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the**

earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day. Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts. The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Come and see what the Lord has done, the desolations he has brought on the earth. He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields^[d] with fire. He says, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nation. I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress." (Take a few minutes to be still before this truth of God's goodness, presence and power with his people)

3. **Prayer** - Lord, Help me to see that you are already reigning, that you are sovereignly guiding history to a glorious end where you will physically rule over the nations in righteousness and truth..Your answer to the chaos and strife of the world is your Son, Jesus Christ. He will eventually break brokenness, kill death, destroy destruction, and swallow every sorrow. Teach us how to take refuge in you, in your son, in your wise will, and in our assured, glorious future. Fill us with faith and hope, grant us boldness to continue to declare your name and your salvation in or city! Amen.
4. **Psalm 2 continued** - **"Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. 11 Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.12 Kiss the Son (sincerely), lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him."**
 1. I know for me, it's easy to look around at the madness of the world around me, and feel justified in my condemnation of it's evil.. but when I do, I am often reminded of Isaiah the prophet and his own ministry. In the first 5 chapters of the book of Isaiah - he is a fiery preacher and prophet, giving woe to the nations for their idolatry, merciless ruling and injustices. The all of a sudden in chapter 6

Isaiah has a vision of the LORD of Host and it blows him away, he sees himself for what he truly is - a man full of idolatry and sin, pride and self righteousness - he says that it is too much he feels that he is literally going to be killed by the sheer glory of God... **“Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty. Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. 7 With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.”**

1. Every one of us stands before God guilty. As one man said, “I lack the strength of the nations, but not their pride.” Each of us in our own way have rejected and do reject God’s rule over our lives, some in small ways, some in not so small ways. God would be fully justified to give us what we want. To live without God’s rule is what we want, and it is also what we deserve - But to live without God would be to cut ourselves off from life itself, total and complete autonomy would actually destroy us, and yet it is what we in fact deserve for rejecting God’s rightful reign. God in his love sends Jesus Messiah to experience the full wrath of what we deserve - rejection from the presence of God, to be cast out into darkness... Jesus experienced what we deserve so we could be forgiven and brought back into the presence of God and experience his good reign over our lives... Now we who will humble ourselves before his grace can pay sincere worship - we can kiss the Son in gratefulness for all that he has done.

5. Contemplation #2

1. **Thought** -If the nations are helpless against the eventual rule of God - how much more my little life? Will I not pay homage - “kiss the son” And receive his grace and mercy over my life..?
2. **Confession** - I often live without fully considering you and submitting to your sovereign will. I lack the strength of the nations but not their pride. I am deceived into thinking that I am in complete control of my life. Yet, you are still Lord! May I always be aware of your might. Let my life be a testimony of your goodness; May it be

characterized by submission to your will. Destroy in me the desire to rule my own life in even the smallest acts of obstinance... Lord show me where I resist you. (take 5 mins to personally confess to the Lord sins of pride and resistance to his Lordship)

3. **Prayer** - We thank you Lord that when we confess our sins you are faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Help us to remember that Jesus bore all of our sin on the cross, and we can approach you without fear of wrath, that we can come boldly before the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Jesus, be King over all my life; Body, soul, mind and strength. Father, may our sincere worship now be directed toward you, not only in words, but in deed and in truth. For Jesus' sake. Amen