

The Perfect King

Psalm 72:1-20
Halifax: 18 September 2005

Introduction

As most of you know,

- I have been preaching from the Parables of the Kingdom that are given to us in Matthew 13.
 - We are now ready to begin those two parables that speak about the growth of the kingdom:
 - the parable of the mustard seed and the parable of the leaven...
 - And then we will take up the parables that speak about the value of Christ's kingdom to His servants...
 - the parable of the hidden treasure and the pearl of great price.

But before we begin these growth and value parables,

- I have, as is our custom, selected a Psalm for us to sing and mediate on that co-ordinates with these parables.
 - And I can think of none more suitable for this than Psalm 72.

Psalm 72 speaks about the glorious reign of King Jesus and how His reign will increase and how He will sweetly attract the nations to Himself.

- These are the very truths that are brought out in the parables we are now starting,
 - And so today, I will endeavour, if God is pleased, to open this Psalm to you for your enrichment and for God's glory.

This Psalm was probably the last psalm that David wrote.

- In verse 20, it says, "The prayers of David the Son of Jesse are ended."
 - It was probably written on his deathbed as he prepared to hand over the kingdom to Solomon his son.
 - That is why in the title it says, "A Psalm of Solomon,"
 - and at the end, "the prayers of David, the Son of Jesse are ended."
- David loved peace, but Providence had called him to be a man of war and bloodshed;
 - He had been called to finish the job that had been given to Israel in Joshua's day and to take dominion of the land of promise.
 - He had served faithfully as a military king,

- but now at the end of his days, the day of peace was dawning!
- Now it was time for Solomon, David's son, to come forth and reign as king of peace and prosperity.
 - And David penned this Psalm in the expression of his hope in response to what God had promised to do in that kingdom.

The Psalm begins with an expression his yearning for a perfect King!

- It says,
 - "Give the king your judgements, O God, and Your righteousness to the king's Son."
 - David knew that he was not that king,
 - but he knew...
 - "that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne,"
 - This Psalm is an expression of that hope!
- A. If you are a child of God, you also long for a king that will straighten everything out!
1. You have seen the mess that we have got ourselves into by our sin!
 - And you see how the mess gets deeper and deeper the longer we continue...
 2. And you know that God has promised a king—the messiah—to come and restore us to God...
 - the Messiah—a king that is furnished with God's judgements instead of His own judgements...
 - You are tired of your sin and tired of sin in the world...
 - You have given up on the self-help and political plans and social plans of this world...
 - You want this king that God promised who will speak truth in the midst of all the error...
 - a king furnished with God's judgements
 - And you want a king that is furnished with God's righteousness...
 - A king that has what it takes to cleanse us from all our sins so that we can be reconciled with God.
- B. And you know that God has now promised such a King and sent such a king...
- King Jesus!
1. And you want King Jesus to rule over the whole world!

- You know that He is the only One who can make the world right!
 - You know that our only hope is that we might be restored to God.
2. Psalm 72 begins with this expression of the believer's yearning for such a king...
- and then it speaks the glorious kingdom that Jesus will establish!
 - Christian, verses 2-17 is a glorious description of what we, as God's people, believe King Jesus will do in His glorious reign!

TRANS> I want you see here the five characteristics of Christ's kingdom.

- First, that it will be a kingdom of righteousness and peace
- Second, that it will be a kingdom that will endure forever
- Third, that it will be a kingdom that will spread into all the world
- Fourth, that it will be a kingdom that will speak by grace
- Fifth, that it will be a kingdom that is filled with devoted-happy subjects.

Let's look at each of these characteristics:

I. First, that it will be a kingdom of righteousness and peace.

- This is presented in verses 2-4

A. In verse 2, it says: "He will judge your people with righteousness!"

1. This means that Jesus truly leads His people into what is right in God's eyes!
 - a. No other king can truly lead us into righteousness—
 - because no other king has what it takes to make his subjects righteous!
 - b. Jesus is the only king who is furnished with what human beings need to be acceptable to God...
 - God is holy and He cannot accept us in our sins
 - But King Jesus stands up in the midst of His sinful people in all ages and offers a sacrifice to God that can take away our sins!
 - He gave Himself on the cross to atone for our sins and God has accepted His sacrifice.
 - c. So when Jesus governs us, He comes to us and He shows us what is wrong with us...
 - that we are sinners before God...
 - But then He shows us what He has done to make us righteous...
 - And He calls us to trust in Him for our righteousness before God.

2. You will notice that second part of verse 2 says that He will govern God's **poor** with justice...

- and verse 4 speaks about how He will bring justice to the poor and will save the children of the needy...

a. Well that is all of us who believe!

- Every one of God's people is poor...

- We are all starving to death until Christ comes to feed us.

- Not one of us has what we need because Satan stripped us off all our righteousness in the Garden when we fell.

b. He is the oppressor that Christ breaks in pieces...

- Jesus tears us away from his grip just as He tore Israel away from Pharaoh...

- And then He establishes us in righteousness.

- He brings us out of Egypt to worship God.

B. The result of all this is peace...

- verse 3 speaks of the mountains bringing forth peace...

1. This peace is the word **shalom** in Hebrew...

- It speaks of a sense of absolute well-being—

- not just the absence of what is hostile and negative,

- but also the presence of what is whole and complete!

- We come back to our great purpose of serving God.

2. This peace is something that grows up where Christ rules!

- There is a satisfaction and a contentment...

- There is a growth into your purpose...

- There is a harmony with God and with the world as a whole.

- There is a service to others.

3. And notice that it is said to grow up on the mountains and hills...

- This is the place where fruit is not expected to grow!

- But Jesus causes it grow in the most unlikely places!

- The tax collectors and prostitutes are transformed by our Lord!

- He reaches to the most unlikely places and makes them glorious.

- He makes the desert to blossom!
- Righteousness and peace spring up wherever Christ rules!

C. But what does this righteousness and peace that Jesus gives really look like?

1. Well, it is looks like harmony!

- We have harmony with God where there was once hostility and frustration!
- He gives us the fullness of life so that we begin shine as lights in His kingdom and bring glory to Him...

2. And in our relationships with each other,

- His kingdom is a world of love...
 - Where instead of every person looking to see how he can take advantage of his neighbour,
 - Each person labours to serve his neighbour and do good for him!
 - Our Saviour leads us to glory so that we live in harmony with our Creator and with each other.

TRANS> Peace and righteousness will be established in the kingdom of Jesus.

- This is the first characteristic of Christ's kingdom.

II. Second, the kingdom of Christ is a kingdom that will endure forever.

- This is brought out in verses 5-7

1. When Jesus once establishes His people in righteousness, they will not depart from it.

a. The seed of righteousness is planted in the believer's heart so that He continues to fear God as long as the Sun and moon endure!

- Fearing God simply refers to the fact that they live with reference to God...
 - They do not ignore Him and try to live independently of Him as the unbeliever does.
 - They deal with Him, they respond to Him, they trust in the righteousness that He has provided...
 - They cannot rest in anything superficial because they deal with Him in truth.

b. And this verse is saying that once that fear is present,

- the believer will persevere...
- He will continue to live in the fear of God instead of other things...

- You can tell what you fear because it is the thing you will give place to it...
 - it is the thing you look to to either bless you or curse you and whose favour you seek to cultivate.
 - Let the pressures of trials and persecutions come,
 - but you will continue to serve the Lord... because you do not believe that blessing is to be found in freedom from trials...
 - Let the temptation of the world come,
 - dressed up in the most seductive clothes—
 - yet, you will continue to fear the Lord as long as the sun and moon endure.
 - because you believe that cursing comes from leaving God to follow your lusts.
- c. And not only will the individual persevere, but God's people as a whole will continue to fear Him from generation to generation...
- There will never be a time when there is not a people on the earth that live in the true fear of God.
2. The reason for this is given in verse 6.
- a. It is because King Jesus will continue to gently bestow His grace upon them like the gentle rain that waters the earth.
- b. This is what we are shown in the Lord's Supper...
- that Jesus continues day after day and week after week and year after year to nourish us with His grace so that we might grow
 - He supplies us with the water of the Spirit so that we will never be barren or unfruitful.
- c. And so the result is verse 7...
- that in His days righteousness shall flourish and abundance of peace until the moon is no more.
 - We will prosper under His reign because He will continue to supply us!
3. One of the great problems with most kingdoms is that they have shortages of what they need!
- There are famines and draughts and destructive storms...
 - But under King Jesus, there is only this gentle rain that continues supply us with all we need for life and godliness!

- He will be our faithful supply of grace forever and ever so that we will never be without!
- This is the second thing you are to expect from Him!

TRANS> The first thing is righteousness and peace,

- the second thing is the continuation of that righteousness and peace forever.

III. Third, the kingdom of Christ is a kingdom of that will spread into all the world.

1. That's right, in these verses you see that in the end there will only be **one government** and that will be **His government!**
 - a. No competitive, contrary government will remain.
 - First it says that "He shall have dominion from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth."
 - This language is reflective of the boundaries of the shadow kingdom that was promised to Abraham and occupied by Israel in the days of David and Solomon...
 - b. But it is only the beginning of things...
 - because God promised to Abraham that in His seed **all** the nations of the earth would be blessed.
 - And so when it says "the ends of the earth" it refers to far more than the land of Palestine.
 - Verses 9-10 speak of Gentiles coming to bow before Him, and verse 11 concludes with the words, "All nations shall serve Him!"
 - This is nothing less than universal dominion!
 - This is what God promised to His Son.
2. But perhaps you have read the newspapers lately, or maybe you even look at your own family and you say,
 - What is this talk of universal dominion? I don't see it.
 - Rebels are everywhere!
 - a. And it is true—in Hebrews 2:8, the author says the same thing about Jesus:
 - First he quotes the verse that says:
 - "You have put all things in subjection under his feet."
 - Then he comments that this includes everything without exception:

- “For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing *that is* not put under him.”
 - Yet then he says:
 - “But now we do not yet see all things put under Him.”
 - He fully acknowledges that everything has not been brought under Him...
 - But the encouraging word is “**yet...**”
 - We do not **yet** see all things put under Him.
 - The day is coming when they **will** be put under Him.
- b. We are told by Paul in 1 Cor. 15 that He must reign until He has put all of His enemies under His feet.
- There are two very different ways that that this can happen to an individual.
 - The one way is that that individual is born again so that he sees the glory of Christ and gladly bows down to Him...
 - The other way is that the individual will bow down as one condemned who has been condemned.
 - I like the way Mathew Henry puts it:
 - “Yea, all kings shall, sooner or later, fall down before him, either to do their duty to him or to receive their doom from him.”
 - In Psalm 72 you have the enemies licking the dust as the serpent was first made to do...
 - And you have kings offering gifts and presents to the king because of their love for Him.
 - Both will happen, but all will be put under Him.
- c. Now some of you probably want to know if this is going to happen before Christ returns or at the time of His return...
- And I will only say this:
 - It will definitely and fully happen... this is our Christian hope.
 - It is our duty to pray and work for His universal reign *before* He returns and God has given us reason to believe that we will make great progress in this work...
 - He has commissioned us to pray for and to do this work, and promised to bless us in this work—

- just as He commissioned and promised to bless His ancient people in taking the land of promise.
- The kingdom of God has grown since the days of the apostles so that now it is all over the world.
 - Just how far it will grow before His return is difficult to say—but that it will grow is His promise.
- Our goal now and our promise for the future is that everything will be brought under His feet.
 - The rebellious will no longer stand to oppose Him...
 - And the redeemed will forever praise Him without interference or molestation of any kind.
 - That is the final result and that will not perfectly be fulfilled until He returns to judge the world.

TRANS> What a glorious, universal kingdom belongs to King Jesus!

- And we have seen so far that Jesus' reign will bring righteousness and peace...
 - That this righteousness and peace will endure forever and ever...
 - And that it will continue to spread until it encompasses the whole earth.

IV. Fourth, it will be a kingdom that spreads by grace.

1. This has already been mentioned in this Psalm,
 - but it is surely presented here again in verses 12-14 to emphasise the most extraordinary way His kingdom will expand!
 - a. Most kingdoms conquer by military might—
 - They come in with military power and force their enemies into submission, demanding that they pay tribute.
 - b. But King Jesus takes over the world by helping people...
 - He comes to a world that is desperately lost in sin and without hope,
 - and gives them His righteousness so that they may be forgiven of their sins and established in His grace!
 - As it says in these verses:
 - Psalm 72:12-13: For He will deliver the needy when he cries, The poor also, and *him* who has no helper. He will spare the poor and needy, And will save the souls of the needy.

2. This is so very opposite!
 - a. Most kings come upon other nations looking to get something,
 - even if they are benevolent by this world's standards, they still come seeking to get rather than to give.
 - but King Jesus comes to give them what they need from God!
 - b. This is the nature of His kingdom until the day of judgement...
 - As His church, we are called to carry the sweet offer of grace and mercy to all,
 - declaring to them what Jesus has done to save them...
 - urging them to be reconciled to God while the day of grace is still open.
 - Telling them of His excellence...
 - c. And as we do, we will meet much resistance from a world that is lost in sin...
 - We will be persecuted...
 - Jesus tells us that this will be the case with us...
 - He has not called us to take up carnal weapons of warfare—spears and swords and political manoeuvres...
 - Rather He has promised that He will redeem us out of all oppression...
 - and here we are told that even though we die at the hands of our enemies...
 - our blood will be precious in His sight...
 - He will still redeem us, and He will avenge our blood.
 - And though there may be times when it looks like His kingdom is going to be completely destroyed by persecution,
 - Verse 15 has the simple confession of faith that King Jesus will live...
 - He will live to bless His people and to be blessed by them...
 - Because He lives, we will live also!
 - And not merely live, but live happily under His rule!

TRANS> And this brings us to the fifth characteristic of His kingdom...

V. Fifth, it will be a kingdom filled with devoted-happy subjects!

- It is a sign of an excellent kingdom when the subjects of the king are filled with delight in their king and are wholly dedicated to Him...
 - When they have such confidence in Him that they will gladly suffer for His cause and count themselves privileged to do so!
 - It is this kind of devotion and happiness that is spoken of in verses 15-17 in five ways...

A. First, Jesus' subjects are shown bring all their gifts to Him...

1. In verse 15, it says, "The gold of Sheba will be brought to Him."
 - This does not speak of forced taxation, such as we have in our own land...
 - This speaks of a voluntary dedication of the citizen's possessions to their king to be used for His purposes!
2. When you truly see who Jesus is,
 - All of your gifts and all of your talents and all that you are you lay at His feet because you know that this will be the best use...
 - In your great love to Jesus you will want to spend everything for Him...
 - This is not to say that you will despise wealth and gold!
 - It is rather to say that you will delight in it all the more—
 - but not that you may consume it on your lusts that you might use it to love your neighbour and to honour Christ!
3. We might think here of the Queen of Sheba who brought her treasures to Solomon and laid them at His feet...
 - She did not feel that she was wasting her treasure, but rather that she was using it in a most wonderful way.

TRANS> That is the first way Jesus' subjects show how happy and devoted they are to their king...

B. Second, Jesus' subjects will pray for their king

- Verse 15 goes on to say that "Prayer will be made for Him continually!"
1. Paul teaches us to pray for kings and for those in authority that they might be saved and that we might live in peace and quietness...
 - We often pray for earthly kings because we are unsure of them and because we see their weakness and often their cruelty...
 2. But these prayers are prayers that all of the purposes of king Jesus will prosper!
 - They are prayers that say,

- “All be will be well if only the plans and policies of our must excellent king are carried out!”
- They are prayers that arise out the excitement for what He is doing!
 - Prayers that He will subdue the hearts of our loved ones and sweetly draw them into His kingdom...
 - Prayers that He will trample all His enemies under His feet so that He will have no rival...
 - They are prayers that arise from confidence in Him rather than from concern about Him!

TRANS> And because these prayers arise out of our delight in King Jesus,

- they will be saturated with thanksgiving for Him and talk about His excellence!
- And this is the third way out text shows us how happy and devoted His servants are...

C. Third, Jesus’ subjects will praise their king daily

1. Every day, they will thank God for sending His Son...

- They will arise in the morning and praise Him, counting themselves blessed to be serving One so excellent...
- And in the evening, they will praise Him for His faithfulness and kindness to them.

2. And not only will they praise Him in prayer, but they will also speak of His excellence to one other...

- praising Him with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs...
 - telling of His glory,
 - telling of His salvation,
 - telling of what He has done for their souls.
- In this way they encourage one another and stir one another up to greater and greater delight...
 - They count themselves most privileged to be His servants.

3. It is an awful thing when the citizens are unhappy with their government...

- When they can find very little praise for it
- But how happy and blessed is that kingdom that delights in her king...
 - So it is with king Jesus!

TRANS> So here are three ways the that Jesus’ subjects are happy and devoted...

- They freely bring their gifts to Him...

- They pray for Him continually...
 - They praise Him daily for His excellence...
- D. Fourth, Jesus' subjects show that they are happy and devoted by being fruitful and multiplying!
1. Verse 16 seems to speak of the subjects of King Jesus as vegetation...
 - It says:
 - v. 16: There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and *they* of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.
 - I have read this from the Old King James because I think the New King James has over-translated the word handful...
 - A handful can refer to an abundance, but it can also refer to a very small amount...
 - And it seems that the very point of this verse is fruitfulness!
 - That from very small beginnings,
 - from a man named Abraham, or from eleven disciples, or from a teacher named Luther...
 - and grows into what is like a mighty cedar forest or like cities of flourishing grass of the earth
 2. This does not seem to refer to the expansion we spoke about before—
 - a. Where king Jesus sweetly draws in subjects from every nation...
 - But this refers to His people bearing children for Him that grow up to serve Him in His kingdom...
 - God promised Abraham both kinds of increase...
 - The increase of the nations turning to Christ, certainly,
 - But also the increase of his own seed—that he would be fruitful and multiply.
 - b. Because the citizens of the Kingdom Christ are so pleased with their king,
 - they want to raise up sons and daughters to serve Him!
 - Psalm 128 describes this so beautifully when it says:
 - Psalm 128:2-4: When you eat the labor of your hands, You *shall be* happy, and *it shall be* well with you. Your wife *shall be* like a fruitful vine In the very heart of your house, Your children like olive plants All around your table. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed Who fears the LORD.

- c. This is not to say that every individual will necessarily be fruitful in this way...
 - Some of Christ's most dedicated servants devote themselves to a single life in order to serve Him in that way...
 - And there are some couples who are unable to have children to their sorrow...
 - But as a body, the servants of Christ are fruitful in bearing many children for Him...
 - They begin as a handful and grow into a multitude!
 - It was very encouraging to see the young people at the MRI from the church in Woodstock New Brunswick!
 - They are very much like our congregation ten or fifteen years from now...
 - When all these little ones who a squirming around in their seats become sons and daughters who possess the gates of our enemies for King Jesus!
 - These children have come because their parents are happy and devoted servants of Jesus Christ.

TRANS> And so you see that the subjects of king Jesus show that they are happy and devoted to Him because:

- they freely bring their gold to Him...
- they continually pray for Him...
- they praise Him daily...
- they are fruitful and multiply...

E. And fifthly, the subjects of King Jesus show their devotion to Him and happiness with Him by honouring Him!

1. Verse 17 speaks about His name or His reputation...

a. It says that His name will endure forever!

- This is a marvellous thing...
- For many kings have good name until they do something foolish...
 - either they or their sons so that their name is brought down!
- But King Jesus has been given the name above every name—
 - We call Him LORD!
 - The One who is self-existing in whom we have every covenant blessing...
 - And His name will never perish...
 - He will never die,

- He will never do anything to tarnish His reputation...
 - His name will endure forever!
- b. And not only that, but His name is also said in verse 16 to continue forever!
- The word **continue** that is used here really means to increase!
 - The idea is that His reputation will not only be persevered,
 - but that as one day passes into the next, it will continue to increase.
 - Many times it is the case in this world that we may have tremendous respect for someone—
 - but as we get to know them better, our opinion of them is weakened!
 - A king that looks glorious from a distance can look pretty ordinary to those who serve in his house...
 - Not so with King Jesus!
 - The more we learn of Him, the more excellent we find Him!
 - He has an inexhaustible excellence and glory,
 - and it is ours to discover more and more of His greatness for all eternity!
 - His name—what is known about Him—will increase!
2. And so you see how blessed His subjects are!
- The end of verse 16 sums up their happiness in His service!
 - “And men shall be blessed in Him; and all nations shall call Him blessed!”
 - They are happy in their service to Him.
 - The more they learn of Him, the more they want to honour Him and serve Him...
 - Christian, this is your future in the kingdom of Jesus Christ!
 - There is nothing bleak about it at all!
 - You are set apart to be blessed in Him!
 - How happy you should be!
 - How devoted to your king!

CONCLUSION:

And so it is for us to praise to God for giving us such a perfect King.

- Psalm 72 teaches you the glories of Your king!
 - We have seen that He establishes
 - a kingdom of true righteousness and peace...
 - a kingdom that will endure forever...
 - a kingdom that will spread into all the world...
 - a kingdom that will spread by giving rather than taking...
 - a kingdom in which all the citizens are happily devoted to their king!
- What is left for you to do but to bless your God as verses 18-19 direct you to do!
 - Psalm 72:18-19: Blessed *be* the LORD God, the God of Israel, Who only does wondrous things! And blessed *be* His glorious name forever! And let the whole earth be filled *with* His glory. Amen and Amen.