

God's Inviolable Throne Assures Us of a Glorious Destiny

Psalm 93:1-5

Halifax: 23 June 2019

Introduction

As most of you know, it has long been our practice at Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church to have a Psalm of Focus related to our regular morning sermon series.

- As we are currently studying the gospel of Mark, and have just come to the account of Jesus calming the sea which is followed by a number of other passages that emphasise His sovereign authority,
 - I wanted to present a new Psalm of Focus to you related to that theme of sovereign authority.
- The Psalm I have chosen is Psalm 93.
 - This Psalm, along with Psalm 94 through Psalm 101, has the common theme of “The Reign of God.”
 - Both Jewish and Christian expositors understand these Psalms to be Messianic—that is, that they are about the reign of Christ.
 - They were compiled and probably written after the exile, and flow out of Psalm 92, where assurance of God’s preservation of His people is emphasised.
 - Returning from captivity, God’s people needed to be assured that God’s purpose to bring them into His glorious presence at the end of all was still certain.
- We also need to be reassured of God’s reign as we are part of a society that once professed God, but now is unravelling as we increasingly look at self as sovereign instead of the LORD.
 - Today’s view is that I myself am the centre of the universe—as Carl Jung said, “The self is a circle whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere.”
 - Instead of seeking to be conformed to God or even nature, we are seeking to have everything conform to self. For us, the individual self reigns instead of God.
 - When we sing, “The LORD reigns,” we are affirming what our culture denies. We are denying the reign of self. We are taking our side with God in a great war.
 - The declaration that God reigns is very beautifully and succinctly set forth in Psa. 93.
 - It expresses just how sure His eternal reign over the earth truly is.
- We will all do well both to take it to heart and to sing it in our day.
 - Listen now as I read it to you. Psalm 93:

Psalm 93:1-5: The LORD reigns, He is clothed with majesty; the LORD is clothed, He has girded Himself with strength. Surely the world is established, so that it cannot be moved. ² Your throne *is* established from of old; You *are* from everlasting. ³ The floods have lifted up, O LORD, the floods have

lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves. ⁴ The LORD on high *is* mightier than the noise of many waters, *than* the mighty waves of the sea. ⁵ Your testimonies are very sure; holiness adorns Your house, O LORD, forever.

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

- You see? We are even dependent on Him for that.
 - We can’t benefit from hearing His word unless He blesses us.

I. The LORD reigns.

A. That is the assertion with which Psalm 93 opens.

1. It is primal to God to reign.
 - This is simply who He is.
 - He cannot be anyone else but the sovereign LORD who reigns,
 - nor does He want to be anyone else, for it is right for the only being who is self-existing and by whom everything else exists to reign.
 - As Romans 11:36 says, **For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.**
 - It is as simple as that.
 - As the One who made all things and who upholds all things, He can do nothing else but reign.
 - It is simply who He is... reigning over all things cannot be separated from Him.
2. But think about how contrary this is to our society.
 - We are so desperate to be sovereign that we will not accept what we have been given—we will not even accept what we are.
 - We want to have control instead of God.
 - We want to set the rules of conduct—to decide what is right for us...
 - We want to live as we please.
 - To lash out in anger or sulk when it pleases us.
 - To have sex in whatever way and with whomever we want.
 - To do whatever we want on the Lord's Day and every day.
 - To hate and kill what we want to hate and kill and to love what we want to love.
 - Increasingly, we will not even accept our own bodies as male or female.
 - At the bottom of it all, we want to reign instead of God.
 - We want control. We want to be the sovereign ruler instead of Him.
 - It is absurd because we can't have it... we cannot be in control... but that is what we want.
3. When we sing "the LORD reigns," we are attacking a whole way of life that is contrary to reality.
 - The LORD does reign and nobody can change that fact.
 - They can be offended about it, but they cannot change it.
 - That is the way it is.
 - Everything will be judged by Him.

B. We further assert here that God has made it known that He reigns.

1. Verse 1 goes on to express that in these words: "**He is clothed with majesty; the LORD is clothed, He has girded Himself with strength.**"
 - His *clothes* refer to what He displays of Himself to us—how He presents Himself to us.
 - And what He displays to us is majesty and strength.
 - a. *Majesty* refers to His authority.
 - When a king is majestic, you see the tokens and evidence of his authority—his crown, his throne, his attendants, his armies, his sceptre.

- In other words, he displays his authority over all things.
- b. And His *strength*—that is seen when He exercises His authority.
 - When we see His hand acting to kill and to make alive, to thwart His enemies and to establish His kingdom.
- 2. His majesty and strength have been displayed again and again in the world.
 - a. They were displayed when He created the world and all things in it by the breath of His mouth—a reality that our world is desperate to deny.
 - b. His majesty and strength were displayed when He instituted labour, the Sabbath, and marriage, and commanded us to be fruitful and fill the earth with image bearers,
 - while at the same time forbidding us to eat the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
 - c. His majesty and strength were displayed when we violated His commandment and He drove us from the garden, cursed the ground because of us, and brought death upon us all,
 - yet clothed Adam and Eve and promised to bring forth through the woman a seed that would serve Him.
 - d. His majesty and strength were displayed when He sent the great flood to destroy the whole world;
 - but it was also seen in sparing Noah and his house along with the animals on the ark so that His eternal purpose for the earth might stand.
 - e. His majesty and strength were displayed again at Babel when He confused the languages to humble the pride of man,
 - but also in calling Abraham to become a great nation that He preserved from their enemies and from their own folly—and through which all the families of the earth would be blessed.
 - And then in delivering them out of Egypt, the powerhouse nation of the day by His mighty hand in answer to Pharaoh, who said, “Who is the LORD that I should obey Him?”
 - f. His majesty and strength were seen in giving them His law with thunder on Mount Sinai and punishing those who sought to defy Him...
 - And in bringing them into the Promised Land and wiping out the Canaanites on account of their wickedness while establishing His people in the land with ceremonies representing His promised blessing.
 - And then in sending prophets to declare His judgments upon the nations as well as upon His own people, and in carrying out those judgments with a mighty hand.
 - g. Above all, His majesty and strength were displayed in sending forth His Son to triumph over Satan, over rebellion, and over death by the cross,
 - and then by raising Him up to reign at His right hand where He has been gathering the nations to be His people, just as He said He would.

- Truly there is no power like that of the gospel, transforming those who are estranged from God—lifting them out of the miry clay and establishing them upon the rock of Christ for salvation.
 - It is an assertion of God’s sovereign rule.
 - So that the drunkard becomes sober.
 - The blasphemer becomes a worshipper.
 - The immoral becomes chaste.
 - The hateful comes to love even their enemies.
3. Truly, by this grand display of His majesty and strength, He has shown us clearly that He rules over the earth and that His purpose for the earth will stand.
- a. This conclusion is drawn in the rest of verse 1 and in verse 2: **Surely the world is established, so that it cannot be moved. 2 Your throne is established from of old; You are from everlasting.**
- No one but the LORD rules over the earth.
 - He alone determines what it will become and how it will become that.
 - His throne is inviolable.
 - It is settled what the earth shall be and no one can change that.
 - The kingdoms of men rise and fall, but the kingdom of God and of His anointed is forever.
- But just what is His purpose for the earth?
- b. His purpose for the earth is that it be filled with worshippers who love God and who serve Him in true obedience.
- Thus He created the first man and the first woman in His own image and called them to be fruitful and fill the earth.
 - Though they, not apart from His sovereign purpose, fell into transgression and sin,
 - He shows His majesty and strength in still carrying out His purpose with the promise of a new (renewed) heavens and a renewed earth where righteousness dwells...
 - In the end, He is going to have a world filled with holy people.
 - He is establishing the whole earth to be the city of God, and when Christ returns in glory, it will be so.
 - All the earth shall worship Him, all His saints will be glorified and perfected, and all His enemies will be cast into the pit.

TRANS> Try as they might, no one can change what He has decreed, and that brings us to the next great theme in this Psalm.

II. All opposition to His reign is utterly futile. It cannot stand.

- A. The opposition is described in verse 3 as floods (floods of opposition).
- It is described by three-fold repetition.
1. First, we say here: **The floods have lifted up, O LORD,**
- How lowly man is—made of the dust of the ground.
 - Yet in shocking arrogance he has lifted himself up against the most high God, like a river overflowing its banks—forsaking its appointed boundaries.
 - There he is, seeking to assert his sovereignty against the most high God.

- Notice how we address the Lord here... **The floods have lifted up, O LORD.**
 - It is a striking thing—a notable thing—a surprising thing that dust and ashes should rise up against God.
 - It is as if here we are calling God to take notice of it and do something.
 - It is a very troubling thing to those who fear God and who have been reconciled to Him to see this in their fellow men, because we know His majesty.
 - We see these floods of opposition that are not crushed...
 - We see Satan and we wonder why God does not stop him.
 - We yearn for God to stop him and to silence his blasphemy.
 - We see wicked rulers rising up like a flood and we wonder.
 - We yearn for God to cause them to see that they are mere men.
 - And worst of all, we see the remaining rebellion in our own hearts and we want to be cleansed—we know it is wrong—we know it is insane and completely unacceptable.
- O LORD, take note of these floods! The floods have lifted up!
- It is so disturbing when we think about it that we speak about it a second time...
2. We say: **The floods have lifted up their voice;**
- They are boasting against the LORD.
 - They speak great swelling words against the LORD and against His anointed.
 - They boast of great things—
 - They say that God cannot stop them... that He has no authority over them and no right to their obedience.
 - If they wish to kill their offspring or to kill themselves, what is that to Him?
 - They even boast of their moral superiority, challenging His laws and commandments and setting up themselves in judgment against Him...
 - As if they were the judges!
 - And they boast of the kingdom that they will establish.
 - They claim that it will be a superior kingdom.
 - They claim that they have the answers and the key to happiness.
 - They boast that they will overthrow the LORD and His anointed.
- O LORD, take note of these floods—rising up and boasting—
- But we do not stop with that in singing this Psalm.
3. We go on to speak of the floods a third time, saying: **The floods lift up their waves.**
- They do more than talk—the language here suggests waves that are relentless.
 - They continue to attack His kingdom with wave after wave.
 - So many wars have been fought by those asserting their own authority instead of submitting to God’s authority.
 - They want to establish their own kingdom, and so the attack begins.
 - But even worse than that is the direct attack against righteous men and prophets who declare that the LORD reigns.
 - With bitter hatred they oppose them and they kill them.

- They even killed our Lord Jesus when He was here declaring the righteous kingdom of God and doing good to all.
- B. In verse 4 we answer this three-fold description of the floods with a three-fold description of the LORD's superior strength.
1. In answer to the floods rising, we assert that the LORD is mightier than they.
 - **The LORD on high is mightier.**
 - Certainly this is true—
 - They can rise up in great power relative to us, and they often do.
 - But God is the LORD, the self-existing God who made and sustains all things.
 - They cannot even breathe without His permission.
 - Certainly He is mightier than they are.
 - Once they have fulfilled His purposes in exerting their strength, He will bring them down.
 - He will blow them away like chaff.
 - As we sing we must take this all to heart—as we feel the strength of Egypt and Babylon and the Prince of Darkness—
 - As we tremble in our weakness, we need to remember that the LORD on high is mightier and we need to say it and to sing it.
 - We need to encourage one another that the LORD reigns with our songs, both in the assembly in the daily affairs of life.
 - I hope that you sing Psalms in your family and that you sing them with your heart engaged so that they minister to you and help you put the world with its rising floods in perspective.
 2. Then we go on to assert in answer to the lifted voice of the floods that the LORD is mightier **than the noise of many waters.**
 - Not only is He mightier than the floods are—He is also mightier than their boasts and their claims.
 - Even their exaggerated boasts cannot compare with who He actually is.
 - They can speak with such confidence.
 - They can and often intimidate us and make us afraid with their boasts and claims against God's word and against His reign.
 - They laugh and mock in their arrogance, but soon their empty boasts are exposed.
 - We might think of the many who have said that they will wipe out God's people, either by war or by argument—but the church continues to grow.
 - Think of those who boast of evolution, yet already we can see their theory unravelling—more and more.
 - Think of those who boasted of historical error in scripture,
 - claiming that persons and places did not exist until such places and persons are discovered...
 - or claiming with mockery that Moses could not have written the Pentateuch because society was not advanced to such understanding...

- until they found overwhelming evidence to the contrary.
 - Or claiming that most of the New Testament had to have been written by later generations—until again, evidence proved otherwise.
3. And in singing this Psalm, we assert thirdly that the LORD is mightier than the mighty waves of the sea.
- Their waves do not harm Him at all.
 - They cannot even reach to His throne.
 - We are told that He laughs at their attempts to overthrow Him.
 - He will break them to pieces like a potter's vessel—like a piece of pottery that is smashed to pieces with a rod of iron.
 - Yes, they attack His people... they even attacked His Son.
 - But all they can do by their attacks is further His purposes.
- C. The truth is, these floods of opposition only help to fulfill His purposes.
1. Take Pharaoh.
- God says to Pharaoh: “For this cause I have raised you up, that I might make my power known.”
 - He made Pharaoh very strong and He hardened his heart so that he would exert all his strength and all his power against God.
 - How feeble it all was.
 - All his efforts, though terrifying to Israel, were impotent.
 - In the end, both the Egyptians and the Israelites saw that God was the LORD.
 - A lasting impression was made.
2. Take the cross.
- Here you have God's enemies, doing all that He appointed.
 - Look at the great prayer of the persecuted saints in Acts 4—where they affirm that their enemies did just what God had determined when they crucified Christ.
 - Acts 4:27-28: **For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together ²⁸ to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.**
 - He was reigning the whole time.
 - They did nothing apart from His will.
 - So why did God let them mock and crucify His Son?
 - Because He had a greater purpose that they were actually fulfilling by crucifying Him.
 - Not only did it show us how wicked mankind is—that even the people God had prepared with promises should crucify the Messiah God sent to save them—
 - but it also brought about the death of God's Son that God appointed in His grace to atone for the sin of the world.
 - To the poor disciples of Jesus, it looked like everything had gone wrong, but it was just the opposite.
 - Everything had gone exactly according the plan and purpose of God.

- When Jesus came forth from the grave declaring full remission of sin by His blood, what looked like a failure at first was seen to be the greatest of all victories.
3. And so it will be at the last day.
- Satan has been raised up and so have those who are joined with him in his rebellion... the floods are lifted up—they have lifted up their voice—their waves strike against all who serve the LORD.
 - But on the Day of Judgment, their rise to power will only serve to demonstrate the power and justice of the LORD who reigns over all when He judges them.
 - The Lord will vindicate His people.
 - Revelation speaks of the blood of the martyrs that He will avenge on the day that He has appointed.
 - Those who have died in the LORD were not harmed by it—instead it was an honour for them to die for their reigning LORD,
 - an honour that they will retain for ever and ever!
 - God has told us that He actually raises these enemies up to accomplish His purposes through them.
 - Sometimes to chasten us that we might learn what it is like to serve under their authority.
 - Always to show His majesty and strength in bringing them down...and to bless us in the end.
 - Yes, He allows them to rise to great heights and then He crushes them.

III. So my brothers and sisters, in your weakness before the angry floods, sing to your king with joyful hope.

- Here in the last verse of Psalm 93, we address our LORD directly.
 - In the first four verses, we have been (with the exception of one phrase) speaking about His reign, but now we speak directly to Him.
- A. First, we say to Him, (verse 5), **Your testimonies are very sure.**
1. His testimonies are His promises.
 - The word that He is spoken to us.
 - The covenant He has made in which He swears to us that He will bless us and make our name great and that He will overthrow our enemies.
 - And that He will give us a new heart and forgive all our sins.
 - And that we will at last come to live in His house forever with Christ our king, beholding the glory that He had with the Father before the world began.
 2. We address Him, you see, as those who believe what we have just sung in the first four verses—
 - that He reigns—
 - that He is mightier than all the floods that have risen up against Him and against His anointed King and His kingdom.
 3. We tell Him that we know that He will do all that He has spoken.

- Who can prevent it?
 - LORD, Your testimonies are very sure!
 - You will do all that you have spoken. Of this we are sure.
- B. Second, we say to Him (still verse 5), **Holiness adorns Your House, O LORD, forever.**
1. To say that His house is adorned by holiness is to say that *He* is at the centre of everything.
 - That which is holy is that which revolves around God, which conforms to His reign and obeys His commandments.
 - All in His house is conformed to Him...
 - All is conformed to this One who is lovely, who is holy, who is our worthy creator and our gracious redeemer...
 - It is conformed to Him whose beauty has been from eternity the glory of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit who dwell together in perfect love and adoration.
 - It is a house where all are enamoured with His glory and majesty.
 2. By telling Him that holiness adorns His house, we address Him as those who accept His reign and delight in it.
 - It is to tell Him that we are glad that He is reigning.
 - and that we want to be part of His kingdom.
 - We do not want to establish another kingdom where *we* are sovereign.
 - Who among us could run such a kingdom?
 - We do not want a kingdom where Satan or some other mere creature is sovereign. That is not fitting.
 - We have come to *Him* for our salvation; we have come to *Him* for life; we have come to *Him* for righteousness through His Son.
 - We have come to Him to save us from our sins—that we might be part of His righteous kingdom forever.
 3. We attest here of our hope that we will be made holy.
 - That our lives, by His grace, will at last be all about Him as our God who reigns.
 - That we will love Him as we ought and worship Him as we ought and obey all of His commandments...
 - And in so doing, that we will live in the beauty of holiness with God at the centre of our lives and of every endeavour.
 4. And we attest that all of this will be so forever and ever.
 - When this glorious kingdom comes, no one will be able to overthrow it.
 - The world is established by Him and it cannot be moved.
 - It will be what He wants.
 - It will be what God wants.
 - It will not be what anyone else wants because: **of Him and through Him and to Him are all things to whom be the glory forever.**