

## PSALM 2 TALK

We are starting a new teaching series today.  
We're calling the series 'Understanding the Times'.  
Because if there has ever been a season where  
it's wise for everyone to pause  
and ask the bigger question  
'what on earth is going on?'  
it seems like now is a pretty good time to do that.

A lot of organisations  
over the last 5 - 10 years prepared their vision statements  
playing on the whole 2020 Vision idea.

"By 2020, we aim to be doing . . ."  
It's a bit ironic that in the year 2020,  
our vision of what lies ahead feels anything but perfect 2020 vision.

For these next few weeks  
we are going to dig deep  
into an ancient text,  
the book of Psalms  
— a text that has not just been a source of wisdom  
and comfort to many, many people over thousands of years  
— but it is a text, that doesn't shy away from addressing the big questions,  
some might say the 'timeless'  
questions of the world we live in.

And today we are looking at Psalm 2,  
A Psalm all about authority and who is really in charge.

You know those times when you arrive at a meeting late,  
and everyone is arguing,  
and you find yourself thinking  
'who on earth is running this show?'

This is a Psalm about THAT question.  
But not for our TINY meetings.  
It's answering it for the ENTIRE planet.

And it was written as a SONG  
A song that would have originally been sung  
by God's ancient people, Israel in their temple.

It's like an early version of Marvin Gaye's protest song

'What's going on?'  
— but with a very different answer.

It is a coronation song. A song of a new king.

The whole concept of coronation ceremonies,  
is a quaint idea to many Australians.  
Many of us struggle to take all the pomp and ceremony seriously,  
due in part to our well developed,  
pretty robust, some would say well justified  
tall-poppy syndrome.

Compared to other countries,  
Australians are often a lot more cynical  
about authority and rulers.  
Probably due in part to our unique and complex history,  
we are very suspicious of power  
being restricted to the privileged few.

And so this coronation song is  
written to provide its readers with '2020 vision' and comfort,  
And that even includes us in the year 2020,  
in fact especially to us in the year 2020.

Now I want to be honest, that for many of us when we read this Psalm, our  
immediate reaction might not be 'WOW what a message of hope, comfort,  
security, joy';  
in fact, our immediate reaction might be to outright reject the author as  
arrogant, with an over inflated ego.

Have a look at how it begins in v1 & 2

It begins with a question essentially saying: WHY?  
Why are all the kings  
the rulers  
the people with power even bothering,  
why are they wasting their energy,  
why are they plotting in vain.

I've just finished the Netflix documentary 'The Last Dance' on Michael Jordan  
and the Chicago Bulls. A great documentary, but you can't help but feel that  
Michael Jordan had a heavy part to play in making sure the final edit made it  
clear that if there was any doubt as to who is the greatest basketball player  
of all time — then doubt no more! He's the Greatest of All Time.

Now when we look at OUR coronation song a bit closer, we see that the author is not simply saying, WHY do other kings and rulers *waste their energy* in a general sense.

The author is NOT saying there is NO place for kings and rulers of the world. The author is saying — WHY are all the other kings, rulers and nations coming together; uniting to fight what they see as their common enemy — God (or the LORD or YAHWEH v2) and the king God his anointed. His Christ.

It's a rhetorical question of sorts, because the psalmist answers the question in v3. These kings, rulers and powers of the world are coming together to overthrow God and his king, because they are CONVINCED that to have God as their ruler is enslaving.

They are uniting in their desire for freedom.

See v3.

“Let us break their chains and throw off their shackles”.

They are CONVINCED that to have God and God's chosen King as their ultimate ruler will be enslaving, it will be the antithesis to living a life of freedom, the unshackled life.

Do you ever feel this way?

That living a life that not only BELIEVES in God, but desires to actually live with God as our boss — do you believe THAT THAT is the road to freedom or the restriction of freedom?

Do you feel sometimes that your life would be free-er if God didn't have to factor into to it?

One of my favourite movies growing up was the Lion King.

And there are heaps of parts of that movie that remind me of this Psalm.

One of the darker scenes early in the movie is when Scar, the King Mufasa's younger brother, envious of his power, comes together and plots with the Hyenas, the natural enemies of the Lions, but they unite in their common quest to overthrow Mufasa the rightful king. And Scar with a powerful piece of propaganda, unites these common enemies against Mufasa and his anointed king Simba;

he promises the hyenas the promise of a glorious future, unshackled by the chains of Mufasa's oppressive rule.

And as the story goes on you see the bleak, desolate future for the land under the rule of Scar and the hyenas.

And so these opening verses, expose this corrupt propaganda for what it is. It is a vain plot, in fact it's a ridiculous, almost humorous plot, like street gang trying to pick a fight with spiderman

“What are trying to do?”:

— see v4

The One enthroned in heaven laughs;  
the Lord scoffs at them.

But we see in v5, that despite the ridiculousness of their efforts to find freedom apart from God, this is no laughing matter.

In fact, the one who made us doesn't think it is funny when we not only ignore him, but actively seek to eliminate his authority in our lives.

It is in fact deeply offensive. And so the laughter of v4, transitions to anger at the seriousness of what they are trying to do.

Trying to rule the creation, without the creator.

There was this movie a few years ago with Michael Keaton, called the Founder — and told the story of the successful plot of Ray Kroc, who through his shrewd business skills was able to take over McDonalds restaurants from the founders and make it into the empire it is today.

And while this kind of thing happens all the time today in the business world, sometimes through honest negotiations, sometimes through secrecy and deception.

It's a very different thing to try to do this with God, our creator, the one who made ALL OF US — to think we can find freedom without our creator, is not just ridiculous, it's deeply offensive.

And yet as we read this Psalm, we don't just get a description of how God feels about how the kings and rulers and nations want to abandon him.

We get a decisive declaration. WHAT GOD HAS DONE ABOUT IT.

And this is like the chorus of the song.

In answer to our question at the start  
'Who own earth is running this show?'

Here we get a decisive answer.

v6 *"I have installed my king  
on Zion, my holy mountain."*

And yet as we read it seems like the word 'king' here is used by the LORD as almost a bit of a concession to the language of the nations.

Almost like its a reference back, in comparison to the kings and rulers of the earth, God's definitive answer is I have installed my king.

BUT.... and this is very important to understanding  
the beauty of this coronation song.

For the rest of the song, God's king is NOT referred to using the language of king and terms like RULER.

If you cast your eyes through the passage,  
you will see how God choses to refer to his king.

v7  
"You are my son;  
today I have become your father."

God's rule is NOT about raw power and might.

God's rule is begins with a loving relationship.

God's ruler is defined by his status as a son of the Father,  
not his status as a king.

Now in the original context, this designation was given to David.

A small shepherd boy.  
The least impressive of his brothers.  
The least powerful.

The king who became famous for his relative lack of power against the mighty Goliath.

This is the kind of king God is interested in.

The king who rules in humility, in service.

Not in displays of ego.

And so the Father - Son rule God is on about  
is very different to the North Korea version of the Father - Son dynasty.

And so for God's ancient people Israel.

At this coronation ceremony

When they looked at the chaos of the world around them

The threats of surrounding nations.

When they found themselves asking the question we all find ourselves asking  
"who on earth is in charge here".

They got a definitive answer — God's king is in charge, the one who will rule  
after his own heart.

The one who will share in his Father's inheritance,  
who care for the nations and the ends of the earth like one cares for a  
precious possession, a prized inheritance vs8

The one who will share in his Father's authority and power vs 9

Now for anyone who knows the story of God's people Israel, we see that  
while David started his rule as a king who would rule after God's own heart;  
we see he failed as a ruler.

In his adultery with Bethsheba, we see a glimpse of how his heart had  
become corrupt, he was using his position of power and influence, to be self  
serving, to abuse and kill others.

It became clear in Israel's history, that this Psalm was either a piece of  
hyperbole about the failed king David — or it was written to point beyond the  
king David to another king.

At the beginning of Mark's Gospel, we read the account of Jesus' Baptism,  
where there is a voice recorded as coming from the heavens, with the words  
'You are my Son'.

You see it is NOT until the coming of Jesus of Nazareth that the world sees  
with 2020 vision, what God's kind really looks like up close.

The only person who has walked the face of the earth that deserves full worship. Full devotion.

And here is this moment about half-way through Mark's Gospel, when it seems like one of Jesus' friends, one of his disciples finally gets it.

Jesus asks them who they think he is - and it seems for Peter the penny has finally dropped he says 'You are the Christ' (that is you are the anointed king referred to in Psalm 2'.

And so as you read this scene in Mark's gospel you're thinking, someone has finally got it; but then there's a twist.

Instead of Jesus talking up all the ways he will dash people to pottery, how his wrath will flare up; we find him talking about how HE HIMSELF will suffer, be arrested, be mocked, be crucified.

And so then we have this strange scene where Peter (who only a few moments ago was thinking he was in the smart kids club) is now confused.

This IS NOT how the coronation song is meant to go, you can imagine Peter thinking.

God's King, isn't meant to suffer. He is meant to be victorious.

And so Peter starts to rebuke Jesus, telling Jesus that he has forgotten how the coronation song goes.

And so how does Jesus respond.

In the most serious way possible — he says that Peter's desire for a triumphant, non suffering king — doesn't come from God, but comes from the devil.

We see in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, what God's rule through his king, his actual looks like up close.

[PAUSE]

So how are we to respond to this coronation song today?

Well in one sense the application is right there in the final three verses

There is a call for earthly kings, rulers and those with great power and influence, the CEO's the media owners, the politicians, the influencers —

the call is a sobering call to *be wise and be warned*. v10

Don't be deluded into thinking you are actually in charge of your little kingdom.

And then there is call for everyone, to serve the LORD with fear v11 which is not an anxious, uncertain fear; but a fear like someone who has suddenly become aware of just how small they are.

But not just service with fear, in the very same verse we read, celebrate his rule with trembling.

We are made to not just enjoy God, but to also enjoy his rule, in awe of his goodness and power.

Again back to the Lion King, I love the opening and closing scene at pride rock, the first with the coronation of Simba and at the end with the rightful king returning to his throne.

there is that real sense of joy and celebration at the rightful king taking his throne, where everything is in its right place.

And you see for us today, in many ways we are right to be suspicious of worldly authorities.

A simple smart phone video of police officers making an arrest in Minneapolis; has been the trigger for global outrage at just how corrupt our human authorities can be.

Which is why for us today, it's so important that we sing this song correctly.

It is so important we know exactly which authority we are called to give our undivided ultimate obedience to.

It is as it says in v12, the SON.  
We are called to be devoted in homage to the son.

Every other human authority will let you down.

In answer to our question today  
'Who on earth is in charge here?'

We see in the life and death of Jesus — the loving, self-less, incorruptal character of God's king.

We see in his resurrection to new life — his victory.

We see that we really can take refuge in him

In his promise not only for life in this world, but also the life to come.

END