

It's Not About You

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[0:00] Well, last week we began a new study on this book, The Way of the Righteous and the Muck of Life, Psalms 1-12 by Dale Ralph Davis.

Davis is a pastor of Woodland Presbyterian Church in Hadiesburg, Mississippi. And before that he served as professor of Old Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary.

And so he's going to be our guide for today and for the next 10 weeks or so through Psalm 1-12.

And so last week we looked at Psalm 1.

We saw the direction, we just saw a number of things, but the first thing we saw was the direction of the believer's life. And so let's warm up our minds here with some review.

And let me ask you, where does the blessed man, the righteous man, not get his direction from?

Where does he not get his direction from?

[1:02] Dale. What's that? The ungodly. He does not get it from the ungodly. He does not get it from the world. So he doesn't walk in the counsel of the wicked.

He doesn't listen to what the wicked people say about how to do life and what life is about. He doesn't stand in the way of sinners. So he's not on that path. He's not watching where everyone else is going.

He's not getting his direction from the world. And so he doesn't sit in the seat of mockers. That means his friends, the people that he talks to regularly, are not unbelievers, ungodly.

And so let me ask you, where does he get his direction? Where does his direction come from for life? From the Word of God.

So it doesn't come from the world. It comes from the Word. And so the blessed man stands in the ancient paths. His ears are open to God and to his wisdom.

[2:03] And that is who he's listening to to see how he should do life. He takes his cues from the Word, not the world. So Psalm 1 really begs us to ask the question, well, what about you?

Are you listening to the world about what it says about materialism, about what it says about this is the way to be happy, to find joy? Or is the Word your delight?

Psalm 1 says his delight is in the law of the Lord. And on his law he meditates day and night. And so Psalm 1 begs us to seriously sit down and think about, who are we listening to?

Who are we listening to? Well, we saw the direction of the blessed man. And next we saw the description of the blessed man. What is the blessed man, the righteous man, like?

What did it say? This is easy. Roger, yes. A tree firmly planted. So we said that means he's stable.

[3:08] He's not going anywhere. He's where he's at and God is blessing him and he will not leave that spot of blessing. And so the blessed man isn't like the fig tree who's planted in the vineyard, who God takes all kinds of care of, but he doesn't bear fruit because it also said that he's a fruitful tree.

So he's there and he's bearing his fruit in season. And his leaves don't wither. What would that mean in our lives? Well, it would mean there wouldn't be any dead spots where there's no grace, there's no holiness.

God's life, God's power is filling the whole tree. And so there's fruit everywhere and there's green leaves everywhere. And then we saw the destiny of the blessed man and we saw the destiny of the wicked man.

The wicked are like chaff. They're blown away. So the pitchfork is stuck in them. They're thrown into the wind and they're carried away. And they will not stand in the day of judgment.

But the Lord knows. He watches over the way of the righteous. And so he knows their way in this life. He knows he cares for them in judgment.

[4:21] And his care is ongoing. If you are a Christian, you can know and depend that for the rest of your life and forever and ever, God is going to care for you.

And that's why he's blessed. That's why he's happy. Because the Lord is his God. And he's blessing him every day of his life.

And so Psalm 1 is a sweet song. It's simple, clear. It's full of wisdom. It gives us clarity about how we should live our individual lives.

And so Psalm 1 is all about the individual. But Psalm 2 is different. Psalm 1 is a very narrow picture of an individual and a man.

And Psalm 2 is the broad picture. And so we saw Psalm 1 is Psalm 1 because it gets us, it starts off where we need to start off with ourselves.

[5:18] But Psalm 2 is nearly as important, just as important, because it shows us not only ourselves, but it shows us the whole world. Where is everything going? Where is history going?

And so we need to get a big view of things. Not only a narrow view, but a big view of things. So have you ever had to say to one of your children, it is not about you.

It's not about you. Paul Tripp tells of a birthday party of a little girl that he was teaching at the time.

She was in kindergarten. And the girl's mother had decorated the room.

She had provided party favors. But there was one little boy that was not happy. He was jealous because the gifts weren't his.

The party wasn't about him. The attention wasn't directed towards him. And so he was starting to make a real nuisance of himself, as you can imagine. I'm sure you've seen pictures and you've been in situations like that.

[6:20] Then one of the mothers walked over to the little boy and turned him around in his chair and got right down into his face so he was looking straight into her eyes. And she said, Johnny, this is not your party.

It's not your party. It's remarkable how small-minded we can become. How selfish and narrow our view of the world can become.

And so sometimes we can't see past our own noses. We can't see beyond our own interest. And so we naturally live for our little kingdom.

Do you remember those terms? Little kingdom. And God's big kingdom. And so we're living for our little kingdom so often. And God is working and building His big kingdom that's going to stretch forever and ever over all space and time.

Well, Psalm 2 is about getting that big picture. It's about getting us out of our narrow view of things and broadening our horizon.

[7:29] And so it takes us out of our little kingdom. It looks us straight into the eye and says, you know what? This is not about you ultimately. I am doing something far greater. And it makes us look right into God's big kingdom.

So Psalm 1 is all about dealing about important individual matters. And Psalm 2 says, you need to know where history is going. You have to see the whole show.

So you have to understand that this world has been promised to the Messiah. So let's look at the Psalm then. Turn in your Bibles to Psalm 2.

Psalm 2. And first, we're going to see that the world hates.

The world hates. That's our first point. So let's just read a few verses here. Psalm 2. Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain?

[8:32] The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Messiah, his anointed one. Let us break their chains, they say, and throw off their fetters.

So we see here, first of all, that the world hates. The world hates God. Romans 1 says that, by nature, men are God-haters.

And that is a startling phrase because none of us like to think of ourselves that way naturally. But it's that slap in the face that begins this Psalm. The world is hostile to God.

And that goes without saying. I mean, if the nations rage, people's plot, kings conspire against Yahweh and his Messiah, and that's our world.

So whether congresses or parliaments or dictatorships or democracies, the root attitude, the fire in the heart of this world is we will not have that man to reign over us.

[9:41] It's rebellion. And so, this is Psalm 1-1. This is the way of the sinner. This is the standing in the way of sinners or sitting in the seat of mockers.

This is Psalm 1-1 written with big letters. This is when the way of sinners goes international, when everyone is participating in it. And so, the disciples tell us that in the early church there was a premier, the premier, the highest example of this conspiracy.

So, and it happened when they crucified Jesus. Now, you remember Acts 4. The apostles are preaching and the Sanhedrin and the Jewish leaders and all the other head honchos of the Jewish nation drag the apostles before them and they say, you have to stop preaching or else.

And the apostles hustled back to where the church was meeting and they prayed. Do you remember what they prayed? They prayed Psalm 2 back to God.

And they filled in the blanks with the latest kings and what has just recently happened. And so, they said, Herod and Pilate along with the Gentiles and the people of Israel killed your holy servant Jesus.

[11:04] And so, the world hates God. The world hates the Messiah. And they don't want Him to rule over them. They don't want anything to do with Him.

And so, when they had their chance, they proved what they were made of and they killed the Messiah. They put Him to death. Now, sometimes, the world's hostility for Jesus, it spills over onto us, His people.

There's no walls that can hold back their hostility. And that's why Jesus said, if the world hates you, know that it hated me first.

That before it hated you, it hated me. And so, as God's people, we are going to experience this hostility. So, when the communists took over China in 1949, one Christian brother there reported that believers were crucified on the walls of their churches for refusing to deny Jesus Christ. And some were chained behind horses and trucks and they were dragged to death. And one pastor was hoisted by a makeshift crane and dropped to his death.

[12:30] And when the first drop didn't kill him, the second one did. And those things are not some extraordinary thing.

This is not out of the ordinary. This isn't aberrant at all. This is the norm. Sometimes it's less violent and sometimes it's more. But the hatred is constant.

The world hated Jesus. It's going to hate us. But before we leave that point, we want to see something else about their hostility.

And that is that it is insane. It's insane. What is the first word of Psalm 2? Someone tell me. Why? Why? And this isn't the why of why I don't understand. This is the astonished why. This is the why. This is the why that you say when you're sitting there watching some reality TV show and they're eating maggots for money.

[13:36] And you're like, why? Why are they doing that? That's crazy. And that's the why that your wife says when she sees you watching that TV show. Why are you doing that?

You must be insane. And that's our world, isn't it? That's our world. It's insane in its hostility. So why are the nations conspiring?

The point is how stupid can you be? How unbelievably stupid can you be? Humans conspire against God? They're going to take God off of his throne?

And that's why he says why do the nations plot in vain? This is vanity. It's going to come to nothing. This is nonsense. But that's the world. It's insane in its hostility towards God.

And now that brings us, that brings you as a Christian to a dilemma. If you keep your eyes on this world and you watch its hostility and that's where your focus is as a Christian, if that is where your focus is, you are going to do one of two things.

[14:53] You are going to compromise or you are going to be gripped with fear that freezes you. So, you'll try to find some way to deal with the reality that Christians, that you as a Christian, are a persecuted minority.

And that's the fact. And you'll try to find some way of dealing with it. The world is not going to like you and it's going to persecute you, sometimes less and sometimes more.

And there is a distinct possibility of extreme violence. And that's what you live with. So, what will you do with that world's hostility? Now, if your focus is on this world, you'll either compromise or you'll be afraid.

And so, will you compromise? And I'm not saying you'll totally deny Jesus, but you'll bend enough so the world doesn't notice you. That's how you sort of play it off, if your focus is on this world. You won't out and out say you're not a Christian, but you'll become the kind of Christian that no one would even bother to persecute, because there's no point to it. Or, you can keep obeying and let the fear grip you, and you start to live in that reality.

[16:15] So, above my desk, there's a big picture of my four-year-old Phoebe. And, as I think about the future, it concerns me, to be honest.

I'm raising Phoebe counter-culturally. I'm raising her to be a persecuted minority, and I don't like that, to be honest. I'm raising her so that the world will hate her, and I don't like to think about what the future might hold for her.

I don't want her to suffer, and I don't want her for people not to like her. So, how, as a parent, how, as a believer, how do we deal with that fear without compromising?

So, how do we get out of this dilemma of fear or compromise? And, the answer is, we listen. We listen. And, what do we hear as Psalm 2 goes on?

The world is raging, and conspiring, and rebelling, and it's a noisy racket, but above that noise, we hear something. We hear the most surprising sound, and we hear God laughing.

[17:32] We hear God laughing, and that brings us to our second point, the throne that consoles. The throne that consoles. So, we saw the world that hates, and here's the throne that consoles, that comforts.

So, let's look at verses 4 and 5. The one enthroned in heaven laughs. The Lord scoffs at them. Then, he rebukes them in his anger, and terrifies them in his wrath, saying, I have installed my king on Zion, my holy hill.

So, immediately, Psalm 2 takes our attention off of this world, and it takes us to the throne room. It takes us to, if you read Revelation 4, it takes us there.

It takes us out of this world, and it takes us up. And, so it takes us off the rebellion, and it takes us to the throne that rules over the universe.

And God is laughing. He's unfazed. He's unimpressed with this world. So, as they truck out their nuclear weapons, and they truck out their persecution and their hatred, the world roars in anger, and God laughs at them.

[18:44] To think that these people could destroy my kingdom. It's preposterous. It's laughable. It's a laughable proposition.

And so, God laughs. And as the Lord laughs, that fear in my heart starts to lift. Because how can I be afraid when my God is laughing at them?

If God laughs, and God is for me, then what do I have to be afraid of? Why should I compromise with this world? Why should you compromise with this world when God is laughing at it?

All man's hatred and all man's venom and power is absurd. And so, why should you give in to them? Why should you act like them? Why should you disobey God and compromise with this world?

Why should you be afraid? Sort of like a child being afraid of ants, right, when you're getting ready to step on them. Isn't it?

[19:46] It's a silly idea. And then, the Lord speaks. He stops laughing, and with wrath, he says, I have installed my king on Zion, my holy hill.

His king is his anointed one. So, Yahweh's response to this rebellion is he mocks them. He mocks their grab for power, their grab for the rule of the world by imposing his own authority, by exalting the very one that they crucified to the highest throne, and to making him sit there and tell all the nations bow down before him until the nations are his footstool.

And so, the world could go on hating. The world can go on conspiring. The world can go on persecuting believers, and it doesn't make any difference. It doesn't make any difference, because God has already decided what is going to happen.

He's already decided that his Messiah will reign. And so, the rule of this world is no longer in doubt. The power grabs, the power plays are over.

The king is on high, and there's nothing they can do about it. And so, Yahweh has installed his king on his holy hill. And so, brothers and sisters, that should give us hope. That should give us hope.

[21:08] That should calm any fear, and that should put steel in your bones. So, how can we compromise with this world? How can we back down?

How can we run in fear? Because our Jesus is on the throne. Your best friend is ruling over all things. And so, when we start looking at the rebellion, or when you start looking at the rebellion, and the TV shows, and the articles, and the latest moves in Congress, it can become too much. And if you start to fear, and you start to doubt, and you start to compromise, the thing to do is to stop looking at the world and aim your gaze higher. And Jesus is on the throne, and he's totally unimpressed.

He's unfazed with the rage of men. So, we move to our third point. The decree that determines. The decree that determines. So, look down at verse seven. Verse seven. Verse I will proclaim the decree of the Lord.

[22 : 18] He said to me, you are my son, today I become your father. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. You will rule them with an iron scepter.

You will dash them to pieces like pottery. Let me ask you, who is, in verse seven, who is the I that is speaking?

Kind of look around in the context. Who is the I that is speaking? Close. Not quite. He says, I will proclaim the decree of the Lord.

Dale. Okay. The person who is speaking is the me in the next phrase.

So he said to me, you are my son. So this is Jesus, this is the Messiah proclaiming. He is the one who is saying, I am going to proclaim the decree of the Lord, and the decree of the Lord is that I will reign.

[23 : 25] And so the Messiah is the Lord's messenger of the kingdom. He's the one who tells of the kingdom. He's the one who advances the kingdom.

He's God's agent to establish this kingdom. And isn't that what we see in the gospels? Jesus came proclaiming the kingdom. Well, what's all this kingdom business about in the gospels?

Well, what's that about? What is Jesus talking about? Well, it's about Psalm 2. It's about this psalm. It's about the Lord giving Jesus the nations.

And it's about Jesus forcefully advancing his kingdom in the world against opposition. And it's that decree that determines history.

It's that decree that Jesus will reign, that he will be the king, that he will forcefully advance his kingdom in a world that opposes him, that decree determines history. And that's what the big picture is all about.

[24 : 28] It isn't about our little kingdom. It is about Jesus and his big kingdom. That is what history is all about and that is where history is going. Now I want you to notice three things about the Messiah's reign.

The first is that it's legitimate. It's legitimate. It says, you are my son, today I have become your father. Now I don't think directly this refers to do with the Trinity.

It refers to Jesus becoming the king. So kings in the ancient near east in the context of this psalm were commonly called the sons of God.

They were considered the sons of God. And so to become a son of God was to become a king. And so here Yahweh says today you are my son. Today I am installing you as the king.

You are the same thing.

[25 : 34] And so the point is that Jesus is a legitimate king. He isn't like the other kings of this world who war against God and who are trying to grab their own and trying to make their kingdom the biggest and they're trying to advance their kingdom to the ends of the world and they don't have that right.

But Jesus the Messiah's authority his kingship his right it comes from God. It comes from God. It's legitimate.

And so it is right for Jesus to rule. Secondly notice the scope of his rule. So the legitimacy and notice the scope.

The nations the ends of the earth will be his possession. So the world rebellion is international. And Jesus kingdom will be international.

It will be worldwide. And so when we pray for the unreached peoples of the world when we hand out those sheets that you just got this morning and I hope you pray for those I would encourage you because this is something that you know God is going to answer.

[26 : 45] God is going to answer those prayers. You don't pray for something that God isn't going to do because his decree has already gone out and it's written down so you can see it that Jesus will inherit the nations.

Jesus will have the nations. Every people, every tribe, every language, everywhere, the islands, the continents, Everywhere, Jesus will own them.

They will acknowledge him as king. It all belongs to him. And that should encourage your prayers. God is going to answer them. God is going to answer them.

He's promised. Now third, notice the force of his rule. It's legitimate, it's scope, now it's force. You will break them with an iron scepter.

You will dash them to pieces like pottery. Now the point isn't that Jesus is vicious. The point is that Jesus kingdom is opposed.

[27 : 54] Men oppose it. They're not going to give him the world. And so he's going to have to take it. So remember the first three verses, they hate him.

They're not going to give up their authority. They're not going to give up their power. So he's going to take it from them and he will smash them like pottery. Now people don't mind baby Jesus.

And they don't mind dying Jesus. But people have a big problem with ruling, reigning, living Jesus right now. And so Christ must impose his reign by force.

And before him the nations and all their strength and all their plotting and wisdom and insight and planning are nothing. They're like an iron scepter and pottery coming together.

And so he smashes them like pottery and bam they're gone. They're in smithereens. So why should you be afraid of this rebellion? It is going to be crushed beyond all repair.

[29 : 03] So he who is with you is greater than he who is against you. And so this psalm opens! Our eyes to see what is going on in the world.

It opens our eyes like Elisha's servant's eyes were opened when the Arameans had them trapped in that city and all around them and he was like how are we going to escape? And Elisha prayed open his eyes so he may see and then the Lord opened the servant's eyes and he looked and he saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

Who needs all of history this is where the world is going.

Marvin Alasky tells of the latter years of the newspaper tycoon William Randolph Hearst and his house guest first house guest had to abide by a very strict rule when they came to his house they could never mention death in his presence they could never mention death in his presence and that's probably harder than you think you know because sometimes just conversations flowing and dying comes up and so you kind of had to be walking on eggshells the whole time you were with them and so that decree controlled their house and what was talked about and how people acted now when the Lord decrees something when he makes this decree it controls all of history and Yahweh's decree needs to control your life as well your life as well that certainty that the nations will be Christ inheritance needs to infect your world view your life view and it should shape the way you spend your money!

because you want to be in line with this decree because there's no plan or insight or wisdom that can succeed against the Lord so you want to be on his side so you want to be spending your money the way he would want you to and in line with what he is doing and it should shape the way you raise your children it should!

[31 : 15] the! the! work should shape the way that you watch the news the fact is this is the story that you're living in this is the world that God has created and this is where that world is going so this is the decree that determines history and we need to be in line with it well the psalm doesn't end with smashed Pottery and broken kings thankfully it ends with the gospel that's a very surprising ending and thankfully it ends with the gospel doesn't it because we've all taken part in the rebellion so we've seen the world that hates and the throne that consoles and the decree that determines and now we see the gospel that calls the gospel that calls so look at the surprising grace of God therefore verse 10 therefore you kings be wise be warned you rulers of the earth serve the

Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling kiss the son lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way for his wrath can flare up in a moment blessed are all who take refuge in him did you see the surprising grace of God the very kings who were rebelling the very kings who were!

and conspiring and all those rulers the Lord calls to them and he calls them to come and be reconciled to him before it's too late and so the rebels are called to make the only reasonable response did you notice how that started it said therefore therefore you kings be wise therefore is a logical word and the psalmist saying or Yahweh or the Messiah I'm not sure who's talking here he says think about this be wise do what's reasonable do what's logical and there's only one logical response and it's surrender surrender and he gives them two incentives to do it he says first for your own safety sake the Messiah's wrath can flare up in a moment and if his wrath flares against you it's like an iron scepter coming down on a piece of pottery you're going to be smashed and you're going to be beyond recovery so be reconciled surrender and the second incentive! is for your! sake happiness you need to surrender that's how it ends blessed happy are all who take refuge in him and so here's the Messiah his rule is unperturbed it's unfazed by this rebellion and he's actually offering men to come to me and find safety and find blessing and so this is the path of joy and so what should you do well serve the Lord and kiss the son now kiss the son means to surrender to him to submit to him you put yourself in his hands so when a near eastern king when he recorded that a king surrendered to him and paid homage to him as the conquering king he would say king what's his name whatever his name is he came and kissed my feet that's how he recorded it in the annals and the

Lord graciously calls these rebelling kings to recognize that they've been conquered and as conquered kings they should come and kiss!

[35 : 16] the son to give their total submission to him and so this too is part of the message of the kingdom the kingdom is at hand Jesus said it's coming it's here Jesus will own the nations and so repent and believe repent stop rebelling put yourself into Jesus hands and that is the gospel that calls every lost sinner everyone who's participated in the rebellion God is now calling them to repent every king every ruler every lost sinner everyone stop living for your little kingdom and start living for Jesus and his big kingdom come and submit yourself to him and so brothers and sisters this should take this psalm should take away our fear because the

Lord laughs the Lord laughs at the rebellion of men and it should excite us because our Savior is on the throne our Savior is on the throne and he's ruling for us and it should shape our lives because this decree that the Lord will give to Jesus the nations that he will rule it's it's it's shaping history it's the decree that will control history and directs history and we see here last of all that it should motivate evangelism it should motivate our evangelism Jesus reigns his kingdom is coming and people are in danger and there is joy to be had and so for their safety sake we should offer them the kingdom we should tell them about ruling and reigning and dying Jesus and for their safety sake we should do that and for their joy sake out of love for them we should offer them the savior because he is offering himself to be!

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