

Sermon Title: A Psalm for the King (Psalm 72), Psalms, Week Six

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Sermon Questions:

1. What is your favorite thing about America?
2. What is something that makes you sad about America?
3. How can you pray for the leaders of your municipality, state, and country right now?
4. How are you most grateful for King Jesus?
5. How is God calling you to pray for God's kingdom to come in Tucson and America as it is in heaven today?

Transcript

So this Saturday is the 250th anniversary of our country. So happy anniversary, America.

You know, as this occasion draws near, I'm struck by the fact that it's received in very different ways from different people. Even in my morning walks in our neighborhood, I have a neighbor who writes in chalk, these kind of priests, protest statements in their driveway. Other neighbor, you know, just not far away on the other side, American flags everywhere. And then, you know, campaign posters, you know, Exactly. Every candidate this person is voting for in the upcoming election, it's received different ways.

Some people have never been more ashamed of our country. Some people never been more proud of our country. And so the question before us today is, how do we as Christians enter into a week like this? What is our call? What is our invitation as citizens of this country and citizens of a heavenly country of another country?

We're going to step in, in our sermon series on Psalms, a songbook for the soul, and to Psalm 72, which is going to provide some great instruction for us this week. And what we're going to find in that is that we can step into this week as citizens, as even patriots of the country, the land that God has given us. We can do so with gratitude and joy. And yet at that same time, we hold ultimately to a true citizenship. The King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the only righteous one, the only one who brings true prosperity, the only one who brings ultimate justice, that our hope is ultimately in him.

So I'm going to open up Psalm 72 for us, and I'm going to read the inscription for us as we have been doing throughout many of the Psalms. In this sermon series, we're going to find this one comes with a little bit of a twist. Psalm 72 begins with this little inscription of Solomon, of Solomon. It actually could also mean to Solomon or from Solomon or about Solomon. But our

translation has of Solomon.

I want to flip to the final verse, and then we're going to read this other verse that kind of provides a little bit of tension as we try to figure out who wrote this psalm. This is verse 20. The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended. Now, that is about. There's different books of Psalms.

That's about the book of the Psalm. Is it also about the Psalm itself? I'm going to argue that. I think that's the case. I think this is a psalm of David to his son Solomon.

But either that. Either it's David or his son Solomon. Just so, just to remind you, David is the second king of Israel, the Greatest king of Israel, Solomon is the third king of Israel. His mom is Bathsheba, who you might know. Actually, in two weeks, we're going to share more about that particular story.

And so we have a psalm from the king David to his son Solomon. But beyond that, we're going to see something else interesting in here. You see, because David, David is not just a king. He is the king from whom the Messianic line will come. His son, his.

Well, by son, I just mean his progeny down there, some point, will be the Messiah, the true king, the king who will one day reign, not just Israel, but over the entire earth. And so as David prays this psalm, one of the challenges of this psalm is that we have kind of a quilt here from David's perspective, from an Israeli perspective at the time. It's all one whole cloth joining together. A Psalm 4, the king at the time and the ultimate king of kings. Now fast forward to us reading this 3,000 years later in America.

We are not a country from whom the lineage of the Messiah is going to come. We're not a theocracy. We. We are a very different country. And so what I'm going to do is I'm going to pull apart those pieces of the quilt for us, because there's pieces of the quilt that not only can be prayed for, David, for Solomon, but for our leaders.

And then there's pieces of the quilt that only rightly refer to the Messiah, the King of kings, ultimately Jesus Christ himself. So I want to read the entirety of the Psalms, and as you listen to it, I want you to listen to those two strands. A prayer for earthly leaders who cannot save us, and a prayer to worship, a call to worship the true king who cannot fail us. Those two things are pulled together in this psalm. So let's read through the whole psalm and then we'll go back through it more slowly.

Here we go. Psalm 72, beginning in verse 1. Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the royal son. May he judge your people with righteousness and your poor with justice. Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people and the hills in righteousness.

May he defend the cause of the poor, of the people. Give deliverance to children of the needy, and crush the oppressor. May they fear you while the sun endures as long as the moon throughout all generations. May he be like the rain that falls on mown grass, like showers that water the earth in his days. May the righteous flourish and peace abound till the moon be no more.

May he have dominion from sea to sea, from the river to the ends of the earth. May desert tribes burn before him and his enemies lick the dust. May the kings of Tarshish and the coastlands render him tribute. May the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts. May all the kings fall down before him.

All nations serve him, for he delivers the needy when he calls the poor and him who has no helper, he has pity on the weak and the needy. He saves the lives of the needy from oppression and violence. He redeems their life and precious is their blood in his sight. Long may he live. May the gold of Sheba be given to him.

May prayer be made for him continually and blessings invoked for him all the day. May there be abundance of grain in the land. On the tops of the mountains may it wave. May its fruit be like Lebanon. And may people blossom in the cities like grass of the field.

May his name endure forever, his fame continue as long as the sun. May people be blessed in him. All nations call him blessed. Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things. Blessed be his glorious name forever.

May the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen. And Amen. And so we're going to pull back and step into two invitations in this psalm. First is this.

It's a call for us to pray for earthly leaders who cannot save us. To pray for earthly leaders who cannot save us. So let's pull back. I'm going to pull these pieces of the psalm apart. So we're not going to exactly go in order.

We're going to see that the pieces kind of fit through, through other, fit together throughout the psalm. But we're going to begin in verses one through four. It says this.

Give the King your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the royal Son. That, by the way, is one of the reasons, I think it's a psalm from David to Solomon referencing his Son. May he heed your people with righteousness and your poor with justice. Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people and the hills in righteousness may he defend the cause of the poor, of the people, give deliverance to the children of the needy and crush the oppressor. Now, what's interesting here is you hear an invitation to pray, and there's kind of three clusters of prayers

that we're praying for the King David's praying for Solomon.

I would argue with we can pray also for all of our leaders. And these clusters of things are pray for his righteousness, for those leaders who don't yet know Christ pray for their salvation, pray that they would turn to God for those who know Christ, that they would walk in the ways of Christ personally. Second, for prosperity. That the king would bring prosperity to his people, to all the people. They would be poor and thrive under his leadership.

That they would experience the blessing of a leader who is bringing justice and fairness and raising the blessing level in the land. So righteousness, prosperity, and also justice. May the king be the one who protects the poor, who fights back injustice against those who don't have one to protect him. And now, as you hear those three things, what's interesting about that is that doesn't map on our kind of American political map, right? And that's kind of the point.

Right. The Gospel calls us to hold these things together that we so often set at odds, but they are the entirety, the fullness of what it is to lead. Well, I'm going to argue that this is not just a prayer for the Israelite king, but this is a prayer that I think, in essence, Israelites prayed for all of those who ruled over them. And we can also pray as well. I want to take us over to Jeremiah 29.

At this time, Israel is dissolved. The people of God are in exile in a foreign country, in a foreign land, under a foreign land leader and listen to Jeremiah's call to the people of God and how they're supposed to live there. This is Jeremiah 29:7. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you in exile and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. Part of what it is to be a citizen in this earth, even though we aren't in the ultimate kingdom, is to be a people that bless the land that we live in.

So tomorrow, I didn't arrange this. I promise tomorrow. I have jury duty right now. You could laugh at that, right? But it's a blessing, is it not a blessing to serve in a land in which you, you as a fellow citizen get to go and help, arbitrate and care for and provide justice for?

We ought to be those who serve the land that we live in. And we do so fundamentally because we are people who love our neighbors. We ought to be patriots because we love our neighbors. We love the land that we're in. We love those physically around us.

We're. We're grateful for the place in which God has set us. Jesus was asked the question, what's the greatest commandment? He said, the first is, love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul. And all your mind.

The second is like, love your neighbor as yourself.

We love our land because we love our neighbor. We want justice for our neighbor. We want just laws, we want honest leaders. We want protection for the vulnerable. We want fruitful work.

We want prosperity in the land. We want freedom to worship God. And not just because those things benefit us, but we want them for our neighbors. It's the heart of a Christian. Now there's a tension in there as well because those who lead over and the.

The laws that are enacted in any country are not. They're never fully in line with God's purposes and God's intention. And so we also speak into those things. We don't muzzle ourselves. To truly love is to also be those who in love speak God's truth.

And we call our leaders to righteousness. We call them to work for the prosperity of God's people. We call them to live justly, to work out just laws. We can be grateful for the founding ideals of America and the ways in which some of those echo the truths, the purposes of God, while also grieving some of the realities of the brokenness around us. Whether that's slavery or racism, abortion or greed, violence or sexual immorality.

And on and on the list goes. We speak that out of love because we love our neighbor. And we pray for those who lead the land. Back to Psalm 72 we pick up in verse 6 and we continue to pray for the leaders over us. David prays for Solomon.

May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth in his days. May the righteous flourish and peace abound till the moon be no more. I love that picture. We Tucsonans, we get the longing for rain, don't we? God bring the rain.

Do you do that? Do you go to your 10 day forecast and see if rain is in it? The other day angel and I were out running errands and there's like, there's a cloud like over the Catalinas. And then than far north in Marana we're like lord, bring the cloud to our house. Like seriously.

And in the same way we get that as human beings we long for righteous, godly, just leaders who bring prosperity. They are like rain that falls on the land. They bless everything. And so it's right to pray for them. It's right for us to pray that God would raise up those leaders around us.

We pray for their blessing and we pray because we want the best. We want our city, our state, our nation to be a place where rain is falling and where things are thriving. I want to pray for a blessing. There's a heart of gratitude that spills out of a Christian. Christians are full of gratitude.

I grew up here in Tucson. I remember in high school, it's happened more than once. But I remember at one specific lunchtime, I was sitting with a group of friends and as happened

from time to time, like grumbling about Tucson just started, like, taking up. They were grumbling about the heat. They were grumbling that there's nothing to do.

They're grumbling that there's no professional sports. Grumble, grumble, grumble, grumble. And I'm sitting there like, oh, there's an ungodliness in that. We ought to be those with eyes to see whatever God has planted us. Gratitude, gratitude for the gift of where he has placed us.

I love There's a local Tucson business why I love where I Live. That's a distinctly Christian statement about Tucson or America or wherever we ought to be. Those whose mouths flow with blessing and gratitude. Cynicism is not a Christian ideal.

Complaining is not a gift of the spirit.

Anybody else struggle with that? I struggle with that. A friend told me this week that cynicism is just pride dressed up as snark. It's true, isn't it? When I am cynical and I can be very cynical, it's just the arrogance of my heart leaking out.

But God has called us to be a grateful people. Paul says this in Philippians 4:11. I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. He wrote that from prison we ought to learn in whatever situation we are, in whatever land we are to be content, to be grateful, to be people of gratitude. Would we be grateful for the nation that God has given us, imperfect as it is?

A nation with checks and balances? A nation with a history of some of our leaders being very godly people, other leaders, maybe not being godly people, but in his mercy, helped bring just systems about. The religious liberties he has given us, the opportunities, the prosperity. Think of the gifts that God has given us and we ought to be grateful. Especially maybe this week.

Would gratitude flow out of our hearts and minds. A prayer for the leaders who cannot save us. Take us to verses 15 and 16. Long may he live. David prays for Solomon.

May gold of Sheba be given to him. May prayer be made for him continually and blessings invoked for him all the day. May there be abundance of grain in the land. On the tops of the mountains may it wave that heaven has echoes of not God bless America. What is It America the beautiful amber waves of grain, right Continues.

May its fruit be like Lebanon. May people blossom in the cities like the grass of the field. Would we be those? The very first thing we think of when we think of our leaders is to speak words of blessing and prayer over the Strengthen them, God. Bless them.

Strengthen them. Strengthen the city council, members of the city. I live in God. Would you strengthen the mayor? Bless the mayor.

Would you bless the governor? Would you bless the President? Would you bless the Supreme Court justices? God, bring blessing to those who lead us, lead them in paths of righteousness.

This is the way of God's people. It always has been. Reflect back through the history of God's people. Some of the best citizens were foreigners. Joseph in Egypt working for the blessing of Pharaoh and of Egypt.

Daniel in Babylon, bringing correction and direction not just to one king but to multiple kings. Esther, Nehemiah faithfully honoring the king and directing the king in paths of righteousness. We ought to be those who walk with love for our place that we live in. Love for America, gratitude for America. And we do so because our hearts are set on the King of kings.

Paul over in First Timothy urges Timothy to pray. This, this is in Rome. This is first century Rome. These are leaders that are imprisoning Christians, persecuting Christians. And this is what Paul says first.

Then I urge the supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. Let us pray for our leaders even though they cannot save us. And then we turn, we turn to the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. And may we worship the King who cannot fail us. There is a far greater love that we have, a far greater commitment, a far greater assurance.

If you are a Christian, you are assured that you have a king who is pure and righteous and brings prosperity and brings justice. We have to yearn for his kingdom. As David is praying, as I said, for Solomon, he's praying this prayer ultimately for his lineage, for the Messiah out there. Now, here's the thing. We Americans, we have a strange relationship with leaders, don't we?

Like from our inception, we have this entangled, we struggle with leaders. Maybe bigger of a struggle than anybody in the world. Like we are challenged by leaders in the play Hamilton, this is kind of put to comedic use. I don't know if anybody's seen the musical Hamilton. There's this point where King George is trying to woo back the American colonies, come back to me.

He says, this is King George calling the people back. He says this, you'll be back soon. You'll see. You'll remember you belong to me. You'll be back.

Time will tell. You'll remember that I served you well. Oceans rise, empires fall. We have seen each other through it all. And when push comes to shove, I will send a fully armed battalion to remind you of my love.

We chose the word president for our high ruler. You know why we chose that word? Because it was the most diminutive of all possible words that we could use. It just meant presider one present, one who happened to organize whatever the meeting was in. And yet showing just how strange our relationship is with leaders.

Now that president is the most powerful person on the earth.

There is in each of us a longing, a longing this world cannot satisfy for a just leader. So that we don't have to lead ourselves. We don't have to hold the weight of all of that on our shoulders. But know that there's someone who's looking out for us. And his name is Jesus.

He is the just and true king. And so in that quilt that I talked about with these two different sections, prayers for the earthly rulers. And now we're going to see. I'm going to go back through the psalm. We're going to see prayers for the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Let's return to Psalm 72, and let's begin to go back through the Psalms. Starting in verse five, we read this. May they fear you while the sun endures and as long as the moon throughout all generations. So we begin to get a taste of this. That it can't possibly fully deal with Solomon for two reasons.

One is fear is really the only right and proper fear that we ought to have is of God himself. And secondly, it says throughout all generations. So obviously, Solomon's not going to live throughout all generations. It is the ultimate messiah, the ultimate king of Israel. Down to verse 8 through 11, we continue.

May he have dominion from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth. May desert tribes bow down before him and his enemies lick the dust. May the kings of Tarshish and of the coastlands render him tribute. May the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts. May all kings fall down before him.

All nations serve him. So David looks out across the Mediterranean Sea and he names places as far as he can think of, from the farthest west to the farthest north to down into the horn of Africa. He prays that all of the earth would serve this King. Now, of course, again the tension is present in the text because the promised land is not the entire earth. What was given to Israel is not the entirety of the earth that is reserved for the Messianic King, Jesus Christ, who one day every knee will bow in front of Paul.

Over in Philippians says this about the great King of kings and Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ. He speaks of the day in which all will bow before him. Therefore he says God has highly exalted him. This is Philippians 2, starting in verse 8. And bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and

under the earth, and every tongue confession that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

There is one whose ultimate kingdom will one day come and all will bow the knee because you cannot. There's no rigged election. There's no recounting the ballots. It's the King. And the King has come, and he reigns and we bow at his feet.

Amen. Amen.

Bow at his feet because he's glorious, because he's mighty, because he's worthy of our praise, because he is righteous, because he brings ultimate prosperity, like secured prosperity in the new heavens and the new earth, and justice. He is the just judge. Verses 14. Sorry, 12. 14.

We continue this focus on the King to come. For he delivers the needy when he calls the poor and him who has no helper, he has pity of the weak and of the needy, and he saves the lives of the needy from oppression and violence. He redeems their life, and precious is their blood in his sight. Now, in a sense, most of this could be said as a prayer for any leader. God, would you help our leaders to be those who help the needy, who help the poor, who look out for them, help them not to be stomped in our world.

But there's a little word in there that makes it clear that this ultimately only refers to the one true King, because he redeems their life. And there is only one who can redeem their life, and that is the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, who gives his life. The King gives his life for us, the poor and needy, because every one of us are needy, every one of us are desperate. And we need the King to see us. We need the King to save us.

There's this clarity that the gaze of the writer of this psalm, that David's eyes are turning from Solomon. And as he finishes the psalm, he just can't help but. But look to God. As his eyes turn upward. He looks to the King of kings and he concludes with these verses.

May his name endure forever. Verse 17. His fame continue as long as the sun. May people be blessed in him. All nations call him blessed.

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things. Blessed be his glorious name forever. May the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and. And amen.

Amen.

The King has come, and only his glory ought to fill the earth. It's as though we've turned from the flashlight of local leaders to the son of the radiant king of glory. And the sun drowns out the flashlight. The King of kings and Lord of Lords, the true king drowns out everything we

could have possibly hoped for in our earthly leaders. Because he is not only the blessed one, he is the one who can bestow blessing.

He is not only the one who is worthy of worship. He is the glorious One who fills the earth with his light and his majesty. He is the King. And so we pray. We pray as exiles in a foreign land.

We pray as ambassadors to that land, speaking of the great Son, to those whose only hope might be in the flashlight. Don't you know there is a greater one who will not fail you, who will not disappoint you, who will be the king that you long for? And we pray. Do you know that Jesus taught us how to pray as ambassadors in this world? When he teaches his disciples how to pray, he begins with a prayer that is a kingly prayer that is praying for the king's kingdom.

Our Father. This is Matthew 6. Our father, who art in heaven, hallowed be your name. Glorious be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

That's what Psalm 72 is. It's the Lord's prayer before the Lord prayed it. God, bring your kingdom, break in your kingdom into our land. And would your power, would your purity overwhelm your people? And so what do we do with this on a land with two applications?

You've already heard the two applications. I'm going to bring us right back to them and flesh them out just a little bit. First, let us pray for earthly rulers who cannot save us. Let us pray for earthly rulers who cannot save us. I think that this is a week that we can just.

We could be joyful. There's no need to hold anything. We can be grateful. We can be patriotic because we're grateful for the gifts of God. We're grateful for the place that he has placed us.

We Want to bless this land. We want God to bless the leaders of this land.

We're grateful people. We're people full of blessing. Or people who pray for our leaders. Would this week be a week of prayer? Man, we're driving past all sorts of signs right now, right?

Like, instead of grumbling, complaining, what if the first thought out of our head, out of our mouth, out of our heart was to pray for each one of those leaders? We should be prayerful people, people of gratitude, not complaint, but also people who acknowledge sin, who call our leaders, call our country back to God's way. Because godly people speak truth to leaders. You've already heard that in some Joseph bringing truth to Pharaoh, Daniel bringing truth, Esther, Nehemiah, truth, correction. Even leaders in Israel think of Samuel bringing correct.

Nathan bring correction to David. We bring correction because we love. Because we love. So pray for earthly rulers who cannot save us. Second, worship the king who cannot fail us.

Worship the king who cannot fail us. Remember your heavenly citizenship. Remember that patriotism is. Is worth nothing if it's not born out of an ultimate patriotism, an ultimate citizenship to the heavenly country, to another citizenship. It's only in that place that we are freed with expectations that are appropriate for the land that we live in.

Never allow patriotism to loose your grip, your hope on God's purposes in your life and your longing for Him. Pin our hope on Jesus. Pin our trust on Jesus. Look forward to the day when he will bring righteousness, prosperity and justice. And so we're going to end in a very different way.

This is. We're going to do something that is very unusual in a church service. It ought to be unusual in a church service. And we're doing so even specifically after the sermon to make sure that the context of which we're doing is understood appropriately. So we're going to stand and we're going to sing the national anthem, and we're going to do so with hearts of gratitude, with hearts that look to the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, filled with hope for the true kingdom that we have, and hearts that are praying for a blessing of the land that God has brought us into.

So we're going to do that. And then, like a flashlight to the sun, we're going to sit down and we're going to step into a time of communion as we focus our gaze on the King of Kings, on the Lord of Lords, on the King of Heaven, in whom our citizenship cannot be revoked. And so I'm going to invite, I think, Soren out, maybe and we're going to sing that together. And then I'm going to come back up and lead us in a time of communion. So if you'd stand, would you.

Let's sing this together. Oh, what so proudly we hail at this twilight's last gleaming Whose.

Perilous fight O' er the ramparts we wash we're so gallant.

Spangled and.

Of the free and the home of the brave.

Amen. You may be seated.

And so, as we express our gratitude to God for our country, how much greater our gratitude for the King of Kings, for the Lord of glory who stepped down from his throne, his rightful throne, and he took on flesh and he dwelled with us for us and gave himself that we might be called citizens of a new kingdom, citizens of the new heavens and the new earth, with Jesus Christ, our King of kings and Lord of glory. And so we enter into a time of communion with that gratitude on our hearts. And I'd love to invite you, if you're a follower of Jesus Christ today, to come and partake of the communion elements. We have two tables up front, we have two in

the back. In this back corner is where the gluten free elements are.

If you're participating with us at home, invite you to grab whatever elements you can as you participate in the body of Christ and reflection on his sacrifice for us.

Sam.

In the Gospel of John, John gives this picture of the ascent of Christ. And he does so to really toy with our understanding of what the highest point of glory will be for this king, this Messianic king. And the high point of Jesus glory is when he is lifted up on that cross and raised up. The deepest point of humiliation that the world could ever think is the greatest place of glory of our King of kings and Lord of Lords. What king, what king would give himself?

What king would bear our sins? What king would make what's wrong in me right? Only the King of kings and Lord of Lords. And so the night before he was crucified, he took the bread and he broke the bread. And he said, this is my body broken for you.

Whenever you eat of it, do so in memory of me. Would you eat this with me?

Glorious King, we worship you.

You are worthy of our praise. Thank you for your broken body that brings healing to us. We are so grateful for who you are.

In your name we pray. Amen. Jesus then took the cup, and pouring that cup, he talked about a covenant. Now when you, when you become a citizen of a country, you make an allegiance to that country. This is, this is our allegiance.

A covenant between us and God that's purchased solely by Jesus Christ himself. He spilled his blood that we might become citizens of his kingdom. On that night, he said, this is cup of the new covenant. My blood shed for the forgiveness of all your sins. Whenever you drink of it, do so in memory of me.

Drink in memory of our King Jesus. We thank you, O High King of Heaven, for your sacrifice, for the citizenship we have. Lord, send us forward as ambassadors of the great High King of his kingdom. A kingdom where the sun never sets. We worship you and our hearts are full.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen. Let's stand, let's sing with gusto as we respond to our great King.