

DML 970 Preaching the Psalms**Assignment 1: Psalm 24****Dr. David Emanuel****Hye Sook Jackie Kang**Introduction/Hook

Have you ever wondered about the God of your faith? We all confess our faith in the Christian God. But, have you ever questioned who this God is that you should worship him? In the journey of my faith, I questioned God many times. Questions like, what if Jesus is not God? What if God is not the God who says he is? This sounds pretty scary: to question God. Yet, we cannot get close to God without asking some daring questions about God.

I aim to do that by asking four questions today: 1) Who is God? 2) Who can seek God? 3) How do we seek God? 4) What happens when we seek God?

The scripture for today's teaching comes from Psalm 24, and let's read it together.

Main Theme/Point:

Before we delve into finding answers to these questions, it would be beneficial to know a few characteristics of a psalm. A Psalm often incorporates specific patterns we need to consider. Everything in the Scripture is intentionally placed there. When we read PS 24, we quickly find a pattern. It is repetition. Repetition is often used to highlight key elements in a psalm. When I go out to eat and find something delicious, I repeatedly say, "It's so good" throughout the meal. Why do I do that? Because I want those I dine with to know how good my dish is and how much I enjoy dining with them. So I repeat that phrase.

In Psalm 24, "the Lord" is repeated 6 times, and "the King of glory" 5 times. Do you think PS 24 wants to say something about this Lord and this King of glory? I sure think so. It is overwhelmingly resounding that the subject of this Psalm is the Lord, God, and the King of glory

based on the repetition. When PS 24 was sung, the Israelites would have heard, “The Lord, the Lord,... The King of glory, the King of glory.” I can imagine the awe as they worshiped God in the temple, singing praises to God.

Returning to the questions, our first question is: Who is God?

We see three references to God: the Lord (Yahweh), God (Elohim), and the King (Melech). Let us take a look at each of them.

First, God is Yahweh, the Lord. He is a personal God to the Israelites and now to us. Yahweh depicts God’s closeness to humans. The English word “Lord” doesn’t indicate closeness or intimacy. But, the Hebrew word “Yahweh” is the personal name of God. The Lord Yahweh is immanent, which means he is knowable and approachable. He dwells among his people and manifests his presence. The Lord Yahweh is a relational God. He is the God of the Israelites and our God.

And this Lord Yahweh is the Creator. According to verses 1 -2, Yahweh laid the foundation of the earth upon the seas and the rivers and established the world with all who dwell there. The Lord, Yahweh, formed and shaped you and me to look and sound like we do. The first mention of YHWH is in Gen. 2:7 as the One who “breathed into Adam’s nostrils the breath of life.” The Creator God is our Lord, our personal God, who came so close, just an inch away from our nostrils, and breathed life into us. The Lord, Yahweh, is an intimate God. Reading Genesis, we find how meticulously God created everything in the world.

Another way to look at verses 1 and 2 is that all creations belong to God. This includes every person who professes faith in God and, of course, those who don’t profess faith in God. The Creator God is all-inclusive, and his mercy extends to all. The Lord Yahweh has the sole

lordship over us all. Psalm 24 begins with the declaration of the lordship of Yahweh over all the earth. This is the foundational truth. When we ignore or deny the lordship of God, we stand on the sinking sand.

Secondly, God is Elohim (v.5). The Creator of the Universe is transcendent. That means he is over and above us all. Elohim God is outside of our human experience, perception, or understanding. Our logic can never grasp his power, wisdom, strength, and justice. It takes faith to know this God. And because he is transcendent, he is the only one who can deliver us. So our salvation comes from this Elohim God.

David, the author of this Psalm, strategically uses the Hebrew word for God, “Elohim,” only once in the middle of the Psalm in v. 5, “the God/Elohim of his salvation.” This is the climax of this psalm, and Elohim can never be sought or approached by us humans, and there is no God like him. Every attention must go to Elohim who is the highest!

Yet, Elohim, God who is outside of us, so far and beyond us, longs to be our God, to be sought and known by his creation, so he voluntarily became Yahweh. This psalm teaches us that God is the creator of all things and is all-encompassing and omnipresent over the entire universe. And simultaneously, God is personal, relational, and intimate. He came so close to us so that we would see him, welcome him, and have an eternal, covenantal relationship with him. There is one more truth we need to know about our God.

The third truth about God is that God is the King of glory. (v.7-10)

V. 8 and 10 testify, “the Lord strong and mighty, The Lord mighty in battle,” “The Lord of armies, He is the King of glory.” The Lord, Yahweh, is Elohim. He is our God, not just a god out there in heaven. The creator God, a great and sovereign God, is near us and is intimate,

available, and immanent. Yet, we must not forget that Yahweh and Elohim is the King. All power, authority, dominion, and glory are his.

Our God didn't stop at creating the world. Our God is not a distant God who is aloof and estranged from his creation. He is very much involved in human affairs. As a matter of truth, he governs and rules to this day. God is not only our Lord and our Creator, but also our King who rules in righteousness and justice (v.5). He is not passive, waiting for his creation to come to him. He actively draws us near to him. He actively administers his righteousness and justice. He is not a king of a nation but of the entire creation. And He is the King of glory; his glory covers all the earth.

Here we must pay attention to two important words that describe the King: "Glory and Mighty!" It is easy to remember!

In Hebrew, glory is 'kabod.' It literally means heaviness or weightiness in reference to armor used in battle. Throughout the Bible, we find people falling under the glory of God. One example is found in 2 Chronicles 5:11-14. When the glory of God filled the temple, and the priests could not stand under the weight of God's glory. God's glory is weighty, but not in a sense you and I understand a heavyweight. The weightiness of this great, sovereign King is not to harm his people; instead, it serves as a marker and a seal of God. The glory of God falls on his people who belong to him and testifies to his lordship over them.

Let us continue to explore.

In the Bible, the glory of God appeared in a cloud. As you know, the glory of God appeared to Moses on Mt. Sinai and to the Israelites. Not only did God's glory guide the Israelites as to when to move and where to travel, but God's glory also represented God's

presence. And the glory of God set the Israelites apart from other tribal nations. More precisely, the glory of God was a visual reminder to the Israelites who God was and to whom they belonged, and he was with them. The revolutionary truth is that the God of the Bible comes in a tangible way to make his glorious presence known to us. He came to dwell among us.

This King of glory is strong and mighty. So we can trust him. He protects us. He fights for us. And He is our shield and fortress. Although it is difficult to pick up in the English text, the Lord Yahweh is wrapped around in mightiness in Hebrew. Verse 8 goes like this: Yahweh --- Gavor Yahweh Gavor. When the Israelites recite Psalm 24, they would hear, “God Strong, Mighty God Mighty!” God is mighty on the left. God is might on the right. God is mighty all around! God is strong and mighty in battle and the Lord of armies, according to v.8 and 10.

As we examine the progression of God in this psalm, we discover the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the creator God as John 1: 1-3 says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him not even one thing came into being that has come into being.” (NASB)

Jesus created you and me; Jesus is the Lord of all things in the world. Jesus has lordship over us all; Jesus has ownership of us all. Then, this Creator Jesus came to His own in this world, as John testifies in 1: 14, “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us; and we saw His glory, glory as of the only *Son* from the Father, full of grace and truth.” Jesus Christ becomes our God, Elohim and Yahweh, as we trust Jesus Christ.

The assurance of our belonging in Jesus Christ is spoken by John again in John 1:12-13, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those

who believe in His name, ¹³who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of a man, but of God.”

Because you and I accepted Christ as our Savior, we are declared the children of God. And God is now our personal God. We can encounter our God intimately. As Moses met God face to face, which in Hebrew literally means mouth to mouth, we can imagine the proximity to the sovereign God. All it takes for us to go near God is our faith in Christ, the Son of God.

Finally, Jesus is the King of glory. The book of Hebrews testifies Jesus as the King of kings. The risen Jesus Christ is seated on the throne, and God the Father placed all authorities and dominions under him. Jesus is indeed the supreme King of glory.

All that David and the Israelites declared in Ps 24 applies to Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ had fulfilled it. God the Creator could not remain in the distance, and he came to us and became our God. After his death and resurrection, he now rules over the entire creation, the world, and all who dwell in it as the supreme King of glory. And this King of glory invites us to come to him. Then, how can we approach this great, sovereign God, the King of glory?

Now, here is the second question: who can seek God? Let us continue to explore.

Ps 24:3 recites, “who may ascend onto the hill of the Lord? And who may stand in His holy place?” Who can not only seek God’s glorious presence, but also remain in his holy presence? V.4 says, “One who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to deceit and has not sworn deceitfully.” The blameless, the sinless may seek and approach God who is none other but holy. However, as we know, you and I are sinners. No one is righteous under heaven. No one can approach God. No one can seek God’s face! But let us not lose heart!

We can seek this GREAT God through two mediums. This answers the third question: how can we seek God?

First, we approach God through Jesus Christ. According to v. 4, only the blameless can ascend to the mountain of God and stand in his holy place. Since we are all sinners and there is no possible way for us to go to God, God himself came to take care of the matter of sin.

Jesus bore our sins. His blood washed our dirty hands and made them clean. His death put our evil, impure, deadened hearts to death and gave us a new heart of flesh where his very Spirit indwells. His resurrection delivered us from the idols of our hearts, falsehood, and deceitfulness. His blood purified our lips, so we speak truthfully. Only a pure heart can speak the truth that gives life in love. Further, only a pure heart can speak a word of praise and worship.

Yes, worship is the other medium of seeking God.

We seek God in our worship by lifting up our heads (v.7). We approach God through worship. And God is the only receiver of our praise and worship. We sing a melody and the words of adoration, honor, praise, and worship to God.

All humanity belongs to God. All humanity is invited to seek God (v.1). But, the truth is only those who accept the Son of God, Jesus Christ, are deemed declared to have clean hands and a pure heart (v.4). So, only those who profess faith in Christ alone are found with no deceitfulness (v.4) because we turned away from falsehood and false religions. And now we worship the one and only God of the universe. The children of God born through the faith in Christ sing hallelujah to God.

I mentioned earlier that repetition is a way to emphasize key elements in a psalm, and the Lord Yahweh is repeated 6 times and the king of glory 5 times. There is another word repeated 6 times, and it is 'nasa,' which means to lift or carry. This word is translated as "to receive" in v. 5 "He will receive a blessing from the Lord," because it uses the same root in Hebrew as nasa.

We can see that one who lifts their hands up and one who lifts their heads up in worship "receive" the blessing from the God (Elohim) of our salvation. This blessing the worshipers receive (nasa) from the God of salvation is the imputed righteousness, and we are deemed righteous because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

So, how do we seek God? We seek and approach God in worship by lifting him up. We worship God by recognizing Elohim consciously and intentionally. We worship God by looking up to the Lord/Yahweh. We worship God by giving the King of glory access to our hearts.

2 Chronicles 5:11-14 teaches that the glory of God fills the temple as his people praise and worship him, as they raise their voices, making music and utterance of the high exaltation of God. It describes the worship of God's people in detail by "raising" their voices in the highest form of the exaltation of God.

"Lift up your heads, you gates, and be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in!" (v.7, 9) include personification of the gates and doors. But, people of God, hear the voice of the Holy Spirit calling us to open the doors of our hearts and souls. Open the gates of your hearts and souls, and allow the King Jesus, the King of glory to come in.

Revelation 3:20-22 says, "²⁰Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me. ²¹The one who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat

with My Father on His throne. ²²The one who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’”

Oh, people of God, hear the voice of the Lord, the King of glory is knocking on the door. Let him into your heart. Receive him as your personal God. Not only do you dwell in the world that God the Creator founded, but the very Spirit of God dwells in you. You belonged to God at the time of creation; you’re twice sealed as his children and belong to God with a mark of the Holy Spirit. You and I are in him, and he is in us only if we would open our hearts and let him in.

Then what happens when we seek God? This is our final question for today.

We receive the blessing of righteousness from the God of your salvation (v.5). When we ascend to God’s place and worship him in his holy temple, we receive “a blessing from the Lord” and “righteousness from the God of his salvation.” Here “his” is literally Jacob’s, meaning Israel’s salvation and, today, our salvation.

I want to mention one more Hebrew word, “tsdaqah.” It is translated as “righteousness” in English. Its root means following a correct path, not departing from God’s righteous way. Being nomadic people, the ancient Israelites would have been in trouble if they had gone off course. We all know how they had to roam around the desert for 40 years when they departed from the ways of God.

How about we take a step further here? Receiving righteousness from God means we have found the correct pathway to God, to salvation through Christ, and we have become bearers of God’s holy image, including his goodness, love, justice, and all of his righteousness. It is far more than we represent God’s glory and righteousness because we are the carrier of his glorious presence in our body as the temple of God. And our response to God is worship, and the very

presence of the Holy Spirit will cause us to raise our praise to God, as Isaiah 61:11 writes, “For as the earth brings forth her sprouts, and as a garden causes the things sown in it to spring up, so the Lord YHWY will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.”

Psalm 24 is known as a liturgical, coronation, and ascension psalm. Whatever it may have been, we can agree that Psalm 24 is sung. One would sing, “The earth is the Lord’s and all it contains, the world, and those who live in it.” Then the other responds, “for He has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.” So it would go like this if we were to recite it today. Why don’t we follow along? I say the A-line, and you say the B-line.

A: “Who may ascend onto the hill of the Lord? And who may stand in His holy place?”

B: “One who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to deceit And has not sworn deceitfully.”

A: “Lift up your heads, you gates, And be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.”

B: “Who is the King of glory?”

A: “The Lord strong and mighty, The Lord mighty in battle.”

This is how the Israelites would have worshiped God.

Closing/Punch

I questioned God. I doubted God. I even ran away from God as Jonah did. But, no matter where I ran to, I could never escape God’s presence because his glorious presence fills the whole earth. When I said “yes” to Jesus, he made me the dearest child of God and sealed me with His glory, the Holy Spirit who testifies within me that I belong to him.

You and I are worthy of being pursued by God Himself and significant for the Son of God to die for. We are a holy nation and a royal priesthood, for the God of our salvation calls us righteous. And it is about time we restore the proper worship of God. We might have become accustomed to Yahweh, our personal, immanent, approachable God, and lost sight of Elohim, the transcendent God who is beyond us and whom we can never approach despite all we do in our religious practices. But Jesus Christ came and gave us the righteous pathway to God. And this Jesus is the King of kings and the King of glory.

How about we hear David's beckoning: Oh ancient gates, lift up your heads and let the King of glory come in! Would you join me and worship the God of our salvation with songs and praises?

Reflection song: His name is Jesus by Phil Wickham

Closing prayer