

Assignment 6 – Final Sermon on Psalm 2:1-12

DML970: Preaching Psalms – Spring 2023

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Date: June 20, 2023

Assignment 6: Final Sermon on Psalm 2:1-12

6) Using the preparatory document in Assignment 5, write a sermon on the psalm that your instructor assigned to you. The finished sermon should be in essay format and should be approximately 12 pages long.

Final Sermon on Psalm 2:1-12

- **Sermon Outline Form** (Lecture of DML970: Preaching Psalms, 2023)

- **Introduction with an example**

- Example. Rejection of Christianity: Missionary Couple testimony.
- Transition. But Psalm 2: God of Sovereignty and Grace.

- **Verse by Verse / Stanza by Stanza**

- Read the whole Passage of Psalm 2:1-12.
- Explain verse (by 4 stanzas) and discuss difficulties.
- Concluding Highlight - God of Sovereignty and Grace.

- **Homiletics**

- Be Fearful and Faithful to God of Sovereignty and Grace.
- Be Trueful in God's words, Great Commandment & Commission.

- **Conclusion with an example**

- God is in control by His Sovereign Grace.
- Concluding Example. BCCC: Brooklyn "Charis" Christian Church

Introduction with an example

Greetings. Good morning, everyone, Praise the Lord gathers us in today Sunday Worship!

Example. Rejection of Christianity: Missionary Couple testimony

- Few weeks ago, I chatted with a missionary couple who had calling from Jesus to a mission field for gospel spreading and church planting in East Asia area since 2009. They shared that though the local government there is super anti-Christianity, but through the power of the gospel of Jesus and gracious leading of the Lord, an underground church with about 80 had been developed till to 2019. HOWEVER, during a particular Sunday Worship Service that year, the local officials came to terminate all the ministries by their “official” reason: NO MORE Christian gatherings related to Jesus Christ are allowed according to their rules; and the church had been closed down since that particular day!

Transition. Dear brothers and sisters, what is your immediately reflective thought while hearing this real story? Of course let’s continue to join our hearts in prayer for God’s mission work, and as well still keep our faith in our God of Sovereignty and Grace through today’s message from Psalm 2!

Verse by Verse / Stanza by Stanza

Let’s Read together out loud the GOD’S HOLY WORDS, Psalm 2:1-12 (ESV)

- 1 Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?
- 2 The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers take counsel together,
against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying,
- 3 “Let us burst their bonds apart
and cast away their cords from us.”

4 He who sits in the heavens laughs;
the Lord holds them in derision.
5 Then he will speak to them in his wrath,
and terrify them in his fury, saying,
6 “As for me, I have set my King
on Zion, my holy hill.”
7 I will tell of the decree:
The Lord said to me, “You are my Son;
today I have begotten you.
8 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,
and the ends of the earth your possession.
9 You shall break them with a rod of iron
and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”
10 Now therefore, O kings, be wise;
be warned, O rulers of the earth.
11 Serve the Lord with fear,
and rejoice with trembling.
12 Kiss the Son,
lest he be angry, and you perish in the way,
for his wrath is quickly kindled.
Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Explain verse (by 4 stanzas) and discuss difficulties.

- Unlike many other Psalms, there is no Title and Superscriptions in Psalm 2 and the Type or Genre is Royal Psalm. According to biblical scholars Brueggemann & Bellinger that Psalm 2 is a Royal Psalm, finding its ancient setting in an important occasion in the life of Jerusalem’s Davidic monarchy. Most interpreters place Psalm 2 in the coronation festivities for the king (mentioned in 2 Kgs 11:12). Perhaps anniversaries of this coronation or other significant events in a king’s rule could also have brought forth this text for the ancient community.

- **Divisions.** Psalm 2 can be divided into 4 sections or stanzas, verses 1-3, 4-6, 7-9, 10-12; and let's go through them.
- **Repetition of Keywords.** Psalm 2 repeats several keywords which help us discern the psalm's message. The word "LORD" occurs four times (vv. 2, 4, 7, and 11), and the LORD's "wrath" twice (vv. 5 and 12). The LORD's "Anointed" (v. 2) is later referred to as the LORD's "my King" (v. 6), "my Son" (v. 7), and "the Son" (v. 12). The word "nations" occurs twice (vv. 1 and 8). "The kings of the earth" and "the rulers" of verse 2 come back in verse 10 as "O kings" and "O rulers of the earth." These repetitions focus draws our attention: the LORD and his Son versus the kings and rulers of the nations of this earth.

Verses 1-3

- In this session, the psalmist uses three tightly constructed parallel lines to illustrate the rebellion of the peoples of the earth, led by their kings. They direct their rebellion against the LORD and his anointed king (or messiah). A king was anointed with oil, probably by the high priest (2 Kgs 11:12).
- Also take notice that this psalm starts with a surprised question that begins with "Why?" The question of why the nations of rebellion plot together in rebellion against the LORD and the Anointed King shield the first two verses and put off the poem's remarkable conflict. The aspect of these nations is expressed in verse 3 as they declare their craving for liberation from dominance inflicted by the Davidic monarchy.
- Some scholars conclude this stanza well. In their relationship with God and the king, the people view themselves as prisoners or slaves. They resist their authority and lead the nations of the world in rebellion against this supposed bondage. The opening parallel line already strongly hints at the futility of their actions when it questions the purpose of their evil plotting and in the second colon reveals that it is in vain. Right from the start, we learn that they will not succeed, despite all their noisy turmoil. The sovereignty of the Davidic king is derived from the primordial sovereignty of the LORD. (Longman and Clifford)

Verses 4-6

- In contrast, this stanza, vv. 4-6, shifts our attention to God's divine response. The LORD laughs scornfully at the rebellion and repeats the ancient decree installing the Davidic dynasty: "I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill" (v. 6). The truth of sovereignty in verse 6 contrasts the human rebellion in verse 3. The identification of the Lord as "He who sits in the heavens," means "the One who is enthroned in the heavens." The verb means "to sit as a king" as in 1 Kgs 22:19; Ps 123:1; and Isa 6:1. God charges the kings as rebels.
- In verse 4, "Then," hints us that at the proper time, the LORD will terrify these rebels. Then in vv. 5-6, God's scolding announces the installation of the human king on the throne in Jerusalem. In the context of the Old Testament, according to some scholars, this particular psalm almost certainly was used during the monarchical period as a song that accompanied the installation ceremony of the son of David who assumed the throne after the death of his father. Perhaps Zion is mentioned because it was the actual physical location of the ceremony. The psalm asserts that the mere existence of this Davidic king would bring terror to the raving human kings of the nations and thus reassert order. It is the LORD who authorizes the rule of the Davidic kings in Jerusalem. (Brueggemann & Bellinger, Longman)

Verses 7-9

- In the third stanza, vv. 7-9 the scene shifts back to the time of Zion, where new Davidic kings were crowned. By Scholar Longman's explanation, verse 7 assumes that the psalm's composer is none other than the king himself, who announces that he will pronounce the decree which God addressed to him. Although the psalm does not have a title, by the time of the New Testament it was attributed to David, probably on the logic of this verse. The decree begins with an allusion to 2 Samuel 7:14, the heart of the Davidic covenant, wherein God announces a special relationship with David and his descendants. He there establishes the Davidic dynasty and a special relationship between himself and the king as a father to a son. In 2 Samuel 7, that father-son relationship is described as one that would punish infractions of the father's rules (2 Sam. 7:14b), but also refers to the fact that he would never remove his kingly son's special relationship (2 Sam. 7:15). A father grants the

requests of his son, and here God invites his kingly son to ask him for dominance over the nations of the world. God signifies that he would bring the nations into submission through the agency of his warrior king.

- In addition, some other scholars suggest that the royal decree emphasizes the intimate relationship between the LORD and the chosen ruler in ancient Jerusalem/Zion. The affirmation is of the divine right of this ruler, so the LORD's adopted son may ask for dominion over the nations. It is often suggested that verse 9 reflects the custom of using the royal scepter, as a symbol of the royal office, to smash a piece of pottery to indicate the fate of those who do not bow to this chosen royal dominion. The emphasis is on the divine guarantee of Davidic rule. (Brueggemann & Bellinger)

Verses 10-12

- Like the third stanza, the fourth stanza, vv. 10-11 again focuses on the rebellious kings of the earth and warns them that serving the LORD is a wise choice, or the awful consequences await those who rebel against this divine monarch. The LORD is the whole universe creator and glorious giver of life. Psalm 2 concludes with a beatitude: Blessed or happy are those who take refuge in the LORD. The concluding line brings readers back to the connection with Psalm 1, which begins with the form of the beatitude.
- With this said, people should come up to God with fear, that God is the center of all existence and power, and that human beings, even kings who are powerful on a human level, are not. Rather, they are dependent on God for everything. God rules all (v. 11), but he has also established his human representative on the throne in Jerusalem. Because of God's appointment, the kings of the earth also owe obeisance, ritually represented by a kiss, to this king. They should fear him because the power of God is with him. Angering him is dangerous because his wrath triggers dire consequences (your destruction). On the positive side, though, those who submit and take refuge in Him will experience blessings. Blessing is associated with an Eden-like existence that includes harmonious relationship with God and humanity, as well as material well-being. (Longman)
- Please note that in verses 11b-12a, three of the four words in the Hebrew text are uncertain, though the general sense is clear from the context. NRSV adopts a common emendation,

“kiss his feet.” Kissing the feet of an overlord was a gesture of political obedience: “May his foes bow down before him, and his enemies lick the dust” (Ps 72:9; cf. Isa 49:23 and Mic 7:17). The Assyrian king Sennacherib boasts that the kings of Syria and Palestine brought gifts to him and kissed his feet. The famous “Black Obelisk” of the Assyrian King Shalmaneser III shows “Jehu, son of Omri” kissing his feet. If the nations do not submit to the Lord and his anointed, the Lord will destroy them in anger. His anger is already aroused (v. 5) and is liable to flame out again with dire consequences for them. (Clifford)

Concluding Highlight - God of Sovereignty and Grace.

- Some theologians convey that Psalm 2 emerge at the beginning of the Psalter and so related to Psalm 1: our text calls for the same decision between the life that the LORD offers and that which the wicked offer. The conclusion of Psalm 2 calls nations to make the wise decision for life found with the LORD.
- Psalm 2 is characterized as a Royal Psalm by the fact that ultimately our will LORD reign. Such profession of faith emphasizes the sovereignty of God over all creation. An earthly king sat on Israel’s throne, but He merely represented a greater and higher King, the LORD, who reigned above. In light of the repeated failures of the Davidic kings, God’s people are to be retold that the LORD reigns with perfect justice over the whole world (Pss 47; 95-99; 98).
- In view of the structure of this psalm, Bellinger makes a good conclusive reflection related to life of humanity. *The first and last sections speak of the LORD’s Sovereignty, and the second and third sections express of God’s Grace of Redemption as choice of the Davidic monarch as the divine representative.* Although God’s response to rebellion is firm, the Davidic choice and covenant stand. The picture of rebellion and God’s response in laughter and fury offer a powerful reminder that God is the giver of life. Also worthy of note is the king’s use of the scepter to smash a pot (v. 9); this is the fate of rebels. Psalm 2, then, vividly calls nations to the reality that Yahweh, with Yahweh’s Davidic representative, is the authoritative giver of life.
- Biblical scholar, Lawson also adds the Messianic promised view. As the monarch of Israel, the Davidic king faces opposition from many foreign powers. The central focus is upon the king of Israel, God’s anointed, the Davidic king. Ultimately, they look ahead to the Lord

Jesus Christ. In Psalm 2, the surrounding nations are viewed as rising up in resistance against an earthly king. Prophetically, this looks ahead to the coming of the Messiah and the opposition He will face from earthly powers (Acts 4:25-26; 13:33). In the face of such opposition, Psalm 2 testifies to the absolute sovereignty of God over the nations. No foreign power can thwart God's supreme authority over all mankind. How futile to resist heaven's KING (2:4-6; 45:6-9; 132:11-13; 144:3).

Homiletics

Be Fearful and Faithful to God of Sovereignty and Grace

- I like the scholar Clifford divides this psalm into three contexts in the history of the holy community. The first was when there was a living Davidic king. Though the Davidic Empire was a minor player in international politics for most of its history, Israel prayed the psalm to express its belief that the Lord had chosen Zion and the Davidic dynasty. In the Second Temple period, when Israel had no king, the people prayed the psalm to express its hope that a king would be raised up to deliver it from bondage to the nations. The third context is the Christian community's ongoing confession of the anointed one, the son of God, and his eternal rule.
- To focus on the third one, the New Testament quotes this psalm a lot. Acts 4:25-28 view verses 1-2 as fulfilled in the hostility of Jews and Gentiles to "your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed." Acts 13:33 interprets verse 7 ("You are my son; today I have begotten you") as a prediction of Jesus' resurrection, and Rom 1:4 likewise links sonship and resurrection. The background of the New Testament title "Christ" owes something to this psalm, as does his other title "Son of God" (Ps 2:7b) in Matt 26:63, John 1:49, and elsewhere. In Rev 19:15, the Word of God strikes down the nations with an iron rod (cf. Ps 2:9). Finally, Heb 5:5 places Pss 2 and 110 together as a witness to the eternal priesthood of Christ. From these quoted scriptures, Psalm 2 indeed spells out the sovereignty of the Lord over the nations and the incomparable distinction of the Lord's anointed. The greater the assault, the greater the victory. Against the declaration of independence from God, the psalmist simply points to the One Enthroned in the Heavens and the decree installing the regent on Zion, which ultimately points to the New Heaven and New Earth!

- Thus, by the Sovereignty and Grace of our Lord, the Son of God, Jesus Christ calls all people under His Lordship. His Kingship sets us free from the darkness of this world that we may serve our LORD Almighty fearfully and faithfully.
- Although we as Christians in this sinful world still suffer persecution, as mentioned in 2 Tim 3:12, “Indeed, all who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted”. As Jesus also warns that there are persecutions for his followers, but there are promise of blessings, “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt 5:10). They are “blessed” because “theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Jesus also said, “In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!” (John 16:33). Take courage, for in the end the Lord, the King of the universe, will gain worldwide victory through his Messiah King, Jesus Christ!
- Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, by God’s sovereign grace, bear in mind that always to be Fearful as People of God and be Faithful as Witness of God.

Be Trueful in God’s words, Great Commandment & Commission.

- As we have gone through that Psalm 2 celebrates God’s sovereignty over the wicked plots of the kings of the world. However, on the other hand, it reminds us that in light of our God’s gracious plan of redemption in Jesus – the Son of God, God’s the anointed king, whom God had appointed as an mediated agent of order in a disordered world, through the path of David a dynasty.
- For this said, many passages of New Testament recognized a deeper significance to the psalm that found its fulfilment in Jesus Christ, the greater son of David. Jesus is the Lord’s anointed (Messiah) and son of David, a role announced every time he is called Christ (the Greek equivalent to Messiah). At his baptism, God’s heavenly voice alludes to Psalm 2:7 by announcing to Jesus: ‘You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased’ (Matt. 3:17). Paul explicitly cites Psalm 2:7 in his sermon at Antioch of Pisidia to witness to his faith that Jesus is the ultimate fulfilment of the promise, wherein God’s anointed would be his Son (Acts 13:33). The author of Hebrews similarly quotes both Psalm 2:7 as well as 2 Samuel 7:14 to underline that Jesus, God’s Son, is superior to the angels (Heb. 1:5; 5:5).

- Early church leaders recognized Herod, Pontius Pilate and other Gentile and Israelite leaders who executed Jesus and persecuted the early church as the raging rulers of the earth mentioned in the first stanza of Psalm 2, but they were also aware that the Lord in heaven was sovereign and in control of the situation (Acts 4:23-31; Ps. 2:1-2 quoted in vv. 25b-26), and thus they confidently continued preaching the gospel. By all this said, New Testament writers as well the readers should recognize that Jesus was their anointed King and the Warrior who would defeat the evil spiritual and human forces ranged against them.
- Thus, through today message teaching, let's be trueful in responding God's words: our Christ Savior, Jesus – the Son of God, called his disciples in the Great Commandment, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:37), and also granted us the Great Commission, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20)

Conclusion with an example

God is in control by His Sovereign Grace. We realize that in the end – the Judgement Day, all people and all nations will bow down before the Lord. They won't be plotting or raging against our God of Trinity anymore. God must be victorious over all! And the history of the whole humanity moves towards this day when God's redemptive promises will be made known and there shall be no more sin, more war, and no more suffering. Let us put our hope frontward to the New Heavens and the New Earth that we are engaged in God's glorious kingdom, that taking us comfort in His salvation plans. He is in control and is above us by His gracious sovereignty!

Concluding Example. Towards the end of today message, may I once again recall our church true story, especially to our new friends. As many of us know, our church name is called BCCC, Brooklyn "Charis" Christian Church, that Charis originated from a Greek word, means "Grace". The thought "Charis – Grace" is inspired and anticipated into the fact that the BCCC current site (with 3 story building, like we are now using the sanctuary on the ground floor) was donated by the previous owner of an Italian church, Sovereign Grace Church. I still remembered back in 2017, the donor of the building, the senior Italian pastor of Sovereign Grace Church shared to us

that, although the Italian people kept moving out from the community, but he trusted that God is the Sovereign Lord and by His Grace in Jesus Christ – the gospel should be kept spreading into the same community (where now over 50% of population are Chinese), through the BCCC ministry. May all the glory be to God of Sovereignty and Grace!