

Well, good morning, ladies and gents. Worthy is the lamb. We're in the series on the psalms, and today's psalm, I think, is very apropos for where we are in the world. You have to be living in a cave, a literal cave at this point, not to know that we've got some pretty serious concerns about the world around us. Anyone living in a literal cave at this point in time?

Or do we all know that, like, whoo, there's some stuff happening that makes us a little antsy? Things just seem to get more and more chaotic. It seems every time I turn on the news, it's not just politics, although we're in a weird place with politics right now, but culture, entertainment, academia, the next generation. I mean, is anyone here, like, what are kids these days doing? So much that gives us pause.

So many things that concern us, so many things that seem to be getting worse, things that are heading in the wrong direction, direction opposed and opposite to God. And if that makes you anxious, that that makes you fearful, then just join the club. I heard someone say, we are living in a time unlike any other time in history. Part of my says, well, yes, given the nature of time and how the world works, you are correct. We are living today as completely unlike yesterday in terms of just the way time works.

But you strike at something that it does seem like man. The problems seem to be unique to this particular generation in space, in world history. It's not, though. In psalms, we get a chance to be reminded all the issues that we're looking at are not new, because history is one long, continuous line of just culture and the world trying to live opposed to God and his ways. This psalmist will remind us that though the world fights against God, God has the last word.

God is still in charge. Our psalm this morning is psalm two. So you can open up to psalm two. We'll have the scriptures up here on the screen, screen as well. But let's stand and let's read this psalm together.

It's a long one, so prepare yourself. Psalm two. One, why do the nations conspire and the people's plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, let us break their chains and throw off their shackles. The one enthroned in heaven.

Laughs the lord scoffs at them. He rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying, I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountainous. I will proclaim the Lord's decree. He said to me, you are my son. Today I have become your father.

Ask me and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. You will break them with a rod of iron. You will dash them to pieces like pottery. Therefore, you kings, be wise, be warned, you rulers of the earth, serve the Lord with fear and celebrate his rule with trembling. Kiss the sun or he will be angry, and your way will lead to your destruction, for his wrath can flare up in a moment.

Blessed are all those who take refuge in him. Heavenly Father, we thank you for this reminder that blessed are those who take refuge in you. The world may be spinning out of control in other ways, but those who are in your care are sheltered beneath the wings of the almighty Lord. Today. If there's anyone here who is not sheltered in your wings, I pray today would be the day that they would turn their hearts and their lives over to you.

I pray this in Jesus name. Amen. You can be seated. If you are a parent, you know that childish resistance to your authority is part and parcel of the job. It seems as soon as a kid can begin to talk.

By the way, Tommy and Samantha have little Maggie. I was almost there. If you'd give me just a moment, I would have landed there. I promise. Little Maggie here with us, and she is a sweetheart.

She's so quiet and peaceful and just obedient right now. That will change.

As soon as a kid can talk, it starts. I don't want to. Why? It's not fair. Well, you gave them 20.

Why are you only giving me ten? I don't know where I came up with that. That just popped into my head right there. You let them do it. You let her go.

Why can't I go? It's incredibly frustrating, but it's not new in the Bible. The scriptures talk about God's own children, the children of Israel, his special people. They did sort of the same thing. But the other nations get to do it.

They get to have more than one God. They get a king. We want a king. We don't want to do that. Of course, rebellion against God, against parents isn't related to children.

It's not just limited to Israelites. It is a global problem. And the psalmist says this. He says, why do the nations conspire and plot in vain? The kings of the earth rising up, the rulers banding together, trying to align themselves against the Lord and his anointed, saying, let us break off their chains.

Let's throw off their shackles. The psalmist says, look at them over there. Whispering in the corner, trying to figure out a way to somehow rule and get around God, get around his laws, get around his commands, looking for loopholes, trying to form a strong enough alliance that somehow they can overpower and overthrow God to live unhinged and unshackled from decency and beauty and order and purity and loveliness and make up new rules about how life should be lived. The Bible says, calling good evil and evil good and calling darkness enlightenment, enlightenment darkness. And what does God do in all of this?

He laughs, not because it's humorous, although there are times as a parent, your children are screaming at you and it does become faintly ridiculous, and you can't help but chuckle

in that moment. But this is not because it's humorous, but because he knows ultimately all of that is in vain. You can resist all you want, but it is not going to change anything. Anything. It is useless to go against God.

Here's what verse four says. The one enthroned in heaven laughs. The Lord scoffs at them and he rebukes them in his anger and he terrifies them in his wrath. Did you notice that? He begins by laughing and he's like, please.

Scoffing. Then he rebukes them and then comes the moment of terrifying judgment. There is a progression in God's rule and reign. And you see it right here. He begins by laughing.

Laughing is a very powerful tool. It is an underutilized tool when it comes to dealing with those who are opposed to God. Mel Brooks, who is a famous Jewish comedian, famously wrote a movie, a screenplay where Hitler, the quintessential enemy of the Jewish people, becomes sort of the center point of a comic opera. When he was questioned about that, why are you including Hitler in your comedy? He says this.

Not only should we laugh about Hitler, we must laugh about him, especially in Berlin, his seat of power. Now, why he gives, because the way to neutralize evil, a way to neutralize a guy like Hitler, is to get people laughing at him. And when you laugh at him, it robs him of their power. It robs him of his stature. It makes him into a figure of ridicule.

That's what God does. He's laughing. No, no, no. You don't have power. You don't have nearly the authority you think you do.

And any semblance of power, any semblance of stature, when you laugh at them, it removes all of that from them. He laughs and he scoffs. He says, you think you're so great kids, but you're going to go the way of all the others who came before you, and there have been plenty who have come before you. And then he warns them, he says, listen, do right turn or you will be destroyed. God says, enough, finally.

And he terrifies them in his wrath. And how does he do this? Well, the scripture gives us some clue. He turns their attention to a very unlikely figure. He turns their attention to the real king, the anointed and appointed leader and lord.

I, he says, I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain. I have already accomplished what you guys are conspiring over there in the corner to prevent. It's too late. I have already done it. You may worry, you may fret, you may stress, you may be anxious about the state of the world.

But know this, as believers, the king is already installed. When he ascended from heaven, he took his place at the right hand of the father. The king is already in place. And he scoffs at those small and insignificant leaders that are intent on going their own way. We are so used to speaking of Jesus as the good shepherd and the friend of sinners.

And he is. But when God points to his anointed son on the throne, he is saying, this good shepherd is also the terrifier of the wicked. The son is God, the father's king, appointed and anointed, to bring justice, final and eternal justice, to the nations. In the Gospel of John, Jesus, speaking of himself, says this in John 5:22. He says, moreover, the father judges no one, but he has entrusted all judgment to the son.

Jesus is the final judge, and his judgment, when it comes, will be terrifying. If you're familiar with the book of revelation, in chapter 20, verse eleven, it describes just a picture in broad strokes about what this judgment will look like. John the revelator writes this. Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it, the earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne.

And books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged according to what they had done, as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up all the dead that were in them. And each person, all the dead, standing before the throne of heaven, standing for Jesus, was judged according to what they had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire.

They're gone. The Lake of fire is the second death. And anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown in, into the lake of fire.

That's just a small little picture of the terrifying judgment Jesus, our good shepherd and the friend of sinners, will execute at the last day. You see, the father laughs, and then he scoffs. Then he rebukes very firmly. And finally know this, that those who align themselves against godness will be terrified by his wrath, wrath that Jesus has been anointed and entrusted to dispense. God says to Jesus, my throne is yours, my kingdom is yours, the ends of the earth are yours.

You have full authority to dispense judgment as you see it in verse eight, he says this, ask me. Ask me, and I will give the nations as your inheritance. The ends of the earth are your possession. This is beautiful picture here. Terrifying picture, but a beautiful picture.

It says, you will break them with a rod of iron. You will dash them to pieces like pottery. On my porch, I have some plants that are dying, but they are in these clay pots. And I thought about this in baseball. Those of you who are softball baseball fans, by the way, can we just give a round of applause?

Our softball team is going to the tournament Tuesday and Thursday night. What time? What time? What time? What time?

Tuesday? Seven on Tuesday. Come out and cheer the team. This is incredible. We have some great players on the team, so they will know this term exit velocity.

Anyone know what exit velocity is? Exit velocity is the speed of the baseball as it leaves the bat right after the batter makes contact with the ball. And it's calculated in miles per hour. So there's a guy named Giancarlo Stanton. He currently plays for the Yankees in 2018.

He hit the ball and it was clocked at 122 mph. Lester Burrus, you're a good hitter. Have you come, Lester, have you come close to that? You're at about six, 7 mph. What are you right now?

Yeah, 122 mph. If you want to see a picture of how powerful God's judgment is against those who deny his authority, imagine a still baseball bat in the hands of John Carlos Stanton, hitting in one of those old orange clay pots on my front porch. It is decimated into just a puff of powder.

In 300 BC, there were Christians in the ancient world, the middle of the down in the Mediterranean, who were huddled in their basements. They were meeting secretly under the COVID of darkness. Their leaders were being imprisoned and arrested and even killed. Their scriptures were being confiscated and burned. The churches, the places where they were meeting, were being reduced to rubble.

Christians, men, women, and even young children were forced to offer sacrifices to the idols of the age. They were forced to eat the idols. They were forced to drink the wine offerings and they were even forced some to bathe in the blood of the sacrifices that were offered. All to diminish and ridicule and hopefully eradicate Christianity off of the face of the earth. Now, why?

Because there was a guy named Galerius who had the ear of emperor Diocletian who ruled the roman empire. Although Christians had experienced waves of persecution before this was sort of unlike anything. It was nothing compared to Galerius. Now he was confident that he could destroy Christianity in his time and for eight years he did everything in his power to make it happen. He even had coins stamped that said and monuments built.

Coins and monuments built and stamped proclaiming that he had extinguished the name of Christians and abolished the superstition of Christ. You can find this in Spurgeon's treasury of David. Now if you were a believer in that time trying to live faithfully before God you would be forgiven for thinking that this was the end. This is surely it. There's not going to be any church.

There's not going to be any christians. This guy is destroying it. The world around certainly did. They bought the coins. They saw the monument.

They believed it. Oh, Christianity was on his way out. And yet in just a few moments we, along with billions of Christians all over the world will be sharing bread and a cup signifying that Christ who died is risen and the life he lives, we now live in him.

If you go back to Rome and you look for Diocletian and remnants of Galerius what do you find? More often than not you find rubble and you find dust. God says, if you go against the Lord and you go against his anointed you will be destroyed like clay pots struck with iron bars. Therefore. Therefore, Kingsley, be wise, be warned.

Rulers of the earth serve the Lord with fear. Celebrate his rule with trembling. It is good. The rule of God is good.

But in a moment it can change. If you go against the Lord you may be enjoying what seems to be peace and prosperity. But God is not mocked and God is not blind and he sees and he will judge and destroy. So the psalmist says this, kiss his son. This is an ancient middle eastern term for just showing reverence and honor.

You may have seen the pictures where they kneel and kiss the feet or kiss the hand or kiss the ring. Kiss the son or he will show his anger and your way will lead to destruction because his wrath can flare up at a moment's notice. He will go so far, he will laugh, he will scoff, he will rebuke and then he will judge. But blessed are all those who put their trust in him. Blessed are all those who take refuge in him.

Submit today to the certain rule of the son. He has already taken the throne he sits. He is king over all. So throw yourself on his mercy. Take refuge in his grace.

Submit to his authority, authority and his power, and receive in your submission this beautiful life that he offers to all who will put their trust in him. When the early Christians were in the middle of their persecution, psalm two formed the basis of much of their prayers. Here's how Acts describes it in Acts, chapter four, verse 24. They met, huddled together, and they began to pray. Sovereign Lord, they said, you made the heavens and the earth and the sea and everything in them.

You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our Father David. And he wrote this. Why do the nations rage? And why do the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed one.

They were living right there in a place where the world was spinning completely out of control and in the wrong direction. But here is what they continued praying. They said this and they noted this and they knew this, but they are doing what your power and your will had decided beforehand should happen. You see, even though it seems like things are out of control, it is firmly placed within the circle of God's overarching will. God had never once lost control of the situation.

Verse 29 says, now, Lord, I consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant, Jesus. What an interesting prayer in the midst of the chaos of the world around us. This prayer stands so unique to me because it speaks to their heart and their concern. Their concern was not our way of life is being threatened.

Our country is going to rack and ruin. It is not going to be for our children like it was for us. And those are all legitimate concerns and things that I have personally thought. But their prayer is this, Lord, in the midst of this, help us be faithful to continue to speak with boldness and live in the power, the signs and wonders and authority. The kingdom.

We want to live there. The world around us may be heading off in the direction opposite to God to sure destruction, but we have determined and made it our priority to speak the word with boldness and to live in the kingdom power. Lord, may our sights and our eyes not settle too long on the chaos and the destruction and just the upheaval and so much around us. But may our sights always be drawn back to the son, the one who sits on the throne and reigns forever and ever. To him be glory and honor and power and authority.

That's where we want our eyes and our focus to be. We know he will one day rule the world in righteousness, but until then, he in his grace and mercy, as chiding, is laughing, is rebuking and warning, Lord, may we speak boldly, may we share boldly, and may we set our hearts and our minds and affections on your kingdom, not the kingdoms of this world. We pray this in Jesus name. We're going to take communion here in just a moment. Communion connects us to, connects us really to those early Christians who faced persecution under, first of all, the religious persecutors of the early Christians and then Diocletian, some of the political persecution.

But it also connects us to Christians all around the world, because there is similar stuff happening in other parts of the world that the early Christians experienced, places where it is not legal, it is not safe together. And yet they do. They speak the word with boldness, and they live in the power and authority of the eternal kingdom. So this psalm reminds me that we do not need to fear the raging and the tumult of the world around us. There's no need to wring our hands.

There's no need for us to lose sleep, because the same goddess who with one word cast Satan to earth can with one word wreak judgment and bring us into his eternal kingdom.

I love that God laughs at the people that we are in awe of. What are they going to do? What kind of power are they going to wreak over us? What horrible things are going to happen? And God says, please, you are my children.

Jesus says this in Matthew. He says, I'm building my church, a church that you are part of. And the gates, the hordes, the armies of hell will not prevail against it. So lie your head down at night and sleep, for the lord gives you peace. Someday.

Every knee will bow, every tongue will confess, every lip will kiss the sun. Have you? Today is the day where you can say, I am tired of my rebellion against God. I want to live a different way. I want to live with my face towards the son.

That's true today. Turn your face to Jesus and say yes to the invitation to live and walk in his light. Heavenly Father, as we gather, we have been reminded of your rule and reignite. And now as we take the bread and the cup, we recognize you as king of creation. Lord over eternity and Lord over our lives.

We acknowledge you as the final judge who will bring evil and unrighteousness to your throne. And you will rightly judge as we lift the cup and we take the bread. We do so recognizing and trusting in your wisdom and father. We also remember our brothers and sisters in Christ, who this morning are doing so looking over their shoulder because they do not know what will happen next. Stretch out your hand.

Stretch out your hand to heal and deliver by your holy and anointed son, Jesus. In his name we pray. Amen.

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