

Psalms 2

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Date: 25 July 2019

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[0 : 00] You may have heard the story of a Japanese soldier in World War II who fought undercover on a remote island in the Philippines. But the strange thing about this soldier was that after the Japanese surrender, he remained on that Philippines island for another 30 years.

You see, it was time to surrender, but he would not believe the war was over. He refused. He was trained in guerrilla warfare and for 30 more years after VJ day, he lived in the jungle and waged a private war with local troops there.

He even ignored the Japanese leaflet drops that were dropped by Japanese planes saying, we have lost the war, it is time to come out and surrender. He thought they were just American propaganda.

And so he raged and he plotted and he set himself up to win a war that he'd already lost. It was farcical really. It was pointless. And it was tremendously sad. He wasted 30 years of his life fighting a war that he'd already lost.

It was time to surrender. But some people just don't know when they're defeated, do they? And that is the message that God gives us in this psalm, Psalm 2.

[1 : 26] Wouldn't it be funny, wouldn't it be farcical, if we treated God the same way that that soldier treated his enemies? But the writer of the psalm says, amazingly, that is what is going on in the world today.

Look at the words in verses 1 to 3. People are raging, plotting, setting themselves up, taking counsel together against the Lord and his anointed.

People all around the world are fighting God and his anointed king, Jesus. And instead of it being one man who's just deluded in his own little private war, private battle, confused in his own little world, the writer says, no, this is happening universally all over the world.

Do you see the words there? The nations rage. The peoples plot. The kings of the earth.

Universally set themselves up. Rulers take counsel together against God.

From the least to the greatest, it is a worldwide phenomenon. Naturally, it is what everybody does.

Look at what they're saying in their kind of battle cry in verse 3.

[2 : 48] Let us burst their bombs apart and cast away their cause from us. And that is the world's motto. That we do not want God, through his king, the Lord Jesus, to rule over us.

It is a world full of rebels. I wonder if you've seen that and felt that yourself everywhere we go and whoever we meet. There is a desire, isn't there, even in ourselves, to live our lives without God ruling over us.

And deep down, we know that God has given us life and fun and food and friendship and fellowship.

He gives us life itself. But people all around us live as if God was like a doorman. We call on him when we need him. But in our hearts we say, let us cast our cords from us.

Let's do what we want. Let's fight him. We're like little rebels. The mantra of our culture is freedom, isn't it?

[4 : 03] But not freedom in a good way. Only freedom in a sort of personal autonomy sense. Where what feels right, is right and I should do that.

We see God's rule through his king, Jesus, as restrictive, don't we? Not for blessing, as it really is. And worse than that, we refuse to believe that Jesus is king at all.

But we just don't know when it's time to surrender, do we? Some people don't. Some people don't. Just for the next few minutes, I want to show you three things this psalm tells us as to why being rebels against God is not a good idea.

First of all, rebelling against God's king is farcical. Farcical. It's laughable. It's funny. I ever heard a conversation a while back between a church minister and an astrophysicist.

And it sounds like one of those bad jokes, doesn't it? With a bad punchline. But the minister was trying to work out about the universe. He said, I'm preparing a sermon on creation.

[5 : 16] So he said to this astrophysicist, let me get a grip on how big the universe is compared with the earth. And he said, is it like if I were to put a pound coin on the middle of a football pitch?

It is the football pitch about the size of the universe compared with the earth. And the astrophysicist said, well, it's not quite that. It is more like if you get a pound coin and put it in the middle of Australia and then multiply the size of Australia with a number that starts with seven and it has 50 zeros after it.

That is the size of the universe compared with the earth. One pound coin in the middle of a massively oversized Australia.

So just imagine that pound coin full of little people on it. And they are shaking their fists at God. The God who made that Australia.

And he sits in the heavens, doesn't he? And he is outside of all of that. The heavens are above the universe and outside of the universe. And what does he do?

[6 : 30] He sat on his throne and he looks down. Verse 4, he laughs. He laughs. One little coin in the middle of Australia full of little rebels looking up to the heavens and plotting and raging and fighting against God.

And against the king that he has installed. It is absolutely farcical, isn't it? You would laugh, wouldn't you? It is hilarious.

It is actually quite bizarre. It is quite strange. That is why the psalm begins with the question Why do the nations rage? Why do they plot in vain?

The writer just can't get his head around it. It is so farcical. So stupid. When human beings think that they are better than God or they can fight God God laughs.

Don't be ridiculous. Little pound coin creatures. Rebelling against God's king is farcical. The psalm tells us. But secondly, not only is it farcical but it is futile.

[7 : 43] It is futile. It doesn't get you anywhere. If you have the experience of seeing a two-year-old or a three-year-old having a tantrum it is pretty ugly, isn't it?

It is a battle of wills between the toddler and the parent. And it is pretty sad because a lot of effort goes into the tantrum, doesn't it? A lot of screaming and crying and stamping feet.

And in the end, it doesn't get them anywhere or it shouldn't get them anywhere anyway. It never got me anywhere with my mum. And it is just like that with the nations and God. The more the raging and the screaming and the kicking against God, the less distance it gets you.

Just have a look at verse 6 for a second. God says, As for me, I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill. And there is an announcement made about this king in verse 7 and 8.

That he is, that God has begotten him as his very own son. Now begotten means to say, He is from me and he is me.

[8 : 56] He is my rule. He is the means of God's rule over things. He is the ruler of the nations and the ends of the earth, let's say.

And so, to spend life denying that rule gets you nowhere. Because God has set him as unrivalled champion of all that is.

Ruler of the ends of the earth, ruler of the nations and ruler of you and me. One little pound coin in the middle of Australia. Not only is that farcical, but it's futile.

You cannot beat God. Because he has installed this king over all. Over creatures. And it is very, very hard work.

Trying to fight against God's king. The more we live our lives under our own rule, The more we realise how much hard work that really is in life. I wonder if you've met people like that.

[10 : 04] Where life is just one big worry. Day after day after day of worry. Calvin said that pride is the enemy of hope.

It's really insightful. Pride of us saying that we can defeat God and that we can be God is very close. Very close. It's on the other side of insecurity of the same coin.

They're perfect bedfellows. As one person once famously said, If you want to feel anxious, just pretend you're in control. And when you walk down the street, don't people just look so tired, don't they?

There is just this underlying hum of hopelessness in life. And that is because there is an underlying pride in the human heart.

And fighting against God's king is really, really hard work. And it doesn't do us any good. And you can plot and you can rage. And you can set yourself up against him in your life.

[11 : 09] But eventually it gets you nowhere. It is futile. It's farcical. It's futile. But the last thing that the psalm teaches is that rebelling against God's king is fatal.

It is fatal. Now as we read this psalm, we heard a lot of things that might surprise us about the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we know God, don't we, in the Bible. He is a God who reveals himself as a loving and patient and kind and forgiving God. Jesus Christ is the man who eats dinner with sinners, isn't he, and tax collectors.

He forgives people when they ask for mercy. But look at some of the words that are used to describe King Jesus here. Verse 5, he will speak to them in his wrath.

He will terrify them in his fury. God, speaking to this king, says, You shall break them with a rod of iron.

[12 : 19] And he warns people, Kiss the son, that's an ancient expression, isn't it, of submission to a king. Kiss the son, lest he be angry.

Verse 12, because his wrath is quickly kindled. Does that sound like the Jesus Christ you know? Doesn't that sound harsh? Why does the psalmist speak like this?

You know on the big state occasions when the queen goes down the mall, doesn't she? And she's led by a procession of soldiers and dignitaries down to Buckingham Palace.

And the guards and the soldiers, they parade in all their finery, don't they, in their uniforms and such. And on the day, it feels like they're just there for show, doesn't it?

Just to kind of show off the queen's prestige. And most of the time, it is just a show, because most people who are there love the queen. They want to kind of applaud her and support her and enjoy seeing her.

[13 : 26] But just imagine that there was a group on an occasion like that who didn't love the queen at all. And they actually hated her.

And as she went past, they start to throw eggs at the royal carriage. And they shout abuse at her. And the ringleader of the group jumps over the fence and tries to assassinate the queen.

They rage against her and her rule. Now, what do you think those soldiers who were there for show would do in that moment? They would jump into action, wouldn't they?

And dozens of MI5 operatives with earpieces would appear from the crowds, no doubt. And they would pounce on the rebels. And they would carry out the queen's wrath, wouldn't they?

And in one sense, that wouldn't make the queen happy to see that happen, would it? She wouldn't get pleasure out of that. But she would know that it was the right thing to do, because she is the rightful ruler of England.

[14 : 33] She is the queen. God speaks about wrath and punishment here. Because the reality is that there are and there will be people like that when King Jesus returns.

And they will not welcome him with open arms. They will hate him and his rule. And they've even, haven't they, tried to kill him in the past and quash his rule.

his rule. And so one day Jesus must carry out his rule by force. He says it will be like the force of an iron bar shattering a piece of pottery.

It will be fatal for rebels on that day. It will be shattering for them. For little rebels. Have a look at verse 12 again.

Kiss the son. Surrender to him now lest he be angry and perish. On some cliffs near where Emma and I used to go on holiday in Northumberland there was a sign and it said stay back, sheer drop.

[15 : 44] And as you kind of read that sign you don't think, do you, well that's a bit harsh. That's a bit mean. Spoiling my fun. Not letting me go near to the...

How dare you tell me that I can't go near to the edge of the cliff. We don't think that, do we? We don't say that. Because we realise that the sign is not an aggressive threat but it's a loving warning. And God by saying these things he's not being unnecessarily harsh or aggressive. He is giving a loving warning that it is a foolish thing to do to rage against this King Jesus.

It will shatter you in the end and you will perish. It's faithful. How funny it is to try and do it. How pointless it is to try and do it.

And how very sad it will be to rebel against King Jesus. How faithful it is. After Jesus died and rose from the dead and ascended he sent his Holy Spirit on the church didn't he?

[16:53] And Jesus spoke through a team of preachers called the Apostles. And they say in Acts chapter 10 and in other places they say this Jesus commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and of the dead.

And the writer to the Hebrews tells us that every person is appointed to die and after that to face judgment. It's like there's an appointment isn't there in God's calendar like you have with a doctor. There's an appointment day that we are going to meet with God. And we will face the king that God has appointed to judge King Jesus and give an account for how we've lived and how we've rebelled against him in our lives.

So the big question is what do we do? What can we do? Well, there is a bright glimmer of hope in this psalm. Just look at the very last line on your sheets.

Just look at the last line and we're nearly done. Alright. Verse 12 Blessed are those who take refuge in him. That is the really strange thing about the gospel of the Lord Jesus.

[18:18] it is very very funny it's very very odd that actually the only place that we can escape the wrath of God's king is not in trying to run away from him and ignoring him but to take refuge in him.

It's funny isn't it? The only escape from God is to go to God. to realise now it is time to surrender to him and admit that we have lived as rebels against him in our lives.

And he promises us that if we do that we will be blessed. Paul says in Colossians 1 that God through Jesus Christ was reconciling to himself all things reconciling rebels he was making peace by the blood of his cross Paul says see the war is the world is fighting a war that's already been lost but God even though he is the winner and he is the king has given us gracious terms of peace that we can be reconciled to him and not just peace not to go about our lives and not be at war with God but blessing and friendship and fellowship with God so the choice this afternoon is that we can either meet Jesus in his wrath as rebels against him or we can meet him now in his grace since the only place the Bible teaches us that we can go to escape

God's king is to go to God's king and the only way we can escape Jesus wrath is to run to Jesus and hold on to him in his grace that we admit our wrongdoing and we trust in what Jesus has done to pay for that wrongdoing on the cross making peace by his blood and live a life in response but wouldn't it be farcical wouldn't it be futile wouldn't it be fatal if we didn't do that let's pray