

God Is Our Refuge: Powerful Practical Prayers for Times like These Praying as to War Psalm 58

preached @ Hawkwood Baptist Church
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Intro.

The text is supposed to be Psalm 58, but I hope you don't mind if we start with one verse from II Corinthians 5:20.

II Cor. 5:20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, certain that God is appealing through us. We plead on Christ's behalf, "Be reconciled to God."

Do you hear the implied, "Or else?" If you have a balanced, i.e. Scriptural view of God's love and justice you should immediately think of Psalm 2:10-12, or verse of that sort.

Should this verse not bring other verses to mind?

Prov. 13:17 "A wicked messenger falls into trouble, but a faithful envoy brings healing." God help us to be faithful messengers of His truth and His grace. Is this not the very essence of what it means to be an ambassador? At the very least to faithfully deliver the message of the king?

Mal. 2:7 "For the lips of a priest should preserve knowledge, and people should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts." Who are we? According to I Peter 2:9 we are a kingdom of priests. It is our duty to preserve knowledge, or as another translation puts it, to "teach the true knowledge of God." We are messengers, ambassadors of the Lord of hosts.

John 20:21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."

David as a type of Christ

The Bible presents Christ to us as (1) our supreme Prophet and Law-giver who replaces all other prophets, (2) our supreme High Priest who makes all other priests unnecessary, and (3) our supreme High King who is truly King of Kings and Lord of Lords. But in order for us to fully understand how Jesus relates to us in these three offices or roles, the Bible presents other men who serve as limited examples—types and shadows of the fullness that we eventually find in Christ.

Thus before Jesus there were other prophets (think Moses), previous priests (think of the high priest at the temple for 1,400 years), and, most importantly for us today, godly kings (think especially of David). Jesus, then, is not just the second Adam, come to be all that Adam failed to be. He is also the second Moses, come to be all that Moses failed to be, the second High Priest, come to be all that the Hebrew high priests failed to be, and the second great King, come to be all that David (and Solomon) failed to be. It's David that I want us to focus on today.

First, let me show you how David's life is designed by God to influence how you and I live before the world as the Church, the body of Christ.

1. David is a type (a foreshadowing, a prefiguring) of Christ as king. Everything we're shown in the Bible about David is designed by the author (the Holy Spirit) to show us something about Jesus as our Great King, His spirit, His style, His readiness to do battle for the glory of God!
2. Jesus is the great fulfilment of all that is hinted at by David. David's kingship was marred and limited by his sinful flesh, but the hints of glory that constantly flashed through David's life and words shine in their fulness in Christ, not just in the days of His flesh, but particularly now, in the days of His heavenly reign!
3. Jesus is the head of the body of Christ, of which we are a part. As such, it is our duty as members of Christ's church to be the personification of Christ in the world. Or, to say it another way, Jesus fulfils His roles as prophet, priest and king in this world through His body, the church.

That means if we want to learn how to be prophetic in ministry, as Jesus would have us do, we look to Him, of course, but in order to see Him clearly, and especially in order to see Him fully, we have to also see how He is reflected in all the prophets. To see Jesus as the great High Priest (in order to exercise our duties as a royal priesthood, I Peter 2:9) we look at His priestly ministry as presented in the New Testament, but for full understanding we must also look to the Hebrew high priests. Finally, to fully understand Jesus' kingly role in the world— as ambassadors for Christ, who is our King, not our prime minister—today we must look to David (and Solomon) in the Old Testament. They interpret His Kingship for us.

To recap, when it comes to Christ as king, David is the *model*, Christ is the *original*, and we are ambassadors for the king; thus we need to look to David the model in order to fully understand Christ as King.

But some of you are thinking: "If Christ is the original, and we have Christ in us, as well as shown to us in the gospels, why do we need a mere model like David? Let me illustrate out of my own life. A few years ago my grandson Sean and I worked together to build a model of a WWII bomber, an Avro Lancaster, arguably the greatest bomber of the war. For awhile we really got into all things Lancaster, including a trip down to Nanton to see the real thing.

But it was only while building the model that I suddenly realized the Lancaster didn't have a co-pilot. I kept thinking we had lost a vital part of the kit until we finally figured out that the parts fitted properly as they were. That led us to do some research where we found the lack of a second set of controls was part of the original design. *It was through the model, not the original, that we discovered a vital fact about that aeroplane.*

In the same way, David the model makes it clear to us that King Jesus the original does so much more than sit on a throne and receive worship. He guides His ambassadors (that's us) to challenge the world to recognize God, to repent for putting other gods before Him, to trust in His Son's atoning death and to give their lives in obedience toward Him. We're also commanded to live in such a way that we force the world to see that there is a God in heaven and that He is at work on the earth. This is what Jesus meant when He said we were to let our "light shine before men so that [the world can] see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven (Matt. 5:16).

David vs. Goliath

Have you ever wondered why the Bible includes the story of David's fight with Goliath? As little children we certainly learn that it demonstrates David's courage and faith. As youth we are usually

taught from the Goliath story that God will help us fight the giants in our lives.

And every now and then, when Giants come my way
I call upon the Lord of Lords, I turn to them and say,
Goliath, you are mighty, but you cannot win this war
When the one who stands before you is standing in the Lord
The power and the glory are mine in Jesus' name
And Goliath, in this hour, you're the next giant slain.
(*Goliath*, Scott Wesley Brown, 1985)

This is fine as far as it goes, but there something greater in the Goliath story that we run the danger of missing if we aren't careful. When David heard Goliath's challenge to the Israelite army under King Saul he put his finger on what was really going on. "Just who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" (I Sam. 17:26)

For this shepherd boy God was not someone who merely helped him face the bears and the lions of daily life. David was offended on God's behalf. Why? Because he belonged to God's army and God's glory was David's first concern.

Do you know why all those Hebrew soldiers fled every time Goliath issue his challenge? They were all thinking, "He's not my giant. Let someone else take care of him." But David didn't think that way. His focus was on God, and God, His God, was being slandered, and David felt it. He burned with shame that a challenge to the people of the living God was going unanswered. So when no one else would stand up for God David was determined to do something about it. No wonder God called him a "man after His own heart" (I Sam. 13:14).

Let me remind you what David said to Goliath just before he released the fateful stone. "You come against me with a dagger, spear, and sword, but I come against you in the name of Yahweh of Hosts, the God of Israel's armies—you have defied Him. 46 Today, the Lord will hand you over to me. Today, I'll strike you down, cut your head off, and give the corpses of the Philistine camp to the birds of the sky and the creatures of the earth. *Then all the world will know that Israel has a God, 47 and this whole assembly will know that it is not by sword or by spear that the Lord saves, for the battle is the Lord's. He will hand you over to us*" (I Sam. 17)

David was God's messenger that day, God's ambassador.

Dear friends, if we aren't called to stand up for the glory of God on earth, then what on earth does it mean to be an ambassador for Christ? What does it communicate to the world about the One we serve if every time God is challenged His ambassadors are the first to drop their heads and flee.

What kind of King has ambassadors who fear every shadow and shrink from every confrontation? Should not an ambassador of Christ declare the whole counsel of God? Should not an ambassador communicate both the promised blessings of God and the warnings that come from God's own mouth. Should we not deliver to the world both the glory and the judgment? If there is a place for Psalm 23, is there not just as great a need for Psalm 58?

Psalm 58

1 Do you really speak righteously, you mighty ones? Do you judge people fairly? 2 No, you

practice injustice in your hearts; with your hands you weigh out violence in the land.

3 The wicked go astray from the womb; liars err from birth. 4 They have venom like the venom of a snake, like the deaf cobra that stops up its ears, 5 that does not listen to the sound of the charmers who skilfully weave spells.

6 God, knock the teeth out of their mouths; Lord, tear out the young lions' fangs. 7 They will vanish like water that flows by; they will aim their useless arrows. 8 Like a slug that moves along in slime, like a woman's miscarried child, they will not see the sun.

9 Before your pots can feel the heat of the thorns— whether green or burning— He will sweep them away. 10 The righteous one will rejoice when he sees the retribution; he will wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. 11 Then people will say, "Yes, there is a reward for the righteous! There is a God who judges on earth!"

Did you hear the last words of this Psalm? Then people will say, "Yes, there is a reward for the righteous! There is a God who judges on earth!" Is this not the goal of all gospel preaching, all faithful witnessing?

Here again is what David said to Goliath: "*Then all the world will know that Israel has a God, 47 and this whole assembly will know that it is not by sword or by spear that the Lord saves, for the battle is the Lord's.*"

This is like what Elijah prayed on Mt. Carmel: "*Yahweh, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, today let it be known that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant. . . . Answer me, Lord! Answer me so that this people will know that You, Yahweh, are God and that You have turned their hearts back*" (I Kings 18:36-37).

The gospel is a double-edged sword

Jesus is the loving, merciful Saviour Who forgives sin.

He is also the One coming to judge those who disobey the gospel.

He who said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28), also said, "Unless you repent, you will all perish" (Luke 13:3).

We do the people of the world no favours unless we warn them with these words of our Lord. If you insist on perverting our children, if you insist on separating families, if you try to shut up the Christian message from Alberta's youth, if you try to close the Christian schools and the home schools, and try to prevent Christian teachers from speaking their consciences in public school classrooms, there is a God in heaven and we are praying that as a warning to others He will make His power known through you. This is what it means to be an ambassador for Christ.

Prayer for TWU

Read the first four from the bulletin insert, then add the following:

- That God's people will boldly declare the judgment of God upon those who persist in blaspheming His holy name.
- That Canadians will understand that blessings are only poured out on those nations whose God is Yahweh! That the nation, starting with its leaders, will return to the One True God and the

One True Faith.