

The Corona Chronicle

West Worthing Evangelical Church Rugby Road.

Sunday September 27th

www.westworthingevangelical.co.uk

Being Church while the Corona Virus emergency is on



The Final Word

You may find it helpful to have your Bible handy when you read this.

We are all aware of massive problems in our world today: not just Covid-19 but famine, drought, injustice, persecution, inequality, exploitation, corruption and more. So what is the cause? Why is the world as it is? And who has the final word?

Psalm 2 addresses this issue.

In the light of what he sees in verses 1-3 the Psalmist raises *An Incredible Query*. Here are the rulers and leaders of the nations, together with their peoples, gathering noisily in determined, implacable opposition to a common hated enemy. But what provokes his incredulity is who they are conspiring against – no one but God himself! But why?

The reason becomes immediately clear in verse 3. The “bonds” and “cords” picture the yoke and reins used to guide and bring wild oxen under control. This is how they view God’s sovereignty, oppressive and restrictive, and they want nothing of it. They reject the authority of God, and his Anointed.

This is not merely a localized reaction but a universal one for this is a Messianic psalm which finds its fulfilment in the Lord Jesus Christ (see Acts 4:24-27). But this attitude is not only universal but perpetual for throughout the centuries God’s authority has been rejected. Today in some nations that opposition is seen blatantly placarded while in others it means that God is relegated to a footnote and practically ignored. In our own country we can see this in the way in which Christian standards have been eroded or removed from our legislation.

But nations are made up of individuals – you and me – shying away from God’s rule in our lives. This is what the Bible means by sin. When Adam led the first rebellion he brought in all the ills and problem in the world. And we perpetuate them. The world is as it is because we are as we are!

The irony, of course, is that we were not made for this but to find fulfilment and purpose in God. So the Psalmist is incredulous that we should be against the God who wishes us only good. But his incredulous query is also triggered by the arrogance shown.

To show their foolishness he highlights *an unchangeable reality* for if verses 1-3 show the world’s enmity and determination to be rid of God verses 4-6 show us God’s response. The Psalmist reminds us of three things: *God’s position*, “he sits in the heavens” (verse 4) - the unchanging God, separate from his creation but totally in control of it – the ruler; *God’s attitude* “he... laughs” (verse 4) completely unfazed by the virulent abuse and threats – remember Isaiah 40:22; *God’s action* – compare verse 3 “Let us” with verse 6 “As for me I (the “I” is emphatic) have set my King on Zion.” Whatever man says, God’s purpose is unstoppable. Zion, (Jerusalem) was not originally a particularly impressive place but God chose it and met with his people there. Today, God’s people and kingdom may seem unimpressive but the outcome is not in doubt because God is God. This is cause for the world to be terrified - verses 5-6. Why?

Because there is *an inescapable destiny*. In verses 7-9 God’s Anointed speaks and again the New Testament confirms he is Jesus (see Acts 13:32-33; Romans 1:3-4). God grants to him supremacy over all the nations, verses 8-9. There is hope for the world through Jesus’ sufferings but verse 9 makes it clear there is also final, total, irrevocable judgement for all who oppose and reject his rule.

Perhaps we don’t like to think of judgement or of God being like that? Do we want a God who is a Super Santa in the sky with goodies for all, no matter what they are like? The God of the Bible is not like that; he cares passionately about right, wrong, sin, evil and purity. And no wonder when we remember the destruction and pain caused, whether on the world scene or in our personal relationships. You can see how big this issue is and how passionately God cares when you remember the cross.

So God won’t ignore human sin. And do we really want him to? What kind of world would it be if, when God’s kingdom comes, there is never a final reckoning for the tyrants, exploiters, persecutors, abusers – and the list is endless. Do we really want evil not to be called to account? Our sins may not be so spectacular but spring from the same source – we don’t want God horning in on our lives. So verse 9 is our inescapable destiny if we continue in this way.

But this psalm doesn’t leave us there; it makes clear there is another way, verses 10-12. There is a refuge available-in God himself!

How is that possible? Even more, why would he want to offer this? The Psalmist confronts us with *an unfathomable mercy*.

As we face what our world is like, as we honestly face the way we have treated God, why would he offer hope to us? Alongside his holiness and justice there is the unfathomable mercy of God reaching out to us. And it's all to do with Jesus and our reaction to and relationship with the Son – verse 12(a). So we are called to radical change - see verses 10-12. In other words we can't have our sin and God's security, our rebellion and God's redemption. We are called to see things differently, to act differently, to exchange loyalties. We are called to *Kiss the Son*, verse 12(a). But what does this mean? In the Psalmist's time when a king was defeated by another king his total surrender was symbolised by kissing either the victorious king's hand, foot or the hem of his garment.

And we are called to give in to our gracious King Jesus who overcomes us, not with a sword and fetters, but with love beyond words, offering us rebels mercy because he himself has borne our sin and its judgement on the cross. Kiss the Son and as you submit in repentance and faith that kiss becomes the kiss of peace and love as you experience this unfathomable mercy.

And you will find God kisses you back in total acceptance.

Dennis Read



Psalm 128 Fearing the Lord , Walking in His Ways

Psalm 128 is known as a **wisdom Psalm**, imparting wisdom on its readers through short phrases and vivid images.

We may have plenty of knowledge but how do we put it into wise action?

Psalm 128 continues on the theme of blessing which we read about in Psalm 127, the blessing of God to those who fear Him.

Today we look at the first four verses

To fear God does not mean we run away from God like Jonah. But to be in awe of God's majesty. To approach Him with reverence and respect. To take God seriously
To put Him first in our lives.

The Psalmist defines it 'Those who fear the Lord walk in God's

ways.' The right attitudes to God lead to right actions

John 14v21

21 He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.

God has laid out His way in His word. Put God at the centre of your life (Fear of God). Let God's word mark the circumference of your life. Let God's word mark what you will and what you will not do. God will then take care of everything in between, and you will be blessed by God in all that you do.

God will bless your work

Look at verse 2: "You will eat the fruit of your labour; blessings and prosperity will be yours." (Psalm 128:2)

This does not necessarily mean that you will become wealthy or rich, but rather that you will find fulfilment in your work and that your work will provide for your needs.

Too often in life we work hard but we still don't seem to be getting anywhere. Is it because we are not fearing God and walking in His ways?

The prophet Haggai in the Old Testament warned the Jews who returned to Jerusalem: "Give careful thought to your ways. You have planted much, but have harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it." (Haggai 1:5-6)

The Jews were working hard but not getting anywhere. That is the opposite of the blessing God offers to those who fear Him and walk in His ways. God wants you to enjoy the fruit of your work. That was His plan from the start.

We read in Genesis 2:15: "*The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.*" (Genesis 2:15) Before Adam and Eve sinned they worked the garden and knew God's blessing on their work. It was good work with good rewards.

Ecclesiastes 2 says: "*A man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment?*" (Ecclesiastes 2:24-25)

God will bless your marriage

Look at verse 3: "*Your wife (NOT PARTNER) will be like a fruitful vine within your house.*" (Psalm 128:3a) This speaks of both fruitfulness and faithfulness.

The vine is a picture of fruitfulness. Remember God's initial blessing on Adam and Eve when He first created them?

Genesis 1:28 says: "*God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.'*"

God's blessing is related to productivity and fruitfulness. And this doesn't just mean bearing children, but it means having a full and productive life. The picture here is of a beautiful vine that is thriving, flourishing, fruitful and productive.

And then there is faithfulness. The fact that the vine is "within the house" speaks of faithfulness in marriage.

This is in contrast to the adulterous wife described in Proverbs 7 who is never at home: "She is loud and defiant, her feet never stay at home; now in the street, now in the squares, at every corner she lurks." (Proverbs 7:11-12)

Marriage is one of God's great blessings in life. Proverbs 18:22 says: "He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favour from the Lord."

God will bless your family.

"Your sons will be like olive shoots around your table." (Psalm 128:3b)

The olive tree is a basic part of agriculture in Israel it is also a picture of productivity and blessing. The image of olive shoots around the table is the picture of a mature, established olive tree with young shoots springing up out of the soil all around it.

The olive shoots represent youth and energy and, above all, promise. When you sit down to eat with your family, your children are the hope and promise of the future sitting around your table.

Psalm 144:12 offers a similar image when it says: "Then our sons in their youth will be like well-nurtured plants, and our daughters will be like pillars carved to adorn a palace."

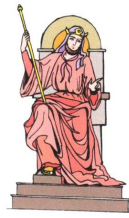
The olive is a slow growing tree. It can take ten to fifteen years before it bears any fruit, but once established the olive tree needs little maintenance or supervision, and it will produce fruit for decades to come. It's the same way with your children. It will take some time before they grow to independence and maturity.

These verses do not mean that God grants marriage and family to all, but rather this is one of ways He blesses the godly. As Samuel Cox says: "Make God your home, and He will make your home a happy home." Psalm 128:4 says: "Thus is the man blessed who fears the Lord."

David Page

The King's Quiz

After reading about Kings Solomon, Joash, Josiah, and Jehoshaphat, answer the following questions. Put an "S" for Solomon; "J" for Joash; "JO" for Josiah; and "JE" for Jehoshaphat.



S for Solomon



J for Joash



JO for Josiah



JE for Jehoshaphat

- _____ 1. He was the youngest of the four when he was anointed king.
- _____ 2. He was 8 years old when he became king.
- _____ 3. He was made king instead of his brother Adonijah.
- _____ 4. His mother ordered him killed.
- _____ 5. He rebuilt the Temple.
- _____ 6. He discovered the book of the law.
- _____ 7. He was punished for breaking the 1st Commandment.
- _____ 8. He was 7 years old when he became king.
- _____ 9. He built the Temple for his father.
- _____ 10. He prayed for his kingdom to be delivered from his enemies.

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- _____ 10. He prayed for his kingdom to be delivered from his enemies. **JE**

Hymns, Prayers and Bible Readings.

O Lord, enable us this day to reveal Your glory in all we think, and say, and do; that Your presence may bless and strengthen us all the day long, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Michael Seward

1 Blessed are those who fear the Lord,
Walking in God's perfect ways;
All they do shall bring reward,
Love enriches all their days.

2 Blessings greet the husband, wife,
Parents, children, old and young;
Fruits of faith be theirs for life,
Joy in songs together sung.

3 Bless us, Lord! Your kingdom come;
Children's children shouting praise:
Prayer in nation, church and home,
Peace in Christ to crown our days.

Christopher Idle from Psalm 128
© Christopher Idle/Jubilate Hymns Ltd

Psalm 128 NKJV
Blessed is every one who fears the Lord, Who walks
in His ways.

2 When you eat the labour of your hands,
You shall be happy, and it shall be well with you.
3 Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine
In the very heart of your house,
Your children like olive plants all around your table.
4 Behold, thus shall the man be blessed
Who fears the Lord.

5 The Lord bless you out of Zion,
And may you see the good of Jerusalem
All the days of your life.
6 Yes, may you see your children's children.

Peace be upon Israel!

PRAYING FOR GOD'S BLESSING UPON US
From Psalm 33

O Lord,
We wait for You in faith -
You are our help and our shield,
In You our hearts rejoice
For we trust Your holy name:
Lord, let Your unfailing love rest upon us,
For we put our hope in You. Amen.

PRAYING FOR PROTECTION
From Psalm 3

Lord, You are our shield from danger. When we call to
You for help:
Hear our prayer from heaven.

When people turn against us or mock our faith:
Restore our courage,
And bring us victory;

When troubles surround us on every side:
Give us rest,
Make us sleep in peace,
And protect us all night long.

Lord come to us:
Lord save us.

Bless us Your people:
We shall overcome
In You alone. Amen.

Jesus took the bread of sorrows.

**Jesus is described as a 'man of sorrows
And acquainted with grief.' Isaiah 53v5-6.
He took the bread of sorrows, our sin.
So that we might trust in His
righteousness leading to eternal life.
What an exchange, what a Saviour.**