

God - Judge and King

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[0 : 00] This is the evening service at Holy Trinity on the 11th of January 2004.

The preacher is Paul Dudley. His sermon is entitled God, Judge and King and is based on Psalm 9.

Father, I do indeed thank you for your word that we can learn more about you and your nature. We pray that you'll help us to understand it and apply it to our lives. Amen. Please be seated.

Well, the other place that you can find Psalm 9 is actually in the Bible. And you might like to open up your Bibles to page 427. 427.

That's the translation that I'll be working from tonight. 427. My family loves TV ads.

[1 : 03] They really enjoy them. So much so that TV ads actually become a part of our vocabulary in particular situations. So, for example, there is this great ad, I don't know if you remember it, where this woman puts on something, some chips, some oil on the stove and she then gets a phone call and she's talking on the phone and the chips bubble up more and more and all of a sudden there's a fire and then you hear as she looks around, oh my goodness, the chips.

Well, in our family, we had oh my goodness, the chips situations. So if someone was in a particular bad situation, you know, dad got a flat tyre or something like that, we'd all turn and go, oh my goodness, the chips.

Well, it wasn't that funny. Okay, it was funny for us then. There are other times. When someone's mad in our house, people will say, not happy, Jan.

A few more laughs there. When people are in a good mood, we tend to click our heels. Oh, what a feeling. A few more laughs, that's good.

There are lots of good ads out there. We really enjoy them. I love the Pepsi Max ads that used to be on, Live Life to the Full. There are many, many of them, very cleverly put together.

[2 : 20] Well, it seems that the world has actually caught on to our love of TV ads that we have in our family. Hugh Mackay, who was a sociologist in yesterday's age, does a lot of reflecting on the way the world is and a lot of surveys and that type of thing.

And he has noted from a few surveys that people are putting more and more trust in TV ads. They trust them more than the news or current affairs.

They trust them more than politicians. Listen to this from a survey. 63% of people do not trust news and current affairs as they once did. 57% don't trust the government as much as they did a few years ago.

52% of people claim that there are no politicians they would regard as trustworthy and reliable. But TV ads, they're trustworthy. We like our TV ads.

Now, Hugh Mackay, he says this radical change, this radical change in a trust and a love of TV ads has actually come about because of the insecure times that we live in.

[3 : 25] The terrorism that is around. Ever since September 11, war, threats, counter-threats, governments that have possible hidden agendas, propaganda that seems to be out there, sensationalistic reporting, media bias.

We just don't trust it anymore. We don't trust the news. We don't trust our politicians. The world is an unsafe place. But more importantly, Hugh Mackay says is, it's out of our control.

So what do we want to control? We want to control the things that we can control. That's where the ads come in, don't they? They've got their soft, seductive voice.

Messages that come to us, waving over us. Messages of telling us what to eat, what to drive, where to shop, what to wear. These are the things that we can control.

These are things that we like to learn about. And advertisement agencies have picked up on this and so they're trying to lay it out as bare as they can that they're trustworthy in what they bring.

[4 : 34] Well, it is a world that is insecure. It is a world that is fallen. And we turn to things that we can control. Our kitchen, our backyard, the things that we drive, what we wear, these are the things that now bring us security.

These are the things that we can boast in. My Christmas present this year, a mortar and pestle. Have you ever seen, who's the cook that I love?

I can't even think of his name now. The English guy. Jamie Oliver, thank you. I love when he gets his little pestle out there and he's making his little herbs and spices and there he is.

Well, I got one for Christmas present. There's my Christmas present. I'm right there. I'm going to control my own kitchen. Even if I can't control my shoulder, but I'm going to control my kitchen. In the times of King David, he lived in an insecure, uncertain world.

I guess much like ours. Wars are strife, plots are scheming, distress, nation's threat, a time when the wicked appear to be prospering, not facing judgment.

[5 : 48] What does David put his trust in? What is it that he boasts in? Does he boast in himself and his abilities, his strength, his creativity, his victories, or perhaps even in his cooking delights, his beautiful magnolia planted in the courtyard, or that, oh, what a feeling camel that he's just purchased.

Are these the things that he puts his trust in? The things that he boasts in? No, he puts his trust in God. And in this psalm, we see the God that is the judge and the king.

He will boast in the mighty deeds and name of his God. Let me read to you verse 1 and 2 of this psalm. I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart.

I will tell of his wonderful deeds. I will be glad and exult in you. I will sing praise to your name, O Most High. This is what he boasts in.

This is what he puts his trust in. Not himself. Not the things that he can do. But he's God. That's where he puts his trust.

[6 : 58] The rest of the psalm, which we're going to be looking at tonight, reflects on the nature of this God that he trusts. That he is the judge and the king. That he is the champion of the weak.

That he's a God that you can call out for deliverance. Next week, we're going to look at the companion psalm to this. The two psalms are written together. They hold together.

In fact, in some, in the old Torah, they're actually one psalm together. But David has written them together so that we might read them together. So we're going to look at this psalm this week, but Psalm 10 next week and see how they help each other and help us to have a fuller picture of this God and the way that the world is.

Psalms 10 will pick up on the wickedness of people and the way they seem to get away with things in this world. But this week, we're looking at the great God, the God who is judge and king of the nations.

Let's have a look at this judge and king and see how we see this in verses 3 through to verse 8. It's there that we see this characteristic of God. This is where we see who he is.

[8 : 02] This is where David proclaims to all the people around him, this great God. It's this God that he gives thanks to and that he sings his praises. So have a look there in verses 3 and 4.

When my enemies turned back, they stumbled and perished before you. For you maintained my just cause. You have sat on your throne giving righteous judgment. Here is the judge and the king.

He is the one who brings nations stumbling and perished before him. In verse 5 and 6, he reflects on the effective nature of his righteous judgments.

That is, he looks at the actual judgments and what they bring about. How does God, what does his judgment look like? What effects does it have on the nations and those who, as it says there in verse 3, stumble and perish?

Look there in verses 5 and 6. You have rebuked the nations. You have destroyed the wicked. You have blotted out their name forever and ever.

[9 : 06] The enemies have vanished in everlasting ruins. Their cities have been rooted out. The very memory of them has perished. Notice the utter destruction that God's judgment brings on the nations.

Look there in verse 5, how the names are blotted out forever and ever. Nations love making a name for themselves. They love writing down all their accomplishments, getting the parchments out and writing down all the great things they did.

There have been places found where kings have etched on stones all their accomplishments, all the great things that they've done. They want to boast in themselves. They want to make a name for themselves.

But God brings about his judgment upon them. He blots their name out. Blots out all their fame, all their things that they've come to.

Blots it out like liquid paper, removing them totally, leaving no trace or record of them. So final is God's judgment. It says there that the enemies vanished in everlasting ruins and then describes how these ruins come about.

[10 : 18] The cities are rooted out like a tree is rooted out of the ground. Not even the stuff underneath is left. Or like a tooth where the dentist goes in and he digs out the roots of the teeth.

You know, he's pulling away there and he has to get down to the very bottom. It leaves no trace of that tooth whatsoever. So is God's judgment against the nations. He leaves no trace of their cities.

Even the memory of them has perished. So comprehensive is the metering out of God's judgment. Well, his comprehensive effects of God's judgment is based upon his character.

It's based upon who this God is. Verse 7. But the Lord sits enthroned forever. He has established his throne for judgment. He judges the world with righteousness.

He judges the people with equity. Here we see a God who has an eternal kingdom. A God that is righteous. Metering out equity.

[11 : 28] Saddam Hussein has just been caught recently. And one of the big questions is who's going to judge this man? Who's going to bring him to face the terrible atrocities that he's committed or hasn't committed?

Who's going to bring about justice? Who's going to bring about a fair justice for this man? Will it be America? America keeps on saying, no, we're going to leave it to the Iraqi people.

Who's going to bring about this judgment for this man? David here says that he's God. He's a righteous God.

A God who deals with equity. There is no bias in him. God has no hidden agenda. He doesn't have dishonest scales. He doesn't have mixed motives.

I've been in a court a couple of times. Not because I was actually caught doing anything or because I was there to represent anyone else. I was there as an observer. I want to bring a reference for a friend and once just observing a case.

[12 : 35] The judge sits up there in his little seat with his little hammer and he is quite intimidating. He's there trying to gather all the facts, trying to be fair.

Has the jury there? He's trying to bring all the things, all the bits and pieces together, all the bits of knowledge that he can gain to bring about a fair judgment. And then he brings down the judgment on that person.

David describes here a judge who is all-knowing. A judge who knows all the facts, all the things that are visible and invisible, things that people want to cover up are laid bare before God.

He is a great God, a God of justice. But as we look in these verses that I've just read, three through to eight, we notice that David speaks in a way that speaks about God has already had a total victory, that he's already reigning the world, that he's already brought about an everlasting justice, as though everything has already happened.

Look there in verse five. Turning back a page. You have rebuked the nations. You have destroyed the wicked. You have blotted out the name forever and ever.

[13 : 55] Notice the past tense there. Many commentators have sort of said, well, you know, perhaps David's reflecting on some of the past judgments that God has brought about. But no, David is speaking in this way to talk about how certain he is of God's judgment coming.

He speaks as though it's a present reality, as though it's already happened, so certain of the judgment to come, so certain of its fulfillment. He speaks this way.

This is indeed a great judge and king. Well, the second characteristic that we see in this Psalm 9 is that God is the champion of the weak. In verses 9 through to 12, David reflects on this.

He is a God who cares for them, a God who stands up for them. Look in verse 9. In verse 9, he uses a pictorial language to try and describe his God.

The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. Here is God, the great stronghold, that is the great castle or the great room or the great building or the great safety box or there's this picture of this place, a place with very thick walls, a place which is safe and secure, one that has locks that cannot be broken.

[15 : 22] Nothing can penetrate it. Anything that is in this safehold cannot be attacked. It cannot ruin. It is safe from fires, from enemies, from floods, from moths, from rust, from vandals.

No matter what the trouble is, those who are weak in God's stronghold cannot be harmed. God has them safe in the palm of his hand.

Verse 10 talks about this as well. Those who know your name put their trust in you. For you, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek you.

He has not forsaken them. He is their stronghold. Well, in verses 11 and 12, we come to a great climax in the psalm.

It's the first of two climaxes. We've just talked about God being the great judge and king, about being the champion of the week. And so at this point, David breaks into great praises. He sings God's great praises there in verse 11.

[16 : 28] Sing praises to the Lord who dwells in Zion. Declare his great deeds among the peoples. He wants to get a megaphone and shout out to all the people who are listening, all those who are reading this psalm.

He wants them to know about his great God. He wants them to see his mighty deeds. This is a great God. In verse 12, A great climax at this point of the psalm.

After knowing what God has done, he wants everyone to sing out the praises to this God. Not just himself, as we saw at the beginning of the psalm. Now he encourages everyone else to join in and sing praises to this great God.

Well, the second half of the psalm, from verses 13 through to the end, we build up to another climax. But it's a much quieter climax. After knowing this character of God, he calls out to this God for deliverance.

In verses 13 and 14, we get hints of the fact that there is distress and suffering in David's life. Be gracious to me, O Lord.

[17 : 46] See what I suffer from those who hate me. You are the one who lifts me up from the gates of death so that I may recount your praises and in the gates of daughter Zion rejoice in your deliverance.

We're not sure what the problem that David is facing at this moment in the psalm. It's not sure whether it's a political strife, whether Saul is still pursuing him, whether a nation is threatening him.

But we do know that he's calling out for deliverance. And why shouldn't he? He has a God who is judge and king. A God who hears the cry of the weak.

Well, despite his distress and suffering, he firmly fixes his mind on God. His solution to this problem that he is suffering is that he has a great rescuer.

A great rescuer who will bring about justice. Verses 15 and 16 pick this up. The nations have sunk in the pit that they made. In the net that they hid has their own foot been caught.

[18 : 50] The Lord has made himself known. He has executed judgment. The wicked are sneered in the work of their hands. Here, David picks up again the certain fact that they are going to face judgment.

Like quicksand, they are trapped. There is no escape for them. God's judgment will be swift and final. They are trapped by their own filth and sin.

David is absolutely certain of this. And that's why he writes these things the way he does, as though it's already happened. The nations had sunk in the pit. The net that hid has caught their own foot.

God made himself known. He has executed judgment. The wicked are snared in the work of their own hands. At this point, there is a musical interlude.

Many of these psalms were written with musical notes put down for the people who were going to play the song. Higaon and Salah, which are the two musical notes there, indicate that at this moment we are to have a change in musical instruments.

[20 : 06] Quite a change. It's like going from the trumpets to the flute. We're going down a notch. The mood has become sombre now.

The moment, Paul wants to try and hold their attention. He wants to make some very clear, sombre, reflective remarks.

So everything goes quieter with the music. The wicked shall depart to Sheol, all the nations that forget God.

For the needy shall not always be forgotten, nor the hope of the poor perish forever. two very bold statements of what God will do.

Sung in a moment of sombre, reflective interlude. David brings the psalm to a final climax, a bold appeal for action.

[21 : 11] He calls on God to execute final judgment on the nations, to bring about the day of the Lord, to fulfill His covenant promises, to bring about His glorious kingdom.

That the nations may know that they are not the ones who power belongs. That humans may know that they have their limits. Humans cannot grasp the revelation of God unless they realise their own weakness and helplessness.

On their own they are dust, mere dust. And so David calls out to God to act to help people realise this. Rise up O Lord, do not let mortals prevail.

Let the nations be judged before you. Put them in fear O Lord, let the nations know that they are only human. How do you reflect, how do you react in these uncertain insecure days?

How do you deal with what's going on? Are you like the rest of society? Trying to control what you can control?

[22 : 29] Are you buying your mortar and pistol? Are you buying new clothes? Are you designing a new backyard? Are you getting a better car? Are you spending time trying to control what you can control?

Is that your answer to the insecurity of this world? Or are you like David? Do you give thanks with your whole heart to God for his wonderful deeds and mighty names so clearly seen for us this side of the cross in his son Jesus Christ?

Do you reflect on God's great character that he has so wondrously displayed? That he is the great judging king of this world? That his judgments are just and righteous as seen in the life of Jesus Christ?

That his wrath is swift and terrible as seen in the death of his son on a cross? That he sits on his eternal throne in heaven as seen by the resurrection of Jesus to the right hand of God the first born in his kingdom?

That his final judgment day will come as Jesus predicted like a thief in the night? That he is the champion of the weak as so clearly seen in the compassion of Jesus' life?

[23 : 52] That he is the stronghold for the oppressed secured by the death and resurrection and indwelling spirit in our lives? Do you call on this God to be gracious to you?

Do you call on him for deliverance? Do you pray, come Lord Jesus? This day in history, throughout history, the 11th of January, has had many things happen on it.

In 1928, Bing Crosby wrote, recorded, Old Man River. By 1975, it sold 400 million copies.

That's pretty impressive. Earhart, in 1935, flies from Hawaii to California. In 1964, US surgeon Luther Terry, issued the government with the smoking hazards, hazards with smoking.

There have been some great accomplishments throughout history. There are just a few on this day throughout history. But on this day, there have been some terrible atrocities as well. Those committed in concentration camps by the Nazis.

[25 : 06] There have been some terrible things, terrible crimes. things, we need to realise that we are but human and that there is a God who is judge and king.

The best antidote for suffering and distress in this world? Fix your minds firmly on God, our judge and king. Let me pray.

Amen. Rise up, O Lord. Do not let mortals prevail. Let the nations be judged before you.
Put them in fear, O Lord.

Let the nations know that they are only human. Amen. Russia's good.

Last pound. Thank you.