

A Royal Wedding

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 31 August 2014

Preacher: Derek Lamont

[0:00] So, like today, to go back to the psalm that we read together. I haven't preached actually from a psalm for ages in St. Columba, isn't it? It's a bad omission. So, it's nice today to go back to a couple of psalms to look at these psalms and learn from them what we can learn as we recognise them as part of God's word and take them for ourselves.

As I said in the prayer, I was at a wedding on Friday, Allie Meredith and Alan Stewart, that was in Varnesque, and I hope to be at one marrying Kirsten McGilvery and A. Baboyoye on Friday again in the same church in Varnesque.

So, I guess weddings are on my mind a little bit in one way or another. And this is a royal wedding song, a good song to sing at a wedding.

And it is attributed to one of the sons of Korah, or of the sons of Korah. So, it's not a Davidic psalm, it wasn't written by David.

Many of them were, we call them the psalms of David, but they weren't all written by David. But this one was written by one of the sons of Korah. We don't know which wedding that he was penning his words to.

[1:18] We know that he was given great inspiration under God, but we don't have a record of which specific wedding, royal wedding, he was writing for.

Some many commentators think it may have been one of Solomon's weddings. He had a few. But I'm not sure if that's true or not. We don't have clear indication of who it was from.

Others believe that this wasn't actually written specifically for any particular wedding, but was just given by God hugely under inspiration, and is a purely messianic pointing forward to Jesus Christ. It's probably similar in between these two things. But clearly it does establish within the Old Testament, that idea of the coming messiah who was seen as a son of David, who was seen as a king, a messiah king figure in the future, as a groom and God's people, his own people, those who came and put their trust and who followed this messiah king, seen as his bride.

So there's this great, they're far more used to illustration and picture in their culture in the ancient eras than we were, and they would strongly use these great pictures to speak of truth and to speak of truth that was to happen indeed in the future.

[2:52] But we know that there was this, even in the Old Testament, this picture that the messiah who would come, who we know as Jesus, because we're looking at it obviously with the benefit of the New Testament, the messiah who would come would be the groom, and his people would be his bride, and you know, Isaiah 62 speaks about that, as a young man marries him in kind of nice, gentle languages, young man marries him, made and so your sons will marry you, as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so your God will rejoice over you.

So is this picture of God rejoicing over his people in the same way that a groom would rejoice over his bride? Or in Hosea 2:19, that amazing picture of faithfulness and adultery and covenantal truth and forgiveness, God says, I will betroth you to me forever in righteousness, in justice, in love and in compassion.

So there's that great same language of covenantal faithfulness of God and some of the language of truth, humility and righteousness that we have in verse 4 here of the kind of relationship he has with his people.

And part of that, and I think sometimes we lose sight of this, is why did God use marriage as a picture, or the wedding feast, particularly the wedding feast and the marriage, as it's described in the Psalm and elsewhere.

And as Jesus uses it in the New Testament, and is such a, and so much favour of using that picture in the illustration, and indeed it goes on to speak about in Revelation, the wedding feast of the

Lamb that Heaven's described as that great celebration, that we are with Jesus Christ in His heaven, and it's like a wedding feast.

[4 : 51] Why does He use that? Well, I think primarily because of the themes of love, covenant, commitment, and yes, joy, love and celebration.

Now maybe we've lost sight of that a little bit. Maybe we're a bit joyless in our Christian faith and in our expression of that, a bit lifeless, a bit dead in the way we live our Christian lives, because we're in difficult times.

We're in that time where Christ has come once for His bride to save them at the cross, and He will come again to take us to be with Him. But we're in that difficult period of betrothal in between, and it's tough and it's a struggle and it's a battle and there's sin and there's problems.

And sometimes we get just get weighed down with that, but we need to be reminded that it's a celebration. And that there is joy involved, and that there is happiness because of what Jesus Christ has done for us. And that's to be our perspective, and that's to be part of what we are and what we do.

And that's to be reflected in our coming together, to be reflected in our worship, to be reflected in our communities, to be reflected in our praise, to be reflected in the way we listen and then the way we live our lives, and the way we interact with one another, celebration and joy.

[6 : 06] And I think that is hugely significant for us, and I hope that some of that comes across as we look through this Sam briefly. And you know, we went through the procedure that the wedding event took place in the Old Testament, and that is quite different from ours, there was this legal betrothal.

That's why, for example, Joseph and Mary talks about Joseph wanting to divorce her quietly, because they were betrothed to one another, but they weren't actually married.

So it was such a legal binding kind of relationship, although they weren't living and sleeping together, it needed a divorce to enact separation.

And so that is part of the similarity between what we have here. It also makes a little bit more sense of the parable of the wise and foolish virgins that Jesus speaks about in the New Testament, because it's kind of different from our weddings.

So that's the background to this Sam, and we know, and we can be confident that this Sam is messianic. It points forward to, with this great Old Testament pictures pointing forward to the relationship between God and His people, because part of this Sam is quoted in Hebrews chapter 1.

[7 : 31] Now you may remember or may not remember that we studied Hebrews and went through this book not terribly long ago. We started at Hebrews chapter 1, which is great, wasn't it? We started at the beginning.

Hebrews chapter 1, and when we have the writer to the Hebrews under inspiration of God quoting the superiority of Jesus, and you remember that, don't you, about Hebrews?

It was all about how superior Jesus was to the Old Testament and to the Old Testament religion, which the new Christians were being tempted to go back into.

And so the first chapter of Hebrews is speaking about how superior Jesus is to anything. And we have this quote that the writer gives from God.

He says, to which of the angels did God ever say, and then he quotes, but about the Son, he says, your throne, O God, will last forever and ever.

[8 : 29] Do you remember that? Do you remember we stopped at that for quite a while, here was God speaking and saying of Jesus, your throne, O God. So God, the Father, was speaking about Jesus, the Son, and attributing to him, divinity, O God.

So your throne, O God, will last forever and ever, and righteousness will be the sceptre of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore, God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.

And then it's got a little letter beside it. And if you go to the bottom of the page, it says, verse 9, Sam 45, verses 6 and 7. So you've got the New Testament quoting this Sam, which is speaking about the king, about the Messiah, and attributing it to God, attributing it to Jesus.

It is clearly with this New Testament authority speaking of not just a king in the ancient Near East, but also speaking of God, and it's on that basis that we move forward.

And it's pointing us into the future as well, and that's great. So at the beginning of this Sam, we've got the Sammet.

[9 : 49] One of the sons, of course, in my heart is stirred by a noble theme as I recite, my verses for the king. My tongue is the pen of a skillful writer. He's given God-given words.

This is a messianic Sam. It's a Sam that is inspired by God, is to be used for the praise of God's people in the Old Testament, and throughout the Church of God. And it is inspired in a unique way by God to be part of scripture.

And his own senses are excited and refreshed, and his heart is stirred by the message that he's been given as he speaks about the beauty of the king, and the love of the king, and the character of the king for his people.

My heart is stirred by a noble message. It's great. It's a great introduction, isn't it? And I think, isn't it very easy for us to forget that as Christians, it's the message of the Gospel and by the character of our God, and by the good news and the joy and the celebration that is to be linked to our Christianity, very often we're going up, with our mouths facing the other way, kind of down the way. Sad and just filled with today's burdens and problems and the miseries and the pressures and the difficulties and the struggles, and they're very real. No one's denying that.

[11 : 09] It's as real for me as for anybody else. So easy for me to forget. So easy. But all of us need to remind ourselves and be challenged by this heartwarming, stirring message of the character of, and the love of God and the commitment of God to us.

We can sometimes be academic, and we can sometimes be cerebral about our understanding of the Bible, or we can sometimes just be completely disinterested. But we pray, and I hope all of you pray, that we will be moved by the wonder of our God and by the wonder of Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior, and by the future hope that He has for us.

We mustn't just grasp onto what happened in the past in Calvary, however important that is, or significant it is, but it's only part of an unfinished story, because Jesus has come once to betroth us, as it were, and He will return again to take us into this wedding feast, this celebration, into His presence, closer presence, forevermore.

And so the reminder is for us to allow our hearts to be stirred by that. It's pretty cold in here this morning. It's quite hard to get your heart stirred when it's kind of cold and the building looks a steer. But just try. Just imagine. And think spiritually about the message in the person of Jesus Christ, because we have a description here in this Psalm, very briefly that I'll go into, of the King.

[12 : 42] And it's verses 2 to 9 where the King is coming, He's betrothed by Him, He's coming to take her to be with Him. And it's a great picture of His...

As we think of it moving forward to the wedding feast at the Lamb and to our life in heaven with Him in nearer company with Him forever.

We are reminded of the character of God. He's the one who's told to you, you're the most excellent of men and your lips have been anointed with grace since God has blessed you forever.

And there's this sense of the excellence of Jesus, who is the Messiah King, this messianic Psalm, the blessing of His character, and also the blessing of His words.

You know, we said of Him in John 6, 6 to 8, who was it by? By Peter, you have the words of eternal life. Isn't that great? The words of eternal life. You know, how many words do we spill?

[13 : 44] How much rubbish do we speak? How worthless and weightless are so much of what we say about one another or to one another. And here is this great Redeemer, this great messianic King whose words, whose lips have been anointed with grace, who have got great words, the words of eternal life.

Who are we listening to today? Who are we listening to? I think most of the time we spend listening to ourselves and making ourselves supreme.

And yet He wants us to recognize His great character and His great grace-filled words that are blessed for us. His invitations to come to Him. His invitations to be forgiven.

His invitations to be transformed. He's a loving God. And it's good, you know, it's good to read the Bible of the day. Of course it's good to read the Bible of the day because it's the words of eternal life. It's the words of God.

They're great words to know and to recognize. And then in kind of verses 3 to 5, it speaks about this character of God in His mission who comes as a victorious King with His sword-guarding size, clothed with splendor and majesty.

[15 : 03] He rides forth victoriously on behalf of truth, humility, and rides His right hand displays awesome deeds. And it speaks about His defeating of the King's enemies. And so there's this great sense, this great picture of God who has been already victorious and is coming to take His bride to be with Himself because He has defeated all Her enemies.

And we recognize and know and understand and appreciate that about Jesus. It might not seem like that for us, but that's why we go back constantly to the cross and the resurrection and the ascension and Pentecost because it all speaks to us of what Jesus has already done of the victory that He's achieved against not physical enemies.

You know, we don't look at a chapter like this and a gird our sword and go out and fight ISIS. Like we have physical enemies because we know the New Testament teaches that our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual powers.

And it tells us that the sword that we use is the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God. It's a spiritual battle that we're in and that God has won the victory for us on the cross.

And so there's this picture of God that we need to hold on to because the danger is that our view of Jesus is this kind of spineless, irrelevant, rather impotent and powerless figure of the past because we don't see Him today and He doesn't hit the first item on the news agenda and He isn't involved in what we see these day-to-day battles of life that we see.

[17 : 01] But that's why we keep living by faith and keeping going back to this God that has already won the victory for us in Christ. A spiritual victory against what?

Against death and against sin and against the grave. And He has won that victory for us in Christ. And that is a great picture of the one who has ridden forth victoriously on behalf of truth, humility and righteousness.

And we see and know that for what He's already done. But we also see that He has a future and a destiny in verses 6 and 7.

This is what reminds us that this isn't just a royal psalm that was written just for ancient kings because it goes on to speak about this king in terms of being divine.

[17 : 59] Oh God, we will last forever and ever. A scepter of justice will be a scepter of Your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness. Therefore, God, you are going to set you above Your companion. Anointed you with the oil and so on.

And we have that great picture of His everlasting kingdom. Now, we belong to that kingdom as Christians. I know it might not seem like that for us.

But we know that He has made a kingdom and He is making a home for us. And it's going to be a place where we will move from this world in which we live with His battle and with His struggle and with His remaining sin.

And we will go into His presence at that great future, heavenly home, where there will be no more sin. And as Revelation describes, no more tears and no more death and no more separation and no more night and no more darkness and no more division.

And He speaks about that kingdom here as His kingdom, this everlasting kingdom. It will be a place of righteousness and a place of grace where wickedness will utterly have been dealt with entirely forever.

[19 : 16] It will be a feast, it will be a celebration, it will be a joy. Can you imagine that? Can you imagine a place like that? It's a picture. We're not going to be all around the table, there's going to be too many of us, but it's a picture of a place that has all the good things of this life, without any of the bad things.

But more than that, has the King there. The King who is on His throne will be there in all His glory and in all His greatness. And we are to think on that and to consider that, because we are His church, we are His people, and we will be, as He says, actually there's a fly just desperately to attack my notes.

You will not have them fly. And these, this picture of the King, sorry, picture of the church, daughters of kings are among your honourable, at your right hand is the royal bride in Gold of Ophir.

That's the picture that He gives of the church. His bride, spoken of a lot in the New Testament as well, you know, this great picture of who we are.

And we are at His right hand there with Him, never to be separated from Him with no more battles, not in that bedrothal period with all His tensions, which I'll mention just before we close, but close to

Him at His side.

[20 : 35] And that's the picture of the Christian and the church, the people of God, all the Christians together in the future with Him. Now it's an important perspective because you'll not feel like that tomorrow.

You'll not feel like that when you're going into the workplace. You'll not feel like that when you get a letter telling you how much you owe. You'll not feel like that when someone treats you badly, or treats you bitterly, or treats you unfairly, or unjustly.

But that's our reality, that's our foundation, that's what we hold on to. And briefly, can we just speak about the bride here that Spokerov in 10 to 15 has betrothed that it's mentioned here?

There's wise words, isn't there, from the counsellor in verses 10 and 12. Whoever it is, maybe it's a bridesmaid or something, you know, bridesmaids have that important job of keeping the bride calm before the wedding, and the best man for the...in our tradition anyway.

He says, or she says, listen, O daughter, consider and give ear, forget your people in your father's house. King is enthralled by your beauty. Honor him, for he's your lord. The daughter of Ty will come to you with a gift. Men of wealth will seek your favour.

[21 : 46] Listen, listen. Wise words of the counsellor. The bride is tense, the king is in waiting, and he's about to come. Maybe she's lost in doubts, and in last minute fears, will he come?

Will I be right kind of queen for him? Will it last? And spiritually, we have the same doubts and fears, don't we?

Can I really follow Jesus? Will I be able to stick with him? Will he stick with me? I love sinful things more than I love Jesus. How can that be?

Will he just reject me? What is it going to be like? What about all the problems? What about my friends who ask me questions that I can never answer? Questions about evil and questions about heart's desires and questions about life that I can't answer?

Well, the encouragement is to listen to the words of God and remind ourselves who he is and put our faith and trust in him. We have to forget our past. We have to forget the sins that we hold on to.

[23 : 03] And we have to mentally make that decision. You know, it sounds with this picture, you know, kind of, maybe it's the way it's written, it sounds a little bit, you know, forget your people in your father's house.

It doesn't really mean forget them. It just means forget that you are now under their responsibility and you've moved to the responsibility of another. And that's part of the vows of marriage, isn't it? That you're vowing exclusivity to the one person.

You've moved from a different relationship and you're moving into a new one. It's not that you forget your family, but you couldn't come into the marriage and say, well, can I have dad and mum in the same room with us all the time?

And can I have a previous boyfriend coming and living with us or a previous girlfriend? Can we just have a threesome? Can it all be just happy together with lots of back-dated relationships and lifestyles and marriages? We couldn't do that.

There's that exclusivity between a man and a woman when they come together in marriage and forsaking all others, we say, in the vows. As long as we both shall love, forsaking all others, that is the vow of exclusivity because that's how marriage and that's how relationship works at that level.

[24 : 10] And we have to forget what's gone before at that level. And so spiritually when we come to Christ, we cling to Him. We forget what's gone before. We forget our sins and our failures and our abilities.

And we stick to Him. And we continue to stick by Him. And we don't look back and we don't seek to look back. That's the mentality we need to have. I'm not saying we always achieve that, but we seek to do that.

And we seek to do that because we are reminded that He is enthralled by us. The King is enthralled by your beauty. Is that not a remarkable thing?

That God is enthralled by His people, by His church? Why? Because we're covered in the righteousness of Jesus. He sees His beloved Son. When He sees His church, when He sees you and me, that's what He sees.

He sees Jesus the substitute, Jesus the Savior, Jesus His beloved Son, in whom He is well pleased. And He is enthralled by our beauty.

[25 : 08] Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the Word, to present her to Himself as a radiant church without spot or wrinkle or any other blemish but holy and blemish.

That's the picture. He's enthralled by our beauty. Because we are covered in His righteousness. It's a great picture. It's that reminder of the parable. It was in Jesus' mind, wasn't it, when He talks about the wedding banquet parable and there's someone comes into that wedding banquet and they're not wearing the wedding clothes.

And they say, oh, what are you doing? You're not wearing the wedding clothes. What are you doing? And He's cast out. And again, it seems quite a harsh when you think of it. It seems quite a harsh picture. But the reality is that the wedding clothes had been provided.

The wedding clothes were all provided in that wedding. And everyone could wear these wedding clothes that had been provided. But this person chose not to. He said, nah, I'm not going to wear what's been provided. These beautiful garments have been provided.

I'm just going to wear my own scabby clothes, my jeans, my t-shirt. I've done all the painting of the house in. Can I cut me a bullet changing? I've got it's good enough. And so it doesn't seem so harsh when we see it in that light, when the provision has been made.

[26 : 26] So Jesus has made the provision for us to be saved. He's made the provision for us to be clean and to be righteous, to be perfect in His sight, to be forgiven, to be beautiful.

And He comes and He also changes our own heart as He does so. Honor Him. Verse 11, for He is your Lord. Can I ask you to do that today if you're a Christian?

Honor Him. For He's your Lord. Can I ask you to go out into your workplace this week and honor Him? Because He's your Lord. Honor Him with your words.

Honor Him with your actions. Honor Him with your obedience. Honor Him with your loyalty.

Because He's Lord, He's worthy and He's worth it. And He's beautiful and He's enthralled by us. Hard though it may seem to believe that He's enthralled by us when we look into the mirror of our hearts and see the sin and the ugliness and the way we let Him down. But He's enthralled by us because He forgives us and He sees not us, He sees Jesus, His own Son, who died in our place and who took the price for our sins.

[27 : 28] Honor Him. He's worthy. Worship Him. We worship Him here, but this isn't the one hour of worship for the week and then we do what we want. This is the public declaration of our love for Him together.

But then we go from here. Honor Him and worship Him with your life. We'll live in sacrifices, He says. Present your bodies. Live in sacrifices because He's worth it. So when the struggles you'll face this week, honor Him.

In the good times, honor Him. When you can't see Him, honor Him. When you think He's far away, honor Him because He's worth it. You don't feel Him close or sense His love. And everything seems like it's honor Him because He's enthralled by your beauty.

And He has this great future for you and He's taking you to be with Himself. Heaven will be a great place. And He finishes with that saying, Therefore the nations will praise you forever and ever.

And His memory will be perpetuated throughout the nations. Tell and praise. His honor is there.

[28 : 37] We might not feel it today. Sometimes we live in a nation which has by and large rejected Jesus Christ. Our churches are half empty.

But we mustn't think that that's the picture worldwide. And we must recognize that God, we believe God will still work here and will bring many people and turn the city upside down. But we also believe and know and remember that there are many people telling and praising Him throughout the world today.

Hundreds of thousands are telling and praising about Jesus Christ in this world. Hundreds of thousands are coming to Christ in different parts of the world today because they are seeing this King of Kings and recognizing what He has done.

And their lives are being transformed, sometimes under great persecution and under great difficulty. But they love this King and the future means a great deal to them because of the battles and struggles here.

This future of the King returning, taking them to be with Himself in heaven. It's also a great hope for all of us in our lives. And it's the only hope that takes us through this life and also takes us through the valley of the shadow of death, which we will all face.

[29 : 51] It becomes a door into this glorious banquet hall for Christians. But it also is a backdoor to darkness and separation for those who will not come to Christ or who will not see their need of Christ being the way, the truth and the life.

Who will not make Him Lord and who will not honour Him in their lives. It's very solemn, but it's also very joyful because He wants us as His people to share this message of celebration and joy with all into whom we come into contact.

And remember that any who come at Jesus will in no wise be cast out. Let's bow our heads and thank Him for His gospel. Lord, we thank You for Your gospel.

We thank You for Your grace. We thank You for this picture from the Old Testament, right long before You were born as the son of man, as the baby and the manger, born into humanity.

But always living in glory. But Lord, long before You came among us and long before the people knew this Messiah, who even when He came confused their expectations and often you confuse ours, we want a God and a Saviour on our own terms so often.

[31 : 15] Forgive us, Lord, when we don't trust You. Forgive us when we don't believe as we ought and when we go our own way believing our own ideas.

So help us, Lord, to honour You, help us to praise You, help us to give thanks for You and for Your wonderful salvation and for Your grace and for the presence of Your Holy Spirit in our lives and for the transforming power that He has in our lives and for us.

May the grace of God transform us daily. Fill us with Your Spirit today. Speak to us from Your Word. And bless us as we sing together. Part of the Psalm now for Jesus' sake. Amen.