

Where Boldness Comes From

Psalms: Encountering God's Heart Through His Playlist

Psalm 2

By Dave Urbanski

This past Sunday Pastor Scott took us through Psalm 2, and one of the many interesting things about this brief passage of Scripture is that it not only points us to Jesus ... but also a passage in Acts in the New Testament points *back* to Psalm 2 as proof of Jesus' power, divinity, and authority!

Many of you know the compelling account in Acts detailing how Jesus' disciples captured the attention of the Jewish leaders because of their boldness in spreading Christ's gospel, especially given the 3,000 who came to faith in Jesus in just one day. Peter and John in the fourth chapter basically told off the Jewish leaders who demanded that the pair and their friends no longer speak of Jesus — yeah, *right!*

With that, the disciples got together and in a bold prayer recited part of Psalm 2:

“Why did the Gentiles rage,
and the peoples plot in vain?
The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers were gathered together,
against the Lord and against his Anointed”

The disciples saw the connection between the prophetic Psalm 2 and what was happening before their eyes in Jerusalem. And after they prayed and asked God for strength to continue their new mission, "the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness." (Acts 4:31)

Interestingly, some might argue the passage from Psalm 2 the disciples recited isn't as obviously prophetic as the part that reads, "The Lord said to me, 'You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.'" (Psalm 2:7-8) But the whole of it and what it meant was clear to them.

And while Psalm 2 is prophetic in terms of who Jesus is, other truths it reveals are full of wisdom in regard to who God is – and who we are in relation to him.

Pastor Scott took us all the way to the end of the psalm to point out its final phrase: "Blessed are all who take refuge in him." He noted that the word "blessed" is a translation of the same Hebrew word from Psalm 1, which we looked at the previous Sunday, meaning "happy." And he added that the word "refuge" appears in the Old Testament 37 times – and that 25 of those instances are found in the book of Psalms.

Here's one reason why that's important: "Refuge" communicates the idea that we need not be afraid of anything while in the palm of the Lord's hand – and Psalm 2 as a whole shows us how that works.

The start of Psalm 2 demonstrates that people who deny God have challenges, in particular their anger and rage; life isn't working out for them at the deepest levels. So they start by "plotting" about how they might diminish the Lord or eliminate him completely. Famous scientists and atheists are well known for this kind of thing. They also take counsel together, or try to get a consensus, to make themselves feel more secure about their constant pushback against the Lord. But while they might look slick and smart on YouTube videos and in debates, ultimately it's all in vain.

So the writer of the psalm issues a warning to these people with power on earth: *Hey! There's a God in heaven who is much stronger than you! A king who forever outranks you! So wise up!*

Pastor Scott outlined what our perspective ought to be in the face of a world that's constantly trying to erase and diminish God: First, we must be wise when non-believers fight the Lord. Second, we must serve the Lord and obey his commands, even when others plot to toss him on the garbage heap. Finally, when it seems like the whole world has taken counsel together against our spiritual direction, we must submit to the Lord's authority and do what he asks of us.

And when we're tempted to run and hide, let us remember the great reminder the Lord gives in verses 4 through 6 of Psalm 2 in regard to exactly who his "powerful" detractors really are in the face of God's might: "He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, 'As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.'"