

Psalm 45

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[0 : 00] Let's open up Psalm 45 together. It's on page 471 in the Visitor's Bible, if you've got one of those.! You are the most handsome of the sons of men.

Grace is poured upon your lips. Therefore, God has blessed you forever. Gird your sword on your thigh, O mighty one, in your splendor and majesty.

In your majesty, ride out victoriously for the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness. Let your right hand teach you awesome deeds. Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies.

The peoples fall under you. Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness.

Therefore, God, your God has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions. Your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia.

[1 : 27] From ivory palaces, stringed instruments make you glad. Daughters of kings are among your ladies of honor. At your right hand stands the queen in gold of a fear.

Hear, O daughter, and consider, and incline your ear. Forget your people and your father's house, and the king will desire your beauty. Since he is your lord, bow to him.

The people of Tyre will seek your favor with gifts, the richest of the people. All glorious is the princess in her chamber, with robes interwoven with gold.

In many colored robes she is led to the king, with her virgin companions following behind her. With joy and gladness they are led along as they enter the palace of the king.

In place of your fathers shall be your sons. You will make them princes in all the earth. I will cause your name to be remembered in all generations.

[2 : 29] Therefore, nations will praise you forever and ever. All right, let me pray. Dear Heavenly Father, please open our eyes to see your son Jesus more clearly through your word this morning.

And please work in us by your spirit to receive it humbly and to cling to it. In Jesus' name, amen. Firstly, I want to express my excitement again.

I count it a real honor and a privilege to preach from the Psalms this morning. And I've had a wonderful time poring over it over the past few weeks in preparation for today. And I want to start with the Psalm's title first because even the Psalm's title is unique and fascinating.

And it has four pieces of information for us to consider. The first is that the Psalm is to be sung corporately since the song is to the choir master. The second is that the Psalm is to be sung according to lilies.

Which I think means sung according to a specific tune. In this case, lilies. The third is that the Psalm is written by the sons of Korah, whom we have been hearing from the past two weeks at Morning Church.

[3 : 46] But it is this fourth piece of information that I find most unique or that is most unique. Psalm 45 is described in its title as a love song. And it's the only Psalm like it.

We'll see some of the details more closely in a moment. But this raises some questions from the get-go. Necessarily, we must ask, who is this love song about?

Which lovers are involved? More than that, we must also ask, what is lovely about its subject or subjects? For us Christians here today, we know of the great love with which God has loved us.

We know that Jesus humbled himself to suffer for our sins and rose victoriously to reign forever over his enemies. And throughout our journey in Psalm 45 this morning, I want to help us see, hear, feel, and even smell the beauty and splendor of the glorious wedding day between the Lord Jesus and his glorious bride, the church.

I pray that this will help us live and wait for it with eagerness and in hope. Now, I think there are two main parts to this psalm, and the structure should be printed on your bulletins if you've got one, and it should be there to help you follow along.

[5 : 06] From verses 2 to 7, the psalmist addresses the king and sings of his excellencies and many splendid decorations. From verses 10 to 17, the psalmist switches to address the king's bride, calling her to the marriage and celebrating the future fruit of their royal union.

So in this way, you can imagine the choir singing at the wedding day, eight verses to the king and then eight to the bride, and then one verse at the beginning to help kick it all off.

The psalmist's heart, you can see in verse 1, is overflowing with a pleasing theme of love. And to sing it, his tongue is at the ready. So, first up is the king, starting in verse 2.

It immediately sounds like a love song, I think.

And there's an intimacy in this language that gives it that quality. The psalmist sings of the king's unrivaled beauty. The king is the most attractive of all men.

[6 : 22] Then he draws our attention to his lips that are full of grace. In fact, the intimate language actually continues in verse 3. Gird your sword on your thigh, O mighty one, in your splendor and your majesty.

The poetry gets up close and personal in its language so that we might actually see the king's beauty and marvel at his features. Equally, I think the phrase, grace is poured upon your lips, is supposed to be a way of describing the king's impressive speech.

He speaks wisely and with elegance and grace. And so, having considered his beauty and excellence, the people with the psalmist conclude, Therefore, God has blessed you forever.

There are many different ways in which the word blessed is used in the Bible, but I think in this case, it's to do with the right to rule. Hence why the following three verses celebrate this ruling that the king does.

We've already seen in verse 3 where the king is the mighty one who bears the sword in splendor and majesty. In verses 4 and 5, we see the majestic king ride out victoriously on his noble steed, himself experiencing the awesomeness of his right hand's deeds and trampling his arrow-pierced enemies.

[7 : 49] These verses are just loaded with praise specifically for the might and the skill and the victory of the king. I love verse 5 because the psalmist moves from imperatives back to descriptions again, like in verse 2.

It is as if a dear fan who was urging his or her sporting champion on from the sidelines has moved beyond impassioned urgings forward and has simply begun to swoon.

Just look at him. Look at how sharp his arrows are. Look how his enemies are laid waste. Now, please don't misunderstand me because I'm not trying to reduce this psalm to those modern-day love songs that are founded on vain beauty and warm, fuzzy feelings.

But this psalm does have that adoring quality, doesn't it? Rather, I'm trying to help us see that these very qualities are the qualities that the psalmist sees as most lovely and most swoon-worthy.

This is awesome deeds and majestic rule that the psalmist sees most fit to glory in on the king's wedding day. When we consider Jesus, our king and our groom-to-be, what is it that we find lovely about him?

[9 : 14] How might the world have lied to us about what loveliness and beauty really looks like? Where might we have believed its lies? See, here is a picture of Jesus' majesty and beauty that puts our often superficial love to shame.

But then it encourages us to shift our eyes toward the qualities that show Jesus to be truly majestic and beautiful. And so I pray that you would join me in joining the psalmist in doing that this morning.

The psalmist then sums up the significance of the king's works and qualities to make a grand declaration of his permanent royalty in verses 6 and 7. He says about the king, Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.

The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. Therefore, God, your God has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.

Now, this might sound a little strange, but in these verses, the psalmist continues to address the king. When he says, Your throne, O God, he is referring to the king's role as the ruler of all the people.

[10 : 37] The fact that in verse 7, this God of the nations, the king, is anointed by his God, the Most High God, should make us think back to Psalm 2, where he who sits in the heavens, the Most High, sets his anointed ruler on Zion.

So this son of God, the king promised to David in 2 Samuel 7, wields his scepter with justice, loving righteousness, and hating wickedness.

And so it is for this reason that he has been anointed. The author of the Hebrews picks up these lines in chapter 1 to say that Jesus, the once creator of the universe, has become superior to the angels after making purification for sins.

He has inherited the world to come because he loved righteousness and hated wickedness. He rules God's kingdom with uprightness. And so it's of Jesus, the anointed son of God, that these words in Psalm 45 ultimately point us to.

And Jesus is getting married. Right? So what is that wedding going to look like, sound like, smell like? Well, it's prefigured here in Psalm 45.

[11 : 56] The king on his wedding day, here in verse 8, is draped in robes that are all fragrant with the earthy and warm smells of myrrh and aloes and cassia.

Ivory palaces house musicians with stringed instruments who echo the sweet songs from below. His ladies of honor comprise of nobility from the surrounding nations.

and the queen is standing beautifully at the altar, suitably decked out in the finest gold from Ophir. So much of this psalm's poetry is devoted to these vivid descriptions of sensory detail.

And I think it does that so that we might be impressed by and glory in the all-encompassing splendor of the whole thing. So in every way, and kind of in every sense, this wedding is the wedding to be at.

And no expense has been spared to make every aspect of it reflect the loveliness of the king and the significance of his marriage. But now, let's look at the bride, the queen standing at his right hand.

[13:10] Like I mentioned earlier, the psalmist switches his subject and so the whole choir now begins to sing to the bride. And they implore her to take the king in marriage and join herself to him.

But notice the call that they make, right, in verse 10. Hear, O daughter, and consider and incline your ear. Forget your people and your father's house and the king will desire your beauty.

So she's leaving her people and her father's house behind, which means that the Messiah, the king, the son of God, is getting married to a foreign woman. Right?

She's come from a distant land with foreign ancestors. But more importantly, she's come from this foreign land with foreign gods as well. Book 2 of the Psalms, Psalms 42 to 72, of which Psalm 45 is in, is focused on King Solomon.

And I think the psalm was written to be sung on one of King Solomon's wedding days. If you're familiar with King Solomon, you'll know that he married many foreign brides, but that this was expressly prohibited for the children of Israel to do.

[14:27] God knew their hearts would be drawn away to worship the false gods of their foreign women, should they marry. And 1 Kings 11 reiterates this for Solomon. Solomon was wrong for taking foreign wives from Egypt, Moab, Ammon, Edom, and so on.

And just as God had said, his heart was led astray. So isn't it strange that in Psalm 45 we're invited to join in a song of celebration for this international wedding?

There's no hint that this union is unlawful in God's sight in this psalm, or that there's any reason not to join in the festivities and enjoy the beauty of the day. On the contrary, like we've seen, every word of the psalmist is used to praise the king and his bride and the marvelous occasion.

And so we must, I think, remember our Lord Jesus and his bride, the church. He, the greater Solomon, will marry a foreign bride that his father will give him, made up of people from every tribe, nation, and language.

But, unlike Solomon, his predecessor, he is not led astray by his bride and how many gods and cultures that she once served and was enslaved to.

[15:49] Rather, it is her who turned from idols to serve the living and true God while she waits for her husband, God's son from heaven. Our youth will be learning more about that this week, actually, at youth camp.

So please ask them when they get home what they learned. We'll have a look at verse 12 in just a moment when we come to the last two verses. But first, let's have a look at those three beforehand.

So that's verses 13 to 15. I'm slightly unsure whether the psalmist is recounting the events of that morning where the bride's virgin companions are all getting her ready in her golden and colored robes to be led down the aisle, as it were, or whether the psalmist is looking forward to the wedding night where the queen is preparing to enter the king and consummate the marriage.

In either case, the poetry, again, lets us get right up close and feel the fabric of her robes to hear the excited laughter of her bridesmaids.

So let me read from verse 13. All glorious is the princess in her chamber with robes interwoven with gold. In many colored robes she is led to the king with her virgin companions following behind her.

[17:09] With joy and gladness they are led along as they enter the palace of the king. I'm sure that some of us here today are imagining a day when they themselves might get married and experience the heart fluttering and the giggling and the anticipation that comes with all that happens on wedding days.

And I'm sure that many of us here today remember a day when that was you whether bride or groom. And even if it is not in this age which it might not be and that's good and right all of us Christians will be getting married.

When the new heavens and the new earth come it will be the time for the marriage of the lamb and his bride the church. and she herself will be adorned in robes of her own made of fine linen clean and white Revelation tells us.

They will be singing and rejoicing a thousand times more glorious than this wedding here in Psalm 45. And so I ask you as I ask myself are you excited?

Are you excited? Do you believe that the wedding we are all waiting for will be the most glorious day of your life? I actually find it quite difficult to live each day with a level of joyful expectation that seems fitting for a future like this.

[18 : 44] but I think that meditating on Psalm 45 in its glorious detail might just help us to point our eyes upward and forward when we are preoccupied with this world or we're feeling hopeless about the future.

This is why I find it especially interesting that Psalm 45 has been placed right after Psalm 44 because in many ways it becomes the psalmist's answer to the dejected yet desperate cries we hear in its final verses.

If you flip over the page you might remember from last week how the sons of Korah have been begging God to wake up and deliver them like he powerfully delivered their fathers in the stories that they've heard.

God is their king whose mighty hand had worked mighty deeds in the past but now seems distant and asleep. Psalm 45 offers the answer of hope and it comes in a king who acts just like they know God to act a king whose own hand performs mighty works and tramples down their enemies.

The hope comes from the fact that in God oh sorry the fact that God has made this king to be ruler over the nations. This is why the psalmist's heart overflows with his love song in verse 1.

[20 : 15] And so I just want to finish by looking at those last two verses and thinking about the international gospel. The psalmist has called the bride to leave behind her people and her father's house but it ends with the promise that her sons will be princes in all the earth since she is now of the royal line.

Verse 12 told us of the gifts that she will receive as the nations come to honour her newfound royal status. And so because of the king she who was far away from glory has been glorified in front of everyone all people.

Finally in verse 17 the psalmist echoes God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 12. where he promises to make his name great among all nations through his offspring Jesus.

And so now it's the foreign bride who is blessed through him and she gets to share in the glory of her kingly husband. We too will stand beside Jesus in the new world to share in his glory.

And so I hope that this glimpse of future glory might re-energize us in waiting for the Lord to return even though right now we might feel unglorious.

[21 : 45] And at St. Lucia Bible Church we love God. We love his word. We love each other. And we also love the lost. I want to encourage us then that as we wait eagerly for our glorious wedding day and hope in our victorious king to have the call to the nations in verse 10 on our lips also here in St. Lucia.

Hear, O daughter. Hear, O Aussie. And consider and incline your ear. Forget your people and your father's house and the king will desire your beauty.

Since Jesus is your Lord bow to him. Let's pray. Glorious and mighty Father we praise you and thank you for giving us the beautiful and mighty King Jesus to rescue us from our sins and give us hope.

And we are so thankful that he might not only be our king but also our loving and tender husband too. Please help us continue to wait eagerly for that day as we tell everyone we meet about the glorious wedding day that they too can share in.

We pray that we might be helped by remembering the beauty and splendor of the sights sounds touches and smells of that day we will soon celebrate in all its fullness.

[23:14] In Jesus name Amen. Amen.