

# Living Before the King of Glory

by Bob Kauflin

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*To be right with God, we must view God rightly, and to view God rightly, we must understand his sovereignty, holiness, and might.*

**Duration:** 1:01:39

**Scripture:** 1 Chronicles 15:25, Psalm 24:1, Psalm 24:3-5, Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Sovereignty"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of viewing God rightly in order to be right with Him. The message is based on Psalm 24, which speaks of the Lord's sovereignty and the requirements for approaching His presence. The speaker highlights the need for clean hands, a pure heart, and truthful speech in order to ascend the hill of the Lord. The sermon also points to Jesus as the perfect example of someone who fulfilled these requirements and ultimately brought salvation to humanity through His death and resurrection.

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## Transcript

It's the most unique introduction I've ever received. I prefer to think of myself as more like a Randy Jackson, though, than you probably don't know what that means. Randy Jackson's another participant on the show.

We have American Idol. And he's a genuinely nice guy, but truthful as well. So that's what I think of myself.

So it's a real joy to be here. I don't know how many of you were here when our son was here, Devin, with his wife, Christine. But he said he had just a great time with you all.

And it's especially a joy to be here with my wife. Our anniversary is actually in August, but we couldn't go then. And so I was over here two weeks ago for New Word Alive, which is an event up in North Wales, which I had a tremendous time at, leading the scene there.

And then we spent the last week in Italy, just having a difficult time there, suffering for the Lord in Italy. And that's been a dream for some time just to go. Every five years, we come over to the motherland, this area, and celebrate God's mercies to us for so many years.

We have six children for the married, 10, approaching 11 grandchildren, and are undone by God's kindness to us. And one of those kindnesses is just being here with you all. So open your Bibles to Psalm

24.

And it is a privilege to be with the Smiths and the Bulleys as well. Dear friends, as I said, we treasure relationships that God gives us over the years. It's going to be a different kind of Easter message today.

Psalms 24 is where we're going to be looking at. It's from the Old Testament. And obviously, Jesus hasn't risen from the dead yet when this psalm was written.

But I think we'll find that this psalm has relevance to the risen Christ and shows us how we should live in light of his glory. And that's what I trust will be the end of our time together today, that we'll better understand how to live before the King of glory. A.W. Tozer was a well-known American pastor and author of the 20th century.

He wrote over 30 books. And maybe you might have heard of his book, *The Knowledge of the Holy*. It's a study of the attributes of God.

It's accessible, it's short, but it's profound. And it begins with this sentence, which is well-known and profound. What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.

Read that again. What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us. Now, to be completely accurate, the most important thing about us is not what we think about God, but what God thinks about us.

That's the most important thing. But Tozer's words are still relevant. He's saying that everything we do is affected and shaped and governed by our view of God.

So if we don't think God is very powerful, then we'll have a hard time praying because we won't think he can do much. If we don't, if we think that God is kind of like a forgetful grandfather, we'll do whatever we want. Because we don't think that God will do anything in response.

He'll just go there, there, now. And that's the kind of God we'll worship. If we think God isn't for us, if we think God is harsh and against us, then we won't trust him.

We won't trust him with our decisions. We won't trust him with our lives. If our thoughts about God are right, we'll reap untold benefits.

But if they're wrong, we'll experience the consequences, which people experience every day. Bitterness, fear, confusion. And the truth is that all of us at different times and in different ways entertain wrong thoughts about God.

Romans 1 verse 20 says that we can know something about God just by opening our eyes to the world around us. We see that he is powerful and that he possesses a divine nature. That's what we can see just by looking at creation.

But it's in scripture where God most clearly reveals himself who he is, what he's done, what his thoughts are through the truths and the lies and the stories and the poems and the prophecies of scripture. And while we may not be able to find everything we want to know about God in his word, we certainly find everything we need to know about God in his word. In other words, it may not be comprehensive, but it's sufficient.

And this morning we're gonna be looking at Psalm 24 because the Psalms teach us so much about who God is and how we're to relate to him. They teach us how to laugh and cry before God. They teach us how to celebrate before God.

They teach us how to live before God. And Psalm 24 in particular is gonna teach us how to live before God as the King of glory. That's the title of the message, Living Before the King of Glory.

Now, just a little background before we actually read the Psalm. It was written by King David and most likely it was written when the Israelites were bringing back the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. Now, the Ark of the Covenant was the box that represented God's presence among his people.

It was extremely, it was supremely important to the Israelites. The Philistines, the enemies, had captured it, but then because it was causing all kinds of confusion with their gods, they returned it to the Israelites, said, no, thank you, you can have your box back. So it stayed in this town of Kirith-Jerim for 20 years.

And now they're bringing it back to Jerusalem. It was a military triumph, a time of celebration, victorious jubilation, or at least the second time it was that. The first time didn't turn out so well.

First time they tried to bring the Ark back, if you remember, it was a disaster because they failed to follow God's command that only the Levites were to carry the Ark. So if you remember in 2 Samuel 6, a man named Uzzah saw that the Ark was about to fall, it was being carried on the back of these two oxen, it was about to fall, so he stretched out his hand to keep it from falling, and God struck him dead. And that was not a celebration.

See, Uzzah thought that the dirt was more unclean than his hand, and he learned differently. What David learned, what Uzzah learned, after he died, I guess, what we learned from this psalm is to be right with God, we must view God rightly. To be right with God, we must view God rightly.

If there was gonna be one sentence you could sum up this message with, it would be that. To be right with God, we must view God rightly. So let's read the psalm, and then we'll pray, and then we'll get into it.

This is the word of the Lord. The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein. For he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.

Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord, and who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false, and does not swear deceitfully. He will receive blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob.

Lift up your heads, O gates, and be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O gates, and lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.

Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory. And because we need God's help to understand his word, let's pray. Father, we thank you for these words of your eternal word, which bring life, which impart understanding, which impart life to those who hear them by your spirit and apply them.

We pray that you'd open our ears to hear your voice this morning, that your spirit would speak to us for the glory of the crucified and risen Christ, that our lives would be changed, that our hearts would be changed,

that as in every Sunday, this would not be just another Sunday, but a time when we encounter you as we hear your word proclaimed and preached by the power of your spirit. And I pray that you would do just that in the name of Jesus, amen. The psalm's divided into three sections, and that's how we're gonna approach it.

And each one challenges a misconception that we might entertain about who God is. And here's the first. The King of glory is sovereign.

The King of glory is sovereign. Now, what I pray is going to happen this morning is that certain views of God that we walked in with this morning are gonna be challenged. Now, if someone asked you, do you believe a certain thing about God? You say, well, no, of course not.

But oftentimes we say we believe a certain thing about God, but we don't live as though we do. So that's the point of the message this morning is to get us to connect the way we live with who God really is. And that's really the goal of the Christian life is to become more and more in line, our lives to become more and more in line with who God really is.

So the King of glory is sovereign. It's hard to go anywhere today without being reminded that we as humans are responsible to care for the earth. We're told that it's our greatest resource and we're in danger of depleting its riches.

And we have to take care of it because it belongs to us. And those are good things, but this Psalm takes it from a little different perspective. It begins with the earth is the Lord's.

Who does the earth belong to? The Lord. The earth is the Lord's. How much of the earth? He says the fullness thereof or everything in it.

And that includes those who dwell therein. So the world and everything in it and every person on it belongs to the Lord. I try to think of things like this when I'm in other countries and just am looking at all the people, the masses of humanity.

And I just think every one of these people belongs to the Lord. They may not even know it, but every one of them, that's what the Psalm says. The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein for, verse two says, for, meaning that has an implication.

If the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof and the world and all those who dwell therein, it means something or it's because of something. Why? Because he created everything. He owns everything because he created everything.

He founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers. It's referencing the story of creation found in Genesis one, verses nine and 10, where God is bringing the land out of the seas. God owns everything because he created everything.

And whatever you might believe about the way the earth came into existence, whether you believe it was a literal six days or whether it took place over thousands of years, we don't wanna miss the main point. And that is that God created everything. Therefore, he owns everything.

Abraham Kuyper in the last century said it like this. There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry, mine. Just love that, the

authority of that.

The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein. Now, this is more than just a theological observation, something that academics get together and just talk about. Did you know the earth is the Lord, the fullness thereof, the world and all who dwell therein, for he created it upon the rivers, established it upon the rivers? Yes, yes, that's very fascinating.

It's more than that. It's meant to affect us. Psalm 33, verses eight and nine, makes the connection.

He says, the psalmist says, let all, Psalm 33, verses eight and nine, let the earth, let all the earth fear the Lord. Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For, the connection again, for he spoke and it came to be.

He commanded and it stood firm. So because he did those things, because he created it and because he owns it, therefore everyone should fear the Lord. Because God is the creator of all things, he is the ruler of all things.

And to be right with God, we must view God rightly. He is sovereign over all. So these two verses challenge our limited views of God.

Many times, God only seems big when things are going well and he's very small when things are going badly. Isn't it true when we experience abundant blessing, oh, God is so good, thank you, God, you are so great and glorious. And then we receive some bad news.

It's like, where's God? And it's revealed in our anxiety, our worry, our anxious fretting, and God is very small. Or maybe our God only shows up when we need him and disappears when he's inconvenient. When we wanna do something, we don't think he'd be too happy about it.

And we say, well, God, I don't need you right now. Let me just go ahead and relate to this person like this or handle my money like this, because I don't really need you in my life right now. Maybe that's the kind of God we serve.

Well, neither of those gods are in the Bible. The God in the Bible is sovereign over all. He doesn't change and he doesn't go away.

He doesn't change and he doesn't go away. Now, that's hard for us to grasp sometimes because we live in the age of tolerance. We live in the age of the internet, where every opinion appears on the same screen and is equally valid.

God is alive, God is dead, both are true. Well, how can both be true? You're either alive or you're dead. Oh, both are true.

One's true for you and this one's true for that person. You just have different truths. There's no such thing as absolute truth, just your truth and my truth, because we tend to view God through our own circumstances and experiences.

So God becomes as big as our thoughts about him. Well, we need a radical injection from outside us to understand who God really is. We need new information other than what we can come up with and that's what the word of God gives us.

The psalmist tells us that God isn't some local God, local deity, a God we choose from various options. That's how it was in ancient Israel. Each tribe, each nation had numerous gods who oversaw different parts of life.

You had a God for agriculture, a God of fertility, God of finances, God of health, God of travel. Sometimes these gods fought with one another and you just tried to appease the gods and it was all about which God was gonna come out on top. The thing that was different about the Israelites is they said there's just one God and he rules over everything.

And we have to realize how relevant that is today. When Julie and I were in Italy, we saw many gods and they weren't in the duomos in the cathedrals. They were just what was being sold all around us, what people were wearing, what people were pursuing.

Those are the gods of our age, things that people run after. And the Bible says, God tells us that he is sovereign over all of them. There's one way to relate to him because there's one God.

I don't know if we have this quote. Do we have the projection, the quotes? Okay. One scholar expressed it this way, unquestionably, the supreme kingship of Yahweh in which he displays his transcendent greatness and goodness is the most basic metaphor and most pervasive theological concept in the Psalter as in the Old Testament generally.

It provides the fundamental perspective in which man is to view himself, the whole creation, events in nature and history and the future. The whole creation is his one kingdom. To be a creature in the world is to be a part of his kingdom and under his rule.

To be a human being in the world is to be dependent on and responsible to him. To proudly deny that fact is the root of all wickedness, the wickedness that now pervades the world. So wherever you see wickedness, it's rooted in someone's insistence that God is not sovereign, that something else is worthy of being worshiped more than God.

So whenever Julie and I are talking to someone who's going through a difficult situation in our lives, one question that we always ask, that always seems to bring things into a clearer perspective is this, where is God in your picture? We go on and on about our situation. This is happening, this is taking place, I feel this, this person did this to me, they said that, and then this was the result, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh. Where is God in what's happening? Because he's sovereign over it all.

What is he doing? What is he doing? I'll tell you what he's doing. He's ruling over the world he owns. He's working out his purposes and his plans, which no man can thwart.

He's accomplishing everything he intended to do from before the creation of the world, which is to bring good to his people and to bring glory to Jesus Christ. Because, because the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein. This is God's world.

It's good news. This is God's world and we are accountable to him. Nothing happens apart from his oversight.

And if we're to know him rightly, we can't limit his sovereignty. So the King of glory is sovereign. That's the first point.

Here's the second point. The King of glory is holy. The King of glory is holy.

We're gonna look at verses three through six. Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? You know, as those who follow God, who worship God, we're told at first that he is the sovereign God. And so the natural response to that is, well, how can we get close to him? If he's that great, if he rules over everything, if he created everything, how can we get close to him? So he asked the question, who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? Now, Jerusalem was elevated and characteristic of the places in the Old Testament where God met with his people.

They were usually high up. So the question of who shall ascend, that's what he's asking. It's a natural question.

Standing, when asked who shall stand in his holy place, that means permanence. It means how can we get to God and stay there? It's not as though we make it to God and they just have to fall down. How can we get to God and stay there? That's the question that the psalmist is asking.

And it's a relevant question because when the Ark was first returned to Israel in 1 Samuel 6, 70 men looked upon the Ark of the Lord and were struck dead by the Lord. And their response was this, who is able to stand before the Lord, this holy God? So here David might be recalling what they experienced when they first tried to bring the Ark back. So what kind of individual is worthy to stand in the presence of a great sovereign creator king? How do we draw near to the sovereign one and stay there? So he describes the kind of person.

Verse four, he who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully. Starts with clean hands, talking about godly actions, talking about what people can see. We do right, it's people who do the right thing.

But then he moves on to a pure heart. We not only do right, we are right inside. This is what only God can see.

I've noticed that it's easier to have clean hands and a pure heart. It's easier to do the right thing externally than it is to actually have motives that please God. This addresses doing the right things for the wrong reasons.

So we can do the right things. We can put on the show of worship here, the clean hands, but not worship from a pure heart. Be thinking about the football match later on or whatever you play them.

Do you play them on Sundays? Yeah. Okay, you play them all the time. That's what I thought.

You might be thinking about what you're gonna have for lunch. You might be thinking about whether what you're wearing was the appropriate thing for today. You might be thinking about, you just be thinking about a lot of things.

You might be thinking about how envious you are of a certain person in the room or not in the room. That's not having a pure heart. One who ascends the hill of the Lord, then again, must not lift up his soul to what is false.

Psalm says, what does that mean? Lift up his soul to what is false. Well, another version translates vanity or empty things. Must not lift up his soul to vain things, to emptiness.

Now, the phrase to lift up your soul is used a lot in the Psalms. It's just speaking of what our deepest desires and affections and influences are, the things we love. This is who we really are.

What really motivates us? We can all talk about being enthused about certain things, but there's a reality here that speaks of the things that really, truly move us, that we really want, that we really desire, the things we love. And if we want something more than God, if we lift up our soul to what is false, to something that's not God, then we can't ascend the hill of the Lord. And then finally, if we're to ascend the hill of the Lord, we must never swear deceitfully.

We must never lie or represent things in an untruthful way to others, never. Our words must be honest, straightforward, and trustworthy all the time, remember, because God's sovereign over all. So this one verse, this one verse covers what we think, what our motives are, our words, and our actions, what we think, say, and do, what we are in relation to God and what we are in relation to others.

In other words, it covers everything about us. So if we're to ascend the hill of the Lord, we have to be right in all four of these areas. God's worshipers, those who ascend the hill of the Lord must be holy because the King of glory is holy.

Leviticus 19, two says, you shall be holy, God speaking to his people, you shall be holy for I, the Lord, your God, am holy. People will sometimes have conversations about ethics, which is doing things for the right reasons. It's being morally right.

Well, for the worshiper of God, for the Christian, ethics is never a merely moral question. Ethics is never just a matter of knowing and following the right rules. Our conduct and thoughts are always determined by whose we are and who we worship.

That's where ethics comes from. You can never separate it from worship. We do what we do because of who or what we worship.

And we always end up doing exactly what we want to do. Even if other people are making us do certain things, we do exactly what we want to do. But because God is sovereign over the whole earth, what we do outside these meetings matters just as much as what we do inside.

So when we're speaking of ascending the hill of the Lord, we're not just talking about coming together on a Sunday and gathering to sing praises to God and hear the word preached. It's what we do with our lives. And if to be right with God, we must view God rightly, just as the first section challenged our limited views of God, this section challenges our inconsistent views of God.

We have a tendency to view worship as what we do here, even a part of what we do here. We're gonna worship, then we're gonna have the announcements, notices, then we have the preaching, and then we go home. Some churches refer to what we do here as worship, the whole event.

But worship is not simply about the songs and the meetings. It's not about a mood. I felt worshipful.

It wasn't until the third song that I really worshiped. No, you're worshiping when you walked in. Worship isn't about just an emotional experience.

Worship isn't just in a musical event. Thank God for songs and emotions and musical events. I'm a musician, I love music, but worshiping the King of glory involves our lives because he is holy.

It involves the thoughts we think and the words we say. So coming on Sundays and singing enthusiastically and passionately, which you do, are great, but those cannot make up for unholy living, which is where the worship of God is most clearly revealed in our lives. Our lives are meant to draw attention to the holiness of God and the greatness of God and the goodness of God as much as our songs do, as much as our meetings do.

We don't want to stop singing passionately. We just want to start living passionately. And I'm not like this because I'm an American.

I just want you to know that. I was just at New Word Alive, which is a meeting. How many of you are familiar with New Word Alive? Okay, so it's up in North Wales.

It's a gathering of about 5,000 people, 1,300 students, university students. It's just a wonderful week of teaching and fellowship and singing, and I was able to do a seminar there on worshipping God, mind, soul, and body. And just fascinating, just having discussions.

And at one point, I encouraged the students. We had two meetings each night, one for the older group and one for the students. And I just said to the students, look, you can sing any way you want, but as long as you're doing it from the heart.

But it seems to me as though a number of you are restraining yourselves. I'm not sure why. So I just wanna give you permission to express yourself physically for the glory of Jesus Christ.

And after that, it was amazing, the change. Just, oh, okay, we can? Okay, great. It is because of the glory of Jesus that we should be enthusiastic.

In proportion to our temperament. But if we, see, do you get excited at a cricket match? No. I guess it depends on whose you're talking to, who you're talking to.

So football, most people would be pretty enthusiastic about that, yeah. So I knew that a lot of the people who are singing at a football match would be excited. But they come and sing to Jesus, and they're excited for a little bit, but then as soon as the song's over, you know, I said it would be like this.

Your team's about to score a goal, and this is really a tangent, but since we have some time. So your team's about to score the goal, and you go, oh, they're getting the goal, they're getting it, they're almost there, they scored! We won. Let's go home.

Yeah, it's meant to, you get the point. It's meant to exude over into our lives, into the way we live. Not in a way that draws attention to itself, or is distracting, but communicates that there is no one like the King of Glory.

There is nothing like the King of Glory. No, no one is as good. You've experienced goodness in your life? Not goodness like the King of Glory.

You've seen greatness? Not greatness like the King of Glory. You've experienced joy over a victory? Not like the victory of the King of Glory, which is where we're headed, so I shouldn't get there yet. All right.

So let's look again at who can ascend the hill of the Lord, the one who has clean hands. Let's just apply these to our lives. Do our interactions with others meet God's standards? Not how do I compare to the person next to me, but how do I compare to God? Are my words to my spouse, my children, my parents,

my friends always gracious? First Timothy 2.8 says we're to lift up holy hands.

Am I ever selfish? You don't have to raise your hand for that. Am I ever unkind? Do I ever speak unkindly to people? When I'm with others, am I always looking for ways to serve them joyfully? Do I ever act hypocritically, doing the opposite of what I preach? If I held up my hands to God's searchlight, would they be clean? That's what that's asking. He has clean hands.

He has a pure heart. Mark 7, 21 to 22 says, for from within, out of the heart of man come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. I'm guilty of everyone in my heart.

I've experienced everyone. We are to lift up our souls to what is false and empty. What really satisfies you? What really, really satisfies you? God or something else? Maybe it's shopping.

Maybe it's food. Maybe it's magazines or kind of music. Maybe it's your beautiful home.

Maybe it's sports or movies or computer games or money or sex. Could be anything. That's not the true God.

Where do you go for refreshment and restoration? God or something else, ultimately. That's what that's asking. And we're to love the truth.

Do you ever exaggerate? Do you ever say something that's almost true but not quite true? Maybe to make yourself look a little better than you really are. Do you ever leave out important details? Do you love reality from God's perspective? Do you ever swear deceitfully, the psalmist says. How consistent is our view of God? Do we think God allows anyone to approach him? This person and only this person says in verse five, will receive blessing from the Lord and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

But who can attain to that standard? I mean, every one of us is guilty. Every one, every single person in this room, every single person in Bristol right now, every single person in the UK, every single person in the world falls short and far short of that standard. I mean, growing up, I grew up as a Roman Catholic.

And I thought I was a pretty good person. The longer I'm alive, the more I see that God's standards are infinitely higher than I thought they were. And that I'm not so good as I thought, I'm not as good as I thought.

I become wicked in my eyes, more wicked in my eyes as time goes on. And I think that's right. So is David saying that we must perfectly obey the law to gain a right standing before God? Is that what they said in the Old Testament and Jesus comes along and changes everything? No, no, the Old Testament and the New Testament, the Old Covenant and the New Testament are built on grace.

They are built on grace. After all, this is the same David who would lust after another man's wife when he saw her on the rooftop bathing, sleep with her, have her husband killed and try and cover it up. He's the one who wrote that.

So without in any way minimizing God's call for us to pursue holiness, this Psalm is telling us that God must and will provide our holiness. And here's one of the many verses in the Psalms that points us to Jesus Christ, the coming Messiah. Let's read verse five again.

This person will receive blessing from the Lord and righteousness from the God of his salvation. Or some translations say vindication from the God of our salvation or God our savior. He's our savior.

He's the God of our salvation. He's not just God our judge. He is God our savior and we are vindicated by him.

We aren't ascending the hill of the Lord based on our own merits. God forbid that we think we can approach God on the basis of what we have accomplished and what we have achieved. That will never happen.

The clean hands and the pure heart are the fruit of God's work in us, in his people, those with whom he has made an unchanging eternal covenant with. It's his justifying and sanctifying grace producing good fruit. But God is saying that those who know God want to be holy like him.

It's how you keep from going to one of two extremes. The one is extreme that says it's all about doing everything perfectly, which is legalism in order to gain God's acceptance. And the other is it doesn't matter what you do because once saved, always saved.

Well, yes and no. Once saved, you'll bear the fruit. You can't ignore holiness.

And that's what God is saying. Those who would pursue a holy God must be holy like he is, but it's never gonna happen through your own achievements. It's never gonna happen through your own merits.

It has to come, that gift of holiness, that gift of sanctification must come from God himself. They're not in opposition. They're working together to support and prove each other.

God's call to be holy and our inability to do it. And as we'll see more clearly in the final part of the psalm, all the glory for having clean hands and a pure heart goes to the Lord, not to us. Charles Spurgeon commented on this verse.

It must not be supposed that the persons who are thus described by the inward and outward holiness are saved by the merit of their works, but their works are the evidence by which they are known. The present verse shows that in the saints, grace reigns and grace alone. And we get a hint of that in the next verse.

Let's read it, verse six. Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob. Now, how kind of the Lord to remind us that we worship the God of Jacob.

Jacob was not an impressive character. In fact, most of the heroes of the Old Testament were not impressive characters. I mean, if you consider the lives they led and the things they did, you begin to do a double take.

God, are you sure this is the one you wanted to use? Did you really use this? I mean, there are a few that stand out. You know, Joshua just stands out. But most of them are just, they're horrible.

You know, at least from our standards. And the reality is they're just like us. So that's what God's saying right here.

This is the God of Jacob. You're worshipping the God of Jacob. Oh yes, the deceiver, the conniver.

Yeah, that one, the one who lies and deceives. And yeah, that's the one, that's the God of Jacob. But he's the one whom God identifies himself with.

God chose to bless even Jacob and enabled him to say, I have seen the face of God. That's who we are worshiping. So David has proclaimed how we come to God.

Now we're about to hear him proclaim how God has come to us. If we want to relate to God as the King of glory, we must see not only that he's sovereign and that he is holy, but that he is victorious. And here's where the Easter message comes in.

In case you've been wondering. So we finished verse six, such as the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob. Selah.

Lift up your heads, O gates, and be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Now, this is an odd transition. And where did the gates come from? Like, okay, part of my job as the Director of Worship Development for Sovereign Grace Ministries is to evaluate songs.

It's what I do. And if someone sent me this song, I would say, okay, really good up to that point. But when you get to the heads and the gates thing, like you haven't even mentioned heads and gates.

I mean, it's like coming out of nowhere. It's like out of left field, you probably don't say. It's like, where did that come from? You know, maybe you could work the gates in a little earlier.

Like, I come to the gates of the Lord. And then, you know, when you say lift up your heads, O gates, it'll be really resounded. No, just work on it a little more.

And after a while, bring it back to me. That's what I would say. Fortunately, God doesn't ask me for recommendations on how his word should be written.

We're not called to evaluate God's word. God's word evaluates us. And actually, the first time I preached this message, it was suggested to me by my dear friend, Jeff Purswell, that I use this passage.

I had a real hard time because of that issue. I just didn't think it was a very well-written psalm. And so I wasn't sure how I could present it to people in a persuasive way.

But the more I began to read it, the more it began to read me. And I began to see why this is here. And I trust you will see that by the end of my message.

We move from considering what we have done to contemplating what the Lord has done. We read about Yahweh, the sovereign king. He's entering into Jerusalem.

He's bringing salvation, blessing, and victory to his people. Gates are metaphorically lifting up their heads in joyful expectation of the king coming back after a victory in battle. We picture gates and doors of Jerusalem swinging wide, or maybe it's a reference to people just opening their arms and welcoming back the king from his victory.

Now, this section was probably responsive. We don't know for sure, but it's written as though it were a response, different parts assigned to different groups. You can imagine David bringing the ark up from Obed-Edom's house in 1 Chronicles 15.

It says, so David and the elders of Israel and the commanders of thousands went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord from the house of Obed-Edom with rejoicing. So just so we can get into the mood of this section, I'm gonna ask everyone to stand. And we're going to act this out momentarily.

This is gonna be group one and group two. And this is just to generate in our hearts what it's like when we're encouraging one another in the victory of the Lord. There's an engagement.

It's not, we're not just sitting, listening to someone speak. There's a participation. It's kind of like what happens when we sing.

We're teaching and admonishing one another. So group one, you're gonna recite what, yes, what comes up there. I guess it'll just, it'll show up alternately, group one, group two.

Okay, we'll just, and we wanna shout this out because the king of glory has triumphed. This isn't, oh, I wonder if the team is gonna win. This is the team has won.

And it was surprising and no one expected it, but he's won. All right, so let's say, and then group two, okay. Lift up your heads, O gates, and be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the king of glory may come in.

Who is this king of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O gates, and lift them up, O ancient doors, that the king of glory may come in. Who is this king of glory? Everyone, the Lord of hosts.

He is the king of glory. Okay, now you can sit down. He is the king of glory.

And David would have taught this to the Israelites, saying, you've got to get into this because Yahweh's, the Ark of the Covenant is being returned to the place that's been prepared for him. The enemy no longer holds the Ark of the Covenant. It's no longer sitting in Kiriath-Jerim.

It's being returned to where it's supposed to be, the city of David. The king, Yahweh, has fulfilled his promises. We must declare his victory.

Now, we know this is talking about Yahweh, the king, the sovereign Lord, because Lord, in most translations, it's in all caps, the king of glory. Lift up your heads. Be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the king of glory may come in.

The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. The sovereign holy God is coming to the holy city, Jerusalem, triumphant and victorious, showering blessing on his people. He's coming not to fight against them, but for them.

In fact, he has fought for them. He is strong and mighty in battle. He's the Lord of hosts.

But Israel, the Israelites, men and women, people of God, must have struggled as they lived out the history of God's people for the next few hundred years, as they were defeated by nations like the Philistines and the Assyrians, when the temple was destroyed and they were finally deported to Babylon. Even when they returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple, there must have been questions in their minds and struggles in their hearts because the rebuilt temple wasn't nearly as glorious as the first temple that Solomon had built. So they must have been asking questions like, is this what the Lord's victory looks like? As they're being taken away captive to Babylon, has the king of glory come in? If so, where is he? He's lost now.

I don't know where he is. If he's so strong and mighty, why do we keep losing? Why are we suffering like we are right now? Those questions had to go through their minds as they read those words. You might be asking the same questions about your own life.

The king of glory has come in. If he's so mighty in battle, why am I going through what I'm going through? Why do I have this disease? Why isn't my child following the Lord? The Lord's so mighty and strong in battle. Why did I lose my job? If he's sovereign over the earth, doesn't he control all the jobs? Isn't the heart of the king in the hand of the Lord? He turns it like a watercourse wherever he pleases.

Well, what about my boss? What about my employer? What about his heart? Where's the king of glory? Why isn't this relationship working out? Why did my child die? Or why was my child molested? Where was the king of glory then? Why did my spouse leave me? Where's the Lord, strong and mighty? No, I don't know your situation, but God does. He knows it better than you do. And he knows what situations you're gonna be facing in the future.

These questions are very relevant. And the reality is God never intended us to limit the meaning of this verse to what took place in ancient Israel. We start there, but we don't end there.

These verses don't simply refer to David bringing the ark back into Jerusalem, as glorious as that was. There was another time hundreds of years later when the king of glory entered Jerusalem. We read about it in Matthew 21, verses nine through 11.

His name was Jesus, of course. And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, Hosanna to the son of David. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest. And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up saying, who is this? Almost wanna add king of glory. And the crowd said, this is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee.

This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee. Now the Jews answer was right, but it was not complete because they didn't know the full answer. But it was here all the time in Psalm 24.

To be right with God, we must view God rightly. And this section challenges our incomplete views of God. Jewish tradition says that Psalm 24 was typically recited on the first day of each week, Sunday.

So as Jesus was entering Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, to those shouts and acclaims, the priests may well have been in the temple intoning this Psalm. Who is this king of glory? Which have been a quite providential and ironic situation. Hebrews 2, 14 and 15 tells us that this king of glory came to destroy the one who has the power of death, that is the devil and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

Through his death and resurrection, he would reveal himself as the Lord of hosts, strong and mighty, the true king of glory. See, that's because Jesus rising from the dead was more than a display of raw supernatural power. It was the single event, the single event in history that assured us, as J.D. made reference to earlier, that his payment, his full payment for our sins had been accepted, that God's wrath against our sins had been satisfied, that death had been defeated, that the powers of darkness had ultimately been overcome, that sin's dominion had been broken and that the life of the age to come had dawned in history.

Amazing, he is the king of glory, which leads to a third scene we wanna look at that these verses refer to, and that is the scene of the king of glory entering heaven, which in one way has already taken place, ultimately, but we will appreciate more fully when we join in the celebration. For centuries, the church has read Psalm 24 on Ascension Sunday, celebrating the day that Jesus arose to be, to sit at the right hand of his father. To the early Christians, this psalm foreshadowed the cries of heaven as the God-man, Jesus Christ, returned from atoning for the sins of his people, having redeemed a people for God's possession from every tribe and language and people and nation.

This is the ultimate victory and triumph that this psalm refers to. So you can just imagine the host of heaven. It's hard to picture it because you're dealing with a situation where it's outside of time, but we're in time.

So what does this look like? Something like this, where Jesus has become a man. He's taken on flesh. He has entered the world through the birth canal of a woman, and he's appeared as a baby in first century Palestine.

And he grows up as a young boy, and he becomes a man, and he never sins, and he obeys his father perfectly. And then after he begins his ministry, three years later, one of his closest friends betrays him, and he is brutally tortured and put to death on a cross bearing the weight of the sin of all those he came to redeem. And then he rose from the dead, and he spent 40 days with his disciples, proving that he was alive.

And then he ascended back to his father's throne. What must have it been like to be on this side of that return? You know, I mean, Jesus Christ, now clothed in flesh, now fully God and a fully man, returning to the father's right hand. You can just imagine the excitement.

Who's the king of glory? It's Jesus! He is mighty in battle. He's strong, he's victorious. He did it, he did it, he did it! It's just, can you believe it? Yes, of course he did, it's God, yes.

Okay, he did it, it's amazing! It's just overwhelming celebration. Well, guess what? This has already taken place. It's already happened.

It's not like we're waiting to find out how it's gonna turn out. Oh, I don't know, is Jesus gonna make it? Yes, yes, he's made it, he's made it, it's done. Now we are in this time period when everything does not yet look like it's under the foot of Christ, but it all will be brought under the foot of Christ.

We tend to be consumed with what we do, what we accomplish, what we achieve, what we experience, what we express, and we can live with the mindset that God is ultimately dependent upon us to ultimately pull his plan off. And you know what? It's not, and it's a good thing that it's not. You know, we look around this room, we think, what are we, about 150 people, 200 people? You know, what can we do to change Bristol? Well, plus the other Christians who are gathered, yeah, sum us all up, what, a few thousand? You know, what are we gonna do to change Bristol? I'll tell you what we can do to change Bristol.

We serve the king of glory, who is sovereign, who is holy, and who is victorious. And that changes everything. It changes everything if you know, in a game, that your team is guaranteed to win.

Now, in this world, you'd be put in prison for that. But in God's economy, it's because he's sovereign. We know who has triumphed.

This life is about celebrating the victory God has brought about through our great King Jesus, crucified and risen. He is the representative man, representative for us, who has clean hands and a pure heart, who never for one second lifted up his soul to what is false, and never swore deceitfully. And because of him, we can ascend that holy hill, and we can stand in that holy place.

We can stand because he has paid our debt. He has suffered in our place. He has ransomed us from hell.

He has defeated our enemies and reconciled us to God. Because he has done all those things, we can trust that he is sovereignly working out his purposes. Now, I don't doubt that in this room, there are some of us who don't recognize God's sovereignty over our life.

We may have been in church all our lives, and just started coming here, or maybe we've been coming here for a while. I don't know. But I can tell you this, in the end, God wins.

Every knee will bow. There will be no knee left unbent when Jesus returns. And by his grace, he offers that option now.

Bow the knee to the sovereign one. Receive mercy for all your sins. It's the greatest gift we'll ever receive.

For those of us who know the Lord, for those of us who know the king of glory, the one mighty in battle, God is encouraging us through this word this morning to look to him, to lift up the gates of our hearts, to open the doors of our hearts, and let the king of glory come in. He is the sovereign, holy, victorious king of glory. Let's not settle for limited, inconsistent, or incomplete views of the God we worship.

God is the king of glory, and wants us to be confident in his sovereignty, pursuing his holiness, and rejoicing in his victory. Whatever trials, or disappointments, or challenges, or struggles, or opposition we might face, God, who owns the earth and everything in it, has redeemed a people for his glory, and his plans will not fail. They will not fail.

They will not fail. Because he is the Lord, strong and mighty, mighty in battle. He is the Lord almighty.

He is the crucified and risen king, reigning in glory. And what a joy it is to know him, to love him, to live for him. Father, we thank you.

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