

Apostolic Preaching & Prayer From the Psalter, Psalm 2

by Michael Flowers

The sermon emphasizes the importance of the Psalms in the context of apostolic preaching and prayer, highlighting their role in proclaiming the gospel, exercising our royal priesthood, and meeting with God and his people.

Duration: 26:52

Scripture: Acts 2:14

Topics: "Psalter"

Description

In this sermon, Peter stands up with the other disciples and addresses the crowd, preaching about Jesus Christ as the king of the kingdom. He references passages from Joel and Psalm 16 to explain the significance of the day of Pentecost. Peter prays for boldness to speak the word of God and for God to stretch out his hands to heal and perform miracles. After their prayer, the place where they were meeting shakes, they are filled with the Holy Spirit, and they speak the word of God boldly. The sermon also highlights the importance of prayer and community in developing a strong faith.

Transcript

As I was in prayer, I had one of those divine reversals this week. I had already intended on a different series, and the Lord really messed me up, you know. When you open your ears to Him and you get this, like, no, no, that's not where I was going to go.

Yeah. And so I feel like, you know, when we're groping through these things, I don't have like a hotline to Heaven, right? None of us have that. But we can hear His voice and be led by His Spirit.

And so He prompted me to move through the book of Psalms for the summer and to show how the New Testament church, the early Christians, used the book of Psalms. How they preached out of the book of Psalms. How they prayed the book of Psalms.

Why are the Psalms important? And how did the early church, and how has the church, the historic church, continued to use the Psalms right up to our three mornings a week in morning prayer? You see, we don't really read the Psalms. We pray the Psalms. We sing the Psalms.

The Psalms are songs, the songs of Israel and the Christological, the songs of Jesus being proclaimed, today I have begotten you, says the Father. And so the responsorial part allows us to participate where it's not just a reading. It is a prayer from the lectern.

And then we respond with that prayer and we pray together that Psalm. OK, so that's the way we want to look at the responsorials, right? It's a part of our worship. If I were on a desert island, I was thinking this day, I said, what book of the Bible would I take? What book of the Bible would you take? Think about this, that I think I would take the book of Psalms with me if I could choose.

You say, oh, Michael, why wouldn't you take the gospel? Why wouldn't you take John or something like that? It's because before John was ever written, which was around 90 AD, the church had been around preaching apostolic messages out of the Old Testament. And so like today, we're going to turn to Acts 2 and we're going to see the first sermon on the day of Pentecost was utilizing the prophet Joel, Psalm 16, Psalm 110. And then they got in trouble because of the healings that were taking place.

And then they came together and they prayed Psalm 2, which we heard today. So we could call this meeting with God and his people. With the Psalms, meeting with God and his people, with the Psalms.

This is not some pursuit of individual spirituality where I go away on an island, even though some of us want to do that right now. Yeah, but I'm there, Robinson Crusoe, Christian, all alone with God. The Psalms are the proclamation of the covenant that God made with Israel and that God promised to all the earth.

Because in the Psalms, it's not just about Israel, it's about all the earth and all creation praising him. You see, David got what Israel never fulfilled. And that's why Jesus, the new vine, the new Israel came to fulfill it all and opened up the way for the Gentiles, all the nations to be saved through him.

And so David is proclaiming that full impact of the gospel throughout the Psalms. When we meet in morning prayer at the ministry center, we're not only meeting with God, but we're meeting with his people, praying the Psalms. And in praying those Psalms, we encounter God and we encounter communion with each other.

And then we finish that up with the eighth sacrament. Everybody know what the eighth sacrament is? Oh, yeah, it's the coffee. I mean, the church would not survive without coffee.

Come on. It's the power of the holy being. After the power of the Holy Spirit, it must be the power of the holy being.

OK, I'm sorry. Amen. Let's pray for those baristas.

More power. Right. And so we hang out together and we've been doing this all year now where we're praying three times a week from seven to seven thirty.

But then it's not over. People stay for an hour or however long they can stay, sometimes two hours. And it's like three small groups going on.

It's centered around prayer, meeting with God and his people. Community is being developed and people from other churches are coming. It's an ecumenical reality where people from other churches are hungry.

They get on our Web site. They see that we're meeting with God and they come to. It's a beautiful thing.

I invite you all if you're around and you're within driving distance. I mean, there's people that do drive from the Northland three times a week to do that. There's people that drive from Overland Park three times a week that do that.

So if you can do that, I just want to throw out that invitation because there's something very powerful happening. It's indescribable, really, about what's happening through the week. And it's all centered around prayer and people hungry for God and people from other churches coming wanting to pray liturgically.

It's a really cool thing. Meeting with God and his people, those are corporate prayers that we're praying then, right? There's individual psalms, there's psalms of individual devotion, and then there's psalms for the corporate body in those hundred and fifty psalms, the largest book in the Bible. And it's right in the center of the Bible.

It just proclaims the gospel. All of the prayer warriors have prayed these corporate prayers throughout the history of the church. Liturgical poems, they are their liturgical poems that bridge the prayers in heaven and on earth, because all of those saints in heaven, which in Revelation 5 says the prayers of the saints in heaven are like sweet smelling incense.

And so that's what's happening. These liturgical prayers bridge the prayers in heaven and on earth because they're the common liturgy that we have all prayed together as we rise up to be with the Lord. They formed us, they informed us, and they have formed us in our spiritual formation.

So all the prayer warriors in heaven, the prayers of the saints were formed by praying the psalms individually and corporately. OK, so what would be our aim in going through the psalms and emphasizing the psalms? Number one, it would be to taste and see the beauty and awe of God in the depths of prayer, the heights of praise and the in-betweens of utter emotional disillusionment. It's all in the Psalter.

And that was a lament, that was a psalm of sorts, a poem, a prophetic poem from Jeremiah that we heard this morning. It was a complaint, right? The psalms give us permission to go there with God, isn't it good that you don't have to, like, deny your feelings and the the view of reality that you're experiencing? It's not reality, ultimate reality, right? Pure spirit, that is. But when our eyes get, we see through a glass dimly at best.

At our best, we see through a glass dimly, Paul says. We are still falling creatures in the midst of being restored and groping for God, and sometimes it's hard to pray, you find it hard to pray sometimes. I do.

And the Psalms give us that every season of the soul variety of prayer where it lets us know that we're human and it's OK, it's good to be human. And, you know, sometimes we we exalt rationality over emotion. But both are just as fallen.

Selah. Selah is a musical term in the Psalms. It means pause and provide some space in the improvisation.

Now, when I thought about that this week, I thought that is significant how we exalt rationality over emotion when both are falling. And the Psalms levels all of that out, at least David does, because he's the guy, the king who dances naked before the ark. He's the guy that offends Michal, his wife, right? He's the guy he's just as thinking like, what a great vision statement for a church.

We already have one, but man, it would be a church after God's own heart, because that's what David was. He was a man after God's own heart. And don't you want to be a church after God's own heart? It's praying the Psalms that will give us the tools, some of the tools to be there.

But you see, the book of Psalms is everybody's prayer book that belongs to everybody doesn't have to have Anglican on it. We have our prayer book and our prayer book. It has the whole book of Psalms.

But the book of Psalms is our second aim would be to explore how the Psalms prophesy the redemptive mission of Jesus. Crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, enthronement. And new creation.

New creation in vivid detail. Jesus quoted the Psalter in order to clarify his redemptive mission. And in quoting Psalm 110, it was the last one of the last Psalms before his crucifixion that he quoted that actually got him there on the cross.

And so the new is in the old concealed. And the old is in the new revealed, Saint Augustine. The new is in the old concealed.

The old is in the new revealed in this out. This is how the apostles preach the gospel. There was no New Testament except for this.

This is this is the new covenant in his blood, Paul says. The new covenant is not a book. It's the body and blood of the Lord.

You get that we're supposed to eat the new covenant and drink the new covenant. Number three, how the early church employed psalms as liturgical prayer, why do I say liturgical prayer? Because you read them, it's a liturgy, it provides banks, it provides a common prayer book, a book of common prayer, really, before the book of common prayer. There was the book of common prayer, the Psalter.

Oh, and so it's how the early church employed psalms as liturgical prayer. Written prayers brought to life in proclaiming the gospel. And making intercession, proclaiming the gospel, preaching Jesus, so what Peter was doing on the day of Pentecost out of Psalm 16.

And then in Acts four that we heard read this morning, making intercession, preaching the gospel and making intercession common prayer. And you know what, when you pray the Psalms, you know, you're praying the inspired scriptures. Okay, Acts two, as you know, we're now coming out of Pentecost.

We've celebrated the ascension of the Lord and then Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit falls on a promised feast day in Jerusalem called the Feast of Pentecost, the Feast of First Fruits. And when the Holy Spirit fell, it enabled those waiting in the upper room to speak languages that they had not learned.

And those languages, see, speaking in tongues, it said, but it's just speaking foreign languages in Acts two, because all the proselytes from all over the world were in Jerusalem for that feast. And they were hearing the proclamations of praise and the gospel preached in their own language. And they said, what does this mean? What is going on? And so Peter stands up and he begins to address the crowd.

And I believe that this is what Jesus means when he says, I'll give you the keys to the kingdom. Because he preaches Jesus Christ, the king of the kingdom, and he takes it out of Joel and he takes it out of Psalm 16. Then Peter stood up with the eleven in verse 14.

I like that he stood up with the eleven, they're all standing up, you know, and they're cheering him on. It's like a team. Yeah, you go first, Peter.

You know, I'm sure they had relief preachers in that in that line there. Right. He raised his voice and addressed the crowd, fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem.

Let me explain this to you. How would you like to explain the day of Pentecost to somebody? Right. Let me explain this to you.

See, only Peter could do that. Only Peter is so bold and so brash to even try. All right.

He's the one that Jesus said, get behind me, Satan, you know, let me explain this to you. Listen carefully to what I say. These men are not drunk, as you suppose.

It's only nine o'clock in the morning. It is an hour of prayer, by the way. It's when good Jewish people would be in the synagogue praying and at the temple praying nine o'clock in the morning.

No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel. And then he goes through. I'm not going to read all of that, but, you know, I'll pour out my spirit in the last days.

And of course, Peter is telling us that Pentecost inaugurated the last days. We're not waiting on the last days, we're in the last days. I will pour out my spirit on all people right in the last days.

So he's saying, we're there. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. He goes on down.

Men of Israel, listen to this. Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him. As you yourselves know, this man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge.

And you, with the help of wicked people, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. You see, there was no need to expound Psalm 22 at this point. They got it.

Jesus was crucified and they did it. But the crucifixion is explained in Psalm 22 with just uncanny details. But that's not the right song for the occasion.

They got that. He's going, but God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. David said about him, and here it is in Psalm 16, here is an apostle handling the book of Psalms, Psalm 16.

I saw the Lord always before me because he is at my right hand. I will not be shaken. Therefore, my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices.

My body also will live in hope because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your holy one see decay. You have made known to me the paths of life through death, by the way, unless a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die. You have made known to me the paths of life.

You will fill me with joy in your presence. Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David, the father David, died and was buried and his tomb is here to this day. But he was a prophet.

The spirit of prophecy is on the Psalms. The spirit of prophecy, John tells us, is the testimony of Jesus. The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus.

Peter is preaching prophetically the testimony of Jesus out of the Psalms. He was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of Jesus, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay.

God has raised this Jesus to life and we are all witnesses of the fact exalted to the right hand of God. There's the ascension he has received from the father, the promised Holy Spirit, which has poured out what you now see in here. For David did not ascend to heaven.

And yet he said, Psalm 110, The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet. Therefore, let all Israel be assured of this. God has made this Jesus whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.

And so when the people heard this, they were cut and they got it and the Holy Spirit was convicting them and they said, what must we do? Three thousand coming to the kingdom by Peter, an apostle, preaching out of the book of Psalms. Beautiful thing. Turn with me to Acts 4 and we'll end here.

By the healing of a man by the gate, beautiful, they get locked up. Peter and John get locked up for doing this. There's a whole lot of dialogue going on and Peter is talking to the council and he says salvation is found in no one else where there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

And he goes on and he expounds and it says in verse 18, chapter four, then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. But we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.

They punished them and they let them go. And then it says in verse 23, on their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. And when they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer.

Take note of this. They raised their voices together. They raised their voices.

They raised the word. There is homo thumed on, you know, where we get our word for thermometer. And so they are of one temperature.

They raise their voices and they change the atmosphere. They have the thermometer. They have the thermostat.

It's the thermostat of the kingdom. And the thermostat of the kingdom is raising your voice together in prayer. Amen.

Prayer changes the atmosphere. Thy kingdom come on earth. I mean, that's the prayer.

That's the prayer of Jesus. Pray that my kingdom would come on earth as it is in heaven. That is, change the atmosphere of the earth to make it the atmosphere of heaven where God reigns, where God reigns.

How do we exercise our royal priesthood? What does a priest do that makes sacrifices? We call this the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving because our Lord Jesus has made that one and final sacrifice for us. All we have to do now is sacrifice our time, money and energy and give praise and glory to Jesus because he's done it for us. And we can read about it in the Psalms.

We can pray about it in the Psalms and we can preach about it in the Psalms and with the Psalms. It's like having something that you didn't realize what you had, you know, the power that was just sitting there in your living room until it gets unleashed. Right.

You just open up the Psalter and you open up your heart to God and you say, I'm going to go. I was glad when they said to me, let us go to the house of the Lord. I'm not even going to try to do this on my own.

I'm going to pray with the church and I'm going to raise my voice and I'm going to change the atmosphere of Kansas City. That's what we aim to do. And how are we going to do it through our weak and feeble prayers? Really? I mean, you know, when you're there at seven in the morning, it doesn't feel like the day of Pentecost.

Right. When we walked out of Friday, everybody was saying, we're just such a buzz in the place. You know, there's all these new people and meeting each other.

And it's just incredible to see it. You know, it's just you hear that buzz, that life that's in the room. That's what happens when people come together around Jesus Christ.

And so they raise their voices together in prayer. That thermostat got shifted over to the kingdom of God. And they said this.

And I don't think this is the first time they thought about this. I think they had been instructed by the apostles how to read Psalm 2. They probably had memorized it because they're saying it and praying it together. It says, Sovereign Lord, they're praying this.

Sovereign Lord, they said, you made the heaven and the earth. And the sea and everything in them, you spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father, David. Why do the nations rage, Psalm 2? They're praying this together.

Why do the nations rage and the people's plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers together against the Lord and against his anointed one. They take that little piece out of Psalm 2. We heard the whole psalm today. And then they began to interpret that passage, those two verses.

This is the interpretation in real time. This is real time interpretation under persecution. So they're taking that psalm and they're personalizing it and they're going like, oh, this is it.

This is what the Lord was telling us. This is the apostolic teaching. Indeed, Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant, Jesus, your holy child, Jesus, whom you anointed.

They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. Now, Lord, here it is, there's going to be three points of intercession. Number one, now, Lord, consider their threats.

Number one, think about what they're threatening us with death, imprisonment. They're here to shut the church down. OK, sound familiar? Consider their threats and enable, number two, enable your servants to

Speak your word with great boldness.

Oh, how we need to pray this, that I could speak your word with great boldness. In the midst of the secularization of the cosmos. Number two, enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness, and number three, stretch out your hands to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant, Jesus, your holy child.

Three answers come to those three requests after they prayed. The place where they were meeting was shaken. And I'm thinking that's relating to God considering their threats, he's just shaking up Jerusalem and he's shaking things, everything will be shaken.

That which only will remain is that which cannot be shaken. So the place was shaken. Number one.

Number two, they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, what they were asking for. Give me great boldness in the spirit to proclaim your word. And number three, they spoke the word of God boldly.

They spoke the word of God boldly, the only way they could have done that was to submit themselves to corporate prayer and crying out to God. God, consider their threats. Enable us to speak your word boldly and fill us with the Holy Spirit so that signs and wonders and great healing so that your compassions can be flowing through us, O Lord, that it all came through prayer.

Right. God so desires to answer our prayer. And he's given us such a beautiful tool called a Psalter to get familiar with and to pray corporately with.

And this is in the Anglican tradition, praise God. It's just that let's pray the Psalms instead of just reading. Let's pray them because they have great power when we engage in faith with the Lord in the name of the Father and the Son.

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