

The Earth is the Lord's Psalm 24

I would invite you to turn in your Bibles to Psalm 24. This Psalm is a little different than the previous Psalms. Each one we're trying to pick and choose, some that give you a little flavor of the different kinds of prayers that we find in this prayer book of the Lord, given to us in the book of Psalms. And we've also tried to point out some of the little technical things that you'll see along the way. And you'll notice in this Psalm, as you have in some of the previous ones that we've looked at, this word, Selah. That appears in some Psalms and is untranslated. And the reason why it's untranslated is that we don't know exactly what it means. Okay. And because we want to honor the word of the Lord, we leave it in there, of course, because that's how it comes to us. And yet we're not sure exactly what its use was. It does seem, and etymologically, it's possible that it means something like pause or rest. In other words, it's some kind of musical notation. We don't know why it's in some Psalms and not in others, and why it's in this Psalm, for instance, though it does, if you'll note, divide the Psalm up according to its two major themes that we have here. So just an interesting point. Again, this is a Psalm of David, which means that it was written by David. And we can read it accordingly. All the Psalms that are said to be of David are in the New Testament and are Psalms that we can go back to in the Old Testament and in the Hebrew or in the Septuagint, Greek translations of the Old Testament. It has those superscriptions that say, this is a Psalm of David. So, it seems as if everything that Jesus and the apostles ascribed to David is what the superscripts ascribe to David as well. Some of you find those things interesting, if not, just let them pass you by.

Now let us turn to Psalm twenty four.

The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and all who dwell therein. For he has founded it upon the seas, and he has established it upon the rivers. Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall enter into his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, and 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. Selah. Lift up your heads, O gates, and be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Who is the King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O gates, and be lifted up, O ancient doors, so that the King of glory may come in. Who is the King of glory? The Lord of hosts. He is the King of glory.

This is the word of the Lord. Please be seated.

Well, you know, there's two realities that every human has to come to terms with at some point or other in their lives. And it's really kind of related to the stories that we tell ourselves about ourselves because we all tell stories about ourselves, don't we? Throughout the day. And this, this isn't just a modern thing, as some philosophers have said, that this is like a modern, uh, condition that we tell stories about ourselves because we're so inundated with story all of the time in the modern world. But we actually see in the Bible that even in Scripture, people were telling themselves stories about their lives. And there's two kind of major stories that we

see show up throughout Scripture, but also just throughout human existence. Today, two major stories that we tell about ourselves.

The first story is that we are not pure, we are not right. We're not as we should be. We're not. And most people may not use this language, but it's the right language. It's the language of the scripture that we're not holy. We may be right sometimes. We may be perfect. Sometimes there may be moments to moments that we feel like we actually do the right thing, that we are internally and externally doing good. But yet when we're honest with ourselves about our failures and the ways that we fall short, we realize we are not perfect. Okay? We even talk about human imperfection. To err is human. We're not perfect. That's one story that we tell ourselves. And that story results in a thing often called shame. And we're going to come back to that later and talk about what that means to be a person who's telling the story of shame to themselves.

But there's another story we also tell, and it's this we can't do everything right. Or to put it another way, we're not all powerful. And so, so often in life, even though we'll have little successes, we a day will work out the way that we want it to. Maybe a project will come to fruition and be successful. Or maybe we'll look back and we'll say, I can see how that turned out for good. Sooner or later, every human realizes they are not all powerful, and that results in another story. It's the story of helplessness, the story of being at odds in the world, and having the world rising up against you.

So these two stories, the story of shame and the story of helplessness are deep human stories. And it's interesting, isn't it, that these are the stories that this Psalm 24 is speaking to. You see, Psalm 24 shows us the perfection of the God who made us. And then it shows us the strength and the glory of the King, who we ought to be looking for shows us the perfection, the holiness of our God, and therefore what he requires of us. And then it shows us the glory, the strength, the power of the King of glory, who we ought to be waiting for. But both speak to these concerns that we have this realization that we are not holy, and the realization that we are not victorious kings.

So let's take a look at Psalm 24. He does it through two movements. The first one is when he talks about creation and the holy hill of the Lord. And secondly, he talks about the city gates and the conquering king who will ride through them. But first, let's look at creation in the holy hill. It's here that we learn that the whole world, all of creation, belongs to God because he is the creator. And only those who are perfectly holy may enter into his presence. Notice how the psalmist begins. He wants to get to holiness. But notice he doesn't begin with the temple. He doesn't begin with the sanctuary. He doesn't begin with the tabernacle. He begins with creation. He says the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. So in other words, all of the world, all of the earth is God's. He owns it. It belongs to him. We may ask the question, well, why does it belong to him? Is it because he's so powerful? And after all, might makes right? And so if the world is God's the most powerful being, then that means the world rightly belongs to him. Okay, that's true, but that's not the reason that the psalmist gives here in Psalm 24. You could say, if I was in a room and there were five people to choose from in terms of who I ought to follow, then I should choose from the most powerful one. There's some wisdom in that and

kind of getting through life successfully. But notice what the psalmist says here. He says the earth belongs to the Lord. He owns it. It's his. He alone is present. He alone is powerful in it, and he alone has authority. Why? Because he's its creator. For he has established it upon the rivers. He has founded it upon the seas. So he's the one who made it. All of it. And the fullness therein, all who dwell in it. And as a result, it all belongs to him. It's important for us to remember that oftentimes if you talk to a non-believing friend, or maybe you just have heard this around in entertainment, or maybe you felt this way yourself sometime, this idea that, what do I have to do? I have to follow God because he's some kind of, you know, old man who lives in the sky and he's got a lot of power. No, that's not actually what the Bible believes. The Bible believes this. You have been formed individually. And not only you, but everything you love. Every moment that's taken your breath away. Everything that you've desired after and sought after. The chemicals that that tell you that you desire and seek after things. All of that is the perfect, wonderful, glorious and intelligent design of a creator. And so he has uniquely in all things in the world, He has unique ownership of you and authority in your life. So you see what he's saying here? He's saying, because God is creator, therefore we owe him a certain allegiance that is unique only to God.

Now, some sermons you'll may hear and commentaries you may read will point out, well, this is also all based around ancient Near Eastern understanding of the cosmos. So notice it says this interesting thing. He has founded them upon the seas and he has established them upon the rivers. What's that about? That the whole world is founded on seas and rivers. What are they talking about there? And of course, we remember back to Genesis 1 where we see the the early creation. And it's just chaos and void. It's just water. It's described as *tohuwabohu* in Hebrew, and out of the water comes the land, and God creates the land after separating the waters above and below. And it all paints this picture that the world is kind of almost like sitting there floating in the middle of water. And you can look above and you can look below, and all you see is water. And God is the one who made all of it. And is that an ancient, ancient view of the world? Yes, absolutely. Should we look at that as some kind of false or mythical view of the world? And I would actually argue, no, we should not. This is not mythology. This is actually a quite understandable description of how the world works now. Think about it. All of us have to describe the world as we know it, right? I can't talk about a world that I don't know. So if you're an Israelite and you walk out to the shoreline on the Mediterranean, or if you go down to the Gulf of Aqaba and you look down on the bay, you look out the Red sea. What do you notice? You look down and you see water. You look up and what do you see? That's where the rain comes from. That's water. It's even blue. You know, if you're on the Mediterranean, you look at the blue water here, blue water up there. The scientists will tell you much, much later. They'll go, yeah, that's why it's blue. It's because there's water vapor in the atmosphere and it filters out the red light. And so you can see the blue, but you can't see the other colors, right? So it's blue, blue, there's water, there's water. But then there's another place that water comes from too. Because anyone who's lived in the shephelah, which is the high region of Israel, would know that sometimes if you need water, you can't find a lake, you can't find a river, but you can find a spring. And the spring is getting water from somewhere else. They were sophisticated to know that water sometimes can fall from the sky. You can find it in the ocean, but sometimes you can also find it coming out of a rock. As a matter of fact, I was at a double oak park the

other day, and I was riding my bike out there, and I was kind of going up, and it was one of those just blazing hot days. I don't have to describe it to you. You've all been here. It's just blazing hot. There hadn't been any rain. The riverbeds were dry, okay. And I was coming down this trail and it was just hot. And I'd gone out late in the day and I was drinking the water, you know, had water on my back. And I was kind of drinking. I was like, oh, man, if I didn't have this, I think I'd die. I don't think I'd make it back to the car. But every once in a while, I was coming down this trail and it would kind of switch back and forth. It was called landslide, and I was trying desperately not to slide down it. But as I was coming down this trail, I kept passing this trickle of water that would go across the trail. and every time I'd hit it, it would splash up and hit my legs and it was cold. And why was it cold? The riverbeds are dry. Where is it coming from? It's coming from a spring, right? Because we all know water can come from different places. The sea, the sky. And it can come out of the ground to the streams or the springs that come out of the ground. Those are the rivers beneath the earth that the earth has been established upon. See, this is just a phenomenological way of describing the world. This is the world as you see it and as you experience it. And you might still go, well, that's so primitive. And I would actually point out, you know, one hundred and fifty years ago, someone could come along and say, the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. And we'd say, you don't know what that means because you don't understand subatomic particles, right? We now understand the world much better than you did. So what? But we could still say, when they go, the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, that they know what they're talking about because they're describing the world that they know. Now we do understand subatomic particles. Now we do understand quantum theory, at least understand. Right. We can point to quantum theory. We can point to all of these scientific theories. Do we know more about the world? Absolutely. But if we're honest and we have even an ounce of circumspection, we'll recognize that. I too can say the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, and recognize that in one hundred years I'm going to go, how? How naive I was and how little I understood about that world.

What is the psalmist saying? He's saying the world as you experience it. It's owned by God. It's created by him. Even the parts you can't see, even the rivers that those springs are coming out of, it's all made by him and owned by him. And that's where we come to this interesting connection between creation and holiness. I want you to sit with this. This is a profound psalm. He says, the Lord has made the earth. It's all his. He owns it. So who then can go up on his holy hill? And the idea here, being that the Lord is, is exists on Zion. That's the holy hill he's talking about. But of course, Zion will come to be used in the Psalms to mean more than just the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. It's really used to talk about wherever Yahweh is. Where is the Lord and where does his deliverance come out of? He's the one who made the world. And yet, if you want to enter into his presence, you have to have certain credentials. You have to be holy. You see in the Bible there's this deep connection between creation and holiness. As a matter of fact, we might even say it this way. To be holy means to be in the best sense, a part of creation. God has made the world. And if you want to be unto him, the creator of the universe, to actually recognize the world for what it is, then you must be holy. And when you are with him, guess what? You are holy. As a matter of fact, holiness is creation in its best form because it's set apart unto the creator.

Let's unpack this a little bit more. What is at the root of it? What does holiness mean? Holy means to be set apart. We see set apart to what? Set apart to the creator. Think of the things in the Bible that are called holy. Whether it's the tabernacle or the temple, or the. Or the priest themselves, or the kind of worship they're doing, it's things that are set apart unto creator. Now, it's interesting because in the New Testament, the Lord will come and he'll say, it's actually not things that are holy, right? The cleanliness, uncleanness, laws of the Old Testament, those were there to teach you a thing. As Paul says, there were kind of tutors to teach you how to think about the world, and you should think about the world in this way. You can do things that are unto creator, and you can do things that are not unto the creator. Okay? But that's what matters. There's no animal that's holy versus an animal that's not holy. There's no rock on earth or place on earth that's holy versus another place that's not holy. It's all made by the creator. And so Peter is told in his vision, stop separating out things from other things. Just to be clear, brothers and sisters, you can't eat a thing on Sunday morning that makes you inappropriate for worship. Okay? You can't touch something on Saturday that makes you inappropriate for worship on Sunday. In the Old Testament, that was a possible thing. But that was all to teach you a lesson about the truth of the world. Now here's the thing. You can come in worshiping Baal and that would make you inappropriate for Sunday morning worship, Those are the things now in the New Testament that are called impure or unholy. You can come in doing something that is false. You could rob from your neighbor, or you could oppress your friend or your spouse and then come into worship. And that would render you inappropriate for worship. But you can't touch a thing. There's no fruit, there's no animal that makes you unholy for worship, because all things are a part of his creation. And to be fully created, honoring the creator is to be holy, set apart for him.

Now we might say, this is a very interesting history of religion in the Bible, Scott. Okay. Thank you for that. But what does that mean for us today? And here the psalmist tells us, what does he say? What does it mean to be holy, to be the kind of person who can enter into the holy hill? It means this you need to have clean hands in a pure heart. And don't lift up your soul to what is false. And don't swear deceitfully. Notice that's not too far from what the New Testament is going to tell us. Holiness actually is. It's not about animals or whether or not you've sewn two different fabrics together, or whether or not you have a fungus in your house. Okay? That's not what makes you holy. That's to teach you about holiness. What makes you holy is the state of your actions in the world and the state of your heart. Look at the way. Just briefly look at how he describes it. Clean hands. Okay. What's the hands? The hands are just a metaphor for what you do in the world around you. Okay. Clean hands. But it's not just about your outward experience, okay? It's not just about your outward behavior. You also have to have a pure heart. We've been going through Deuteronomy, and you've already heard me talk about Deuteronomy 6, right? What is it? Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all of your self, and with all of your strength out there in the world. And here the psalmist is just breaking it into two divisions. All of your strength in the world, all the stuff you do with your hands and your heart. The Lord's not interested in your open or expressive religiosity, okay? He wants to see that your heart worships him and that your hands honor him. So notice he says, clean hands, pure hearts, so outward inner. But then look how he flips it. This is just poetic. We're just noticing his poetry. He went through the time to write poetry. So we're going to acknowledge it

outward to inner. But then what does he say next? Does not lift up his soul to what is false or swear deceitfully? What are those two things talking about? Well, lifting up your soul or your self, that's that same word as love the Lord your God with all your heart and all of your soul or your self, your person lifting up your person to what is false. What's that about? It's about pagan worship, okay? Whether it's Baal or Asherah or Marduk, or money or health or reputation around the town of Birmingham, or keeping up with the Joneses. Whatever. The thing is that you're lifting up your person to, that's not God, then that's lifting up your soul to what is false. So notice that's again, he's talking about kind of an internal reality in that case. So he said clean hands, pure heart worship, which is of the heart. And then he says secondly, but also swearing deceitfully. Now what is he talking about there when he talks about swearing deceitfully? He's not just talking about being a truthful person versus being an untruthful person. Though we would include that. But we should point out why does he say it that way? He could say, uh, it does not does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not lie. Why doesn't he say that? Why does he say swearing deceitfully? If you even think about the Ten Commandments, what does the Ten Commandments say? It doesn't say thou shalt not lie. What does it say? *Thou shalt not bear false testimony*. Okay. Now, of course, that includes all kinds of lying. God is a God of truth. We know that in him is no untruth at all. In him is no deception. That's absolutely true. We ought to be in the same way. And yet notice with these commands, it's not just about lying, but it's about lying to in some way get a leg up, to oppress, to exploit or to in some way power over your neighbor. That's what bearing false testimony is. That means you've gone into a lawsuit and you've borne false testimony so that you can win the lawsuit against the other person.

What does he say here? Swearing deceitfully. You're going into a transaction and you're swearing. Yes, I will do this thing, but you've got your fingers crossed behind your back because you're just trying to get done the things you need to get done. You're trying to move your agenda forward. And so truth now, reality has become a thing you think that you can manipulate in order to bring about your agenda. Okay, so yes, that means fraud and business transactions. That means, uh, perjury and legal transactions. But that also means flattery. That means evasion of truth. That means telling a story just so that the person doesn't arrive at an understanding of reality, but rather arrives at the understanding of what you want them to understand. You see, God is a God of truth, and he says you cannot manipulate truth in order to exploit, oppress, or in some way power over your neighbor. Do you see, by the way, how the order goes? Clean hands, pure heart, false worship, oppression of your neighbor. You see, for the psalmist as for the prophets, as for Jesus himself, there's not a hard line between external behavior and internal faith. Okay, if your heart is wrong, then your actions are going to be wrong. And when your actions are wrong, they're going to lead your heart astray.

So what does it mean to be holy? What does it mean to be the person who can stand before God in his sanctuary? It means that you are clean and pure inside and out. Now look at verse 5. There's a promise. If you have this, you'll receive a blessing from the Lord and righteousness from the God of your salvation. The one who stands before God receives the blessing. To be in God's presence is to receive his blessing. Because if you're in his presence and you're not holy, by the way, what happens? You get burned up. The prophets dealt with this quite a bit in Isaiah

33:14. Isaiah says this *who among us can dwell in the consuming fire? Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?* He's talking about being in the presence of God. That's why in the benediction that we hear at the end of the church service from time to time says, May the Lord bless you and keep you. May he make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. If he's not gracious to you when his face shines upon you, it will, as Isaiah says, be a consuming fire. You see, God's presence consumes us unless he is gracious. So if you are standing in his presence and you're not being consumed, it's because you are holy. And if you're holy, then guess what? You're receiving the blessing from the Lord.

Notice what he says there. He's receiving righteousness from the God of his salvation. Verse six reminds us, this is not just talking about one person, but a whole generation who seek him, a whole people, the descendants of Abraham who seek the face of the God of Jacob. This is not one isolated worshipper, but rather it's about a whole generation of people, a community marked by seeking the Lord and not being consumed by his presence. So now we can understand the scrutiny of this question who can do this? Who can stand in the presence of the Lord and not be consumed? Who has a pure heart? Who doesn't have a divided heart? Any of you, any of you here this. Who can ascend to the hill of the Lord? And do you want to raise your hand like Isaiah and say, here I am, Lord, send me. As a matter of fact, imagine.

Remember how Isaiah responds the first time he sees the holiness of the Lord? As the veil is drawn thin and the seraphim are flying around. What is his first response? Lord, woe is me, for I'm a man of unclean lips. If you've ever taught a Bible study, you've ever sat down and taught a class, taught children, taught adults out of Scripture. You know what this feels like. Every preacher knows what this is like to be prepared to get up and to actually do this thing that I'm doing right now, which is share with you the word of the Lord.

Every preacher knows what this is like. There's something that starts to happen. It's like on Thursday or so, and you realize Sunday is coming up and you start asking yourself, Lord, Lord, can I enter into that place and teach your word? Can I share the Holy Word of God, the inspired, inerrant Word of God with these people in Sunday morning worship? Lord, am I qualified to do this work and things will happen. There'll be a moment of anger on a Saturday, or an errant thought. You'll say, Lord, please don't disqualify me. Don't disqualify me from getting up there and doing this. Sometimes it's even when I'm sitting right here in the chair. Okay. And pastors, we talk about these kinds of things sometimes be sitting there and you'll be going, Lord, please get me through. Get me through the sermon. Don't let me disqualify myself. See who shall ascend the hill of the Lord. If we're honest, we know the answer cannot be, here I am, Lord. Send me God. And this is why the call for holiness, the holiness of God, can often produce in us shame.

Now, shame is not simply the fear that someone might discover what we have done. Shame is the dread that someone might see what we are. There's an instinct to hide oneself. We see this in our first parents after eating of the fruit. What do we see them do after they eat of the fruit? Do they jump up and down in the garden, in rejoicing in their newfound freedoms. No, they go and they hide in the hedges. They knit together pitiful little underwear out of leaves. They blame one another. They try to hide themselves from God. See, that's what shame does. It's important to recognize the difference between shame and guilt. Okay? Guilt is recognizing that

you've done something wrong. But guilt can be healthy because guilt can drive you to repentance and faith for looking for healing, for looking for reconciliation. Shame says that's not available to you. Shame says you are wrong. Shame leads to hiding in isolation and deceit and defensiveness. People who wrestle with shame are often the most harsh with their critics and harsh with their criticism. Shame leads us to act out lest the truth that we fear about ourselves becoming exposed.

Notice Psalm 24 is not cheapening holiness to make us feel better about ourselves. It doesn't say, who can ascend the hill of the Lord? It asks, who can ascend the hill of the Lord? It doesn't say the reasonably moral person or the comparatively good guy doesn't say the one who's better than average. They say rather, he must have both clean hands and a pure heart. The God who made us is holy, and the holiness that he requires exposes our lack of holiness. But notice Psalm 24 does not stop at the holy hill. There's a sudden shift in verse 7 to the city gates and the conquering king. Notice the shift here. And we'll explain it in a minute. What's he doing?

There's a shift that happens because all of a sudden he moves into this ancient Near Eastern enthronement chair. Okay. That's what's going on here is you have a king. He's riding back from victory. And as he's coming up to the gates of the city, the nation is standing on the gates to hear about the victory that he's had at some battle that they haven't seen. It's somewhere beyond the horizon. And he's coming back and they're wondering, did we win or did we lose? And here comes the Herald over the hill, the preacher of good news, right. He's coming over the hill. How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him. And what is he saying? Lift up your heads, O gates!

And my family was memorizing psalms, as we do sometimes from time to time. I'd encourage you to do this, particularly with small children. Memorizing the Bible's great psalms are particularly fun to memorize, but they would kind of beat their hands together like they were doing a cheer. And this is it's kind of like a cheerleading thing happening. You can imagine a cheerleading squad doing this on a football field. You know, lift up your heads O gates, be lifted up O ancient doors, so that the King of glory may come in. He is cheering. He's calling the gates to lift their heads up. Of course, the gates are symbolic of the people, and the inhabitants of the city. Come out on the ramparts. Receive in the victorious King.

But then comes the question. Notice the question in the first half was this who can ascend the holy hill? Two questions. Who can enter into his holy place? Notice in the second half we get two questions who is the King of glory? And then repeated again, who is the King of glory? The answer the Lord. And that is the divine name. There. Yahweh, strong and mighty, the Yahweh mighty in battle. Again he's asked, who is the King of glory? Yahweh Sabaoth, right? You remember the old version of Mighty Fortress is our God, right? Okay. Lord Sabbath his name, Lord Sabaoth. His name. That's what that means. The Lord of hosts is art. He's not hosting parties. That's the Lord of armies. He is the King of glory. Five times we see that title King of Glory -- Melech Hakavod. Okay, five times that word that that phrase appears here in this Psalm. Interestingly, it doesn't appear anywhere else in the in the Bible. Okay. This is the only place it shows up. It's a special title for this victorious king who is riding back in victory at the head of his army, having conquered all of his enemies. Now we should point out this is a

human king. It's true. The Old Testament kings were named by after the gods that they that they served. Okay. The gods who gave them victories. We even see this in the Bible. You see these names? They're called theophoric names. Okay. They have the divine name within the name. Any name in the Old Testament that ends with (yah, l, a, h) in our English, that's the divine name, that's Yahweh. Okay, this king is identified by the God who gave him the victory. Who is this human king who's riding back in victory? He is the Lord of hosts because God goes before us like he went before David and like he went before Joshua. God goes before us. He vexes our enemies, and he gives us the victory.

Now, of course, we look at the first half of this Psalm and it says, who can enter into the holy place? And we say, not us. You see, the first half of the Psalm calls us to holiness, but it exposes our shame. The second half of the Psalm says this who's the King of glory? Are you? Are you the one who's riding back from the victory? Are you the one who's coming in that the gate should open? Are you the human king who's been given the divine victory? The second half raises the question not of our lack of holiness, but of our helplessness. You see, the shame and the helplessness often intertwine. Shame says, I don't add up. Helplessness says I cannot change my story. Shame says I'm dirty, exposed, and unworthy and unlovable. I can't enter into God's presence and helplessness. Says I'm powerless to make myself clean, safe, whole, or victorious.

That's why Psalm 24 is such good news. It is an evangelion. It is a gospel message because it gives us an answer. Who can enter into the holy hill? Who is the King of glory? It's the Lord of hosts, the one who's been identified with the victorious King. He's the one who can enter into the sanctuary. He's the one who's given the victory. And yet we still have to ask. Okay, so who's that? Is that David? You know, David had victories over the course of his life. He had mighty men. He's even described as one who was after God's own heart. And yet, when we read closely to David's story, we also remember it wasn't always so good. There was a period of time in exile where he actually acted like a madman. He even fought on the side of. Okay, get ready for this. He fought on the side of the Philistines, right? The worst of the worst. But then later in life, after being given all of these blessings and all of this success, he becomes a man whose life is bent around adultery and murder. And not just murder, but murder of his most loyal commander. Is David, the King of Glory? Is he the one who can enter into the holy hill because his hands are clean? He's got a pure heart. Is he the King of glory? He's had the victory, and that the gates should lift up their head to. David would not have said that he is the one, because he knew that he was waiting for a son. Upon whose shoulders would the eternal dynasty be established? So we have to look to another. And of course, as you know, Jesus Christ answers both halves of these Psalms. He is the one who has clean hearts, clean hands, and a pure heart. He alone fulfilled the holiness of verses three through six. His hands were clean, his heart was pure. He never lifted up his soul to what is false. He never swore deceitfully. He loved God with perfect devotion, even unto the cross. He was obedient. He loved his neighbor with perfect faithfulness, giving of himself, disadvantaging himself to the advantage of those who might be saved through his atoning death. No deceit was found in his mouth. No impurity was found in his heart. No stain was found in his life.

Do you remember what the author of Hebrews said about the high priest who goes before us? Again. Hebrews 7:26 for it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest. Listen to how he's described holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. All of that is holiness, language exalted above the heavens. He's in the sanctuary itself. You see, he's the Holy One who could enter into the holy hill, but he's also the King of glory. Now Isaiah tells us, he says, you know, one day after this exile, there will be a king who comes, who is identified with the Lord perfectly, but he's going to be a human. This is important that we remember this. Our problem, Israel's problem was so great they needed a human to get them out of it. Isaiah 9:6 a passage we should not only read during Christmas time, right? But it tells us of this child who will be born. This is a real child. It's a human child who will be born, a son who will be given to us, and the government shall be on his shoulder. And his name...What's this human king's name going to be? His name shall be amazing sage of miracles. That's what Wonderful Counselor means. Okay. This is. We think of wonderful means. Really good. It means full of wonders, miracles. Counselor. Sage. He is a miraculous sage. He is. This is his name, Mighty God. His name is everlasting royal father. His name is leader. Better translation than prince. Leader, ruler of Shalom of peace. The child is born and yet he is mighty. God a son is given, and yet the government rests on his shoulders. You see, Psalm 24 prepares us to see Christ. It is our tutor, as Paul calls it. It is training us so that when Christ arrives, we'll say, There he is, the one who can go unto the holy hill, the victorious King, to whom all of heaven opens up her gates as he marches in. Because that's what he did. He dies on the cross. But that's not a sign of weakness winning. It's a sign of our King being victorious over the great trinity of Satan, sin, and death. He descends into the grave, but the grave cannot hold him up. The grave spits him back out again, victorious. His work is not done. He rises now up to where? The true sanctuary of God. Yes, the holy hill, the culmination of creation itself. He ascends into it where he does what? He sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. Heaven's gates are lifted up as the King of Glory marches in -- in his ascension. This means that the stories of shame and helplessness that we tell ourselves are being rewritten in the gospel. It means that Jesus is the great author of our salvation, which means that he is rewriting the stories of shame and helplessness in a way that we cannot return to the old stories. We have to now lay hold of the new story, the story of the Gospel.

Let me put this in another way. Christ is telling us that your shame is untrue. It's a lie. You are not unclean. You are very clean. You are not dead. You are alive. You are not dirty. You are washed. You're not profane. You are holy. You can ascend the holy hill because he has made you holy. You are not disqualified; you're qualified in Christ. The gospel also rewrites the story of our helplessness. You see, at the cross, it looks like weakness at one, because Jesus is mocked and he's stripped and he's pierced and he's buried. But the King of glory seemed anything but glorious at that moment. But that was his battle, and it's the one that he won. And death could not hold him. The grave could not keep him. Satan could not conquer him. And he is risen indeed. And now he says, you are risen in me. You no longer live. I want you to hear this. Your righteousness, your holiness, your victory in Christ. It is all complete. As a matter of fact, it's yours. Okay? In our tradition, we can have a hard time saying this. You are now perfectly righteous in Christ. It is your righteousness. Yes, it's alien. It comes from Christ, but he has now given it to you. You no longer live, says Paul. Christ now dwells within you. And

when you're nodding your head, as I say, that, that's the Holy Spirit nodding your head within you in agreement because you're dead. And when you say that's true, or you find encouragement in that, that's the Holy Spirit testifying to your spirit of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. It is your righteousness. It is your holiness. You now have standing in the holy hill. And when you march into heaven, right when saints go to heaven, the city gates of heaven lift up their heads, because here he comes, one who is in the King of glory. And this is the wonderful cycle of the gospel, right? You were helpless and you lacked in holiness. Now you've been given holiness and you've given power in Christ.

And so now go out and live out of abundance, not out of a scarcity model. Out of an abundance model. Because now you are covered in his holiness and you're covered in his glory. So now go be holy and now go. Be glorious. Go do mighty things on his behalf, not because you're trying to earn your way to the holy hill, not because you're trying to credential yourself, but now you've been given the credentials and you can live out of oceans and oceans and oceans of grace. It's the wonderful cycle of Scripture. We don't just merely rest and fall back, Sabbath style into Christ's grace. We do that. And what happens? It immediately pushes us out, no longer fearful of being condemned, no longer afraid of being cast out, no longer worrying if we are, if we have what it takes. You don't have what it takes. He has given you what it takes.

See, in Christ you may seek the face of God like David. You may live *coram deo* before the face of God, but it's a God you could not have approached on your own. So, you can now lift up your head. You can lift them up, not because you have no sin, but because Christ is holy on your behalf. You can lift up your head not because you have no weakness, but because Christ is strong on your behalf. The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. The holy hill belongs to Christ, who shall ascend the hill of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy One of Israel, and all who he carries with him in his entourage.

Who is the King of glory? The Lord Jesus Christ the Lord mighty in battle, and because he has gone before us, we have complete and total standing in the presence of God.

Let's pray.