

# **Glad Submission to Christ**

**Preached by: Brad White**

**Text: Psalm 2**

**Date: Saturday, April 24, 2010 – Men's Prayer Breakfast**

- I. The wrong response to God and Christ-rebellion VV1-3
- II. God's response to the world's attitude VV4-6
- III. God's promises to his Son VV7-9
- IV. A call to rightly respond to God and Christ in glad submission VV10-12

## **Introduction:**

Different theologians categorize the Psalms differently, but most agree that there are as many as ten different types of Psalms. This Psalm is one of at least five or six Psalms that can clearly be designated as Messianic Psalm in that it deals directly with Christ.

Theologians debate about particular Psalms where it is sometimes unclear whether or not the author is talking about the king or whether or not he is talking about the Messiah. In some of these cases I think that we can understand that the text in its immediate context and in its initial fulfillment is referring to the king, but in its larger context it is pointing beyond the king to the true Son of David; the Messiah.

James Montgomery Boice says that if any Psalm is Messianic then this is it. First of all, the Hebrew word that is translated "anointed" in verse 2 is the word Messiah. The most compelling evidence however, that this Psalm is Messianic and refers to Christ is the New Testament references to this Psalm. Let's look at **Acts 4:23-27**. In this passage, Peter and John have just been released after being questioned and ordered not to preach in the name of Jesus.

**"When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, "Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed'- for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel,"**

So, in this passage Jesus is seen to be the anointed one against whom the people were gathered together.

Later on in **Acts 13:32-33** we read: **"And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you."**

This really leaves us with little doubt that this Psalm is about Christ since Paul not only quotes the verse but actually says that he is quoting from Psalm 2.

Then there are two passages in **Hebrews, 1:5 and 5:5** that directly apply **Psalm 2:7** to Jesus.

**Hebrews 1:5 says: “For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you.””**

**Hebrews 5:5 says: “So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you.””**

I also believe that this Psalm is clearly alluded to at both the baptism and the transfiguration of Jesus. In both cases, the Father refers to Jesus as his beloved Son. At his baptism, he addresses Jesus directly. At the transfiguration he speaks of Jesus in the third person.

So, having established that this Psalm is indeed Messianic we now have a better sense of how to interpret it. That is to say that this Psalm is not about the rebellious attitudes of some ancient near eastern kings toward David or one of his descendents. Rather, this Psalm contains a universal description of mankind’s posture toward God and Christ.

In this passage we will see four things; two of them are responses to Christ. First, we’ll see what the wrong response to God and to Christ is; rebellion. This is the default position of every person outside of Christ. Second, we’ll see how God views this rebellion. Third, we’ll see what God the Father has promised to God the Son. Finally, we’ll see a call to rightly respond to Christ in glad submission.

I pray that as we consider this Psalm that we will be inspired to live lives of glad submission to God which are thereby Christ exalting. Being assured that we are in Christ, I pray that we will be able to rejoice at the promise of Christ’s ultimate victory. I also hope that we might be inspired with more missionary zeal as we reflect on the fact that the Father has promised the nations to the Son. And I think that this Psalm has a few things to say to us about evangelism.

### **I. The wrong response to God and Christ-rebellion VV1-3**

Charles Spurgeon said that these first three verses are “a description of the hatred of human nature against the Christ of God.” There are three things that I want us to see about this response to God.

**First**, I want us to see that it is not passive resistance. Notice **three things** in the text that point to this. **First**, in verse 1 it says that the nations rage. In other words, the nations do not sit passively by as neutral observers who don’t have an opinion one way or another about God and his Christ; rather, they are enraged at God. **Next**, it says that the peoples plot against God. **Finally**, it says that the rulers take counsel together against God and his

anointed one. In other words they are actively and intentionally seeking a way to overthrow God.

What I hope that you will see here is that we need to have a sober and realistic assessment of mankind's condition apart from Christ. If we think that man is essentially pretty good and that there are some who, although they are not Christians, are pretty good people, then we will not feel much of a sense of urgency or concern for sharing the Gospel with them.

The New Testament is full of this teaching; that man apart from Christ is not good and that he is not neutral but rather that he is an enemy of God. One of the clearest expressions of this is **Colossians 1:21-22** which says: **“And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,”**

Here it says that outside of Christ we were alienated from God. Some translations say that we were enemies of God; that is that God was against us. But this enmity also included our posture toward God; the verse also says that we were hostile in mind, doing evil deeds. So, our minds were also set against God and this resulted in evil deeds.

The **second** thing that I want us to see in these first three verses is found in verse 3. What we see here is what man, in his sin, wants; he wants to be free from God. He wants to be free from constraint in order to pursue or live for the desires of his flesh.

Jesus described this attitude in the Parable of the Ten Minas in **Luke 19**. In **Luke 19:14** Jesus says: **“But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him saying, ‘We do not want this man to reign over us.’”**

Then in **Luke 19:27** he says: **“But as for these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slaughter them before me.”**

**Ephesians 2:1-3** explains to us why this is the attitude of humanity toward God. It says: **“And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.”**

So in this passage we are told that spiritually dead people follow (by default) the course of the world, they are under the dominion of Satan, they pursue the passions of their flesh, and they are under the wrath of God. Consequently, it is not surprising to read in verse 3, that mankind wants to be free from God. He wants to throw off all restraints and pursue, without any hindrances, his only fleshly, sinful desires.

A **third** thing that I want us to see in these first three verses is that this attitude toward God is utterly foolish. Notice in verse 1 that the Psalmist says that the peoples plot IN VAIN. That is to say that it is impossible to overcome God and any attempt to do so is in vain.

## **II. God's response to the world's attitude VV4-6**

In the next three verses we see God's response to the world's rebellious attitude. I want us to see **two things**. **First**, God's response is laughter. It is not happy laughter but rather scoffing laughter or laughter of derision. The idea is that God does not take any threat against himself or against his sovereignty seriously. He knows that it is utter folly to oppose him.

An application that we can draw from this is that God does not need to be defended. He has not called us to defend him; rather he has called us to proclaim him. Certainly there is some place for apologetics. However, ultimately the thing that will lead to others being saved is the proclamation of the gospel.

**Second**, Apart from laughing, God declares something about his Son in verses 5 and 6. He declares that he has established his King, that he has established Christ to rule, and he (implicitly) foretells of Christ's ultimate victory.

This points us back to something that we saw in the first three verses. The issue in this passage is not just a general rejection of God but more particularly it involves a particular rejection of Christ. This is something that we very much see today in our society. Most people are somewhat tolerant of the idea of religion and of some sort of God; but many of those same people become hostile if we begin to speak about the exclusivity of salvation in Christ.

This is precisely what God declares in verse 6; he has established Christ and has chosen to exalt him. We also see this in the New Testament. In **John 5:22-23 Jesus said: "The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him."**

So, we see there that the Father desires to exalt and honor the Son. He desires for Christ the same honor and glory that he desires for himself.

**Acts 4:12** clarifies that God has chosen to make everything depend on Christ. A person's eternal destination all hinges on how they respond to Christ and this is so because God has chosen to make Christ the focal point of salvation; God has chosen to make it so. The verse says: **"And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."**

### **III. God's Promises to His Son VV7-9**

In verses 7 through 9 Christ speaks and he recounts **three promises** that the Father had made to him.

The **first** promise that the Father makes to the Son is in verse 7. It is simply an assurance of his love for him and of the intimate relationship that they share as Father and Son. It is also an assertion of his exalted position.

We should not understand the language of verse 7 to refer to the fact that Christ is eternally begotten of the Father. Indeed we do understand that from other passages and that is part of the doctrine of the Trinity. Rather, in light of the New Testament usage of this passage, we should understand it as referring to his resurrection.

Look with me again at **Acts 13:32-33** which says: **“And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, ‘You are my Son, today I have become your father.’”**

So, here it connects the “raising” of Jesus with the declaration “you are my son, today I have begotten you.” I think that two other New Testament passages can help us to understand this.

Look with me at **Colossians 1:18** which says, **“And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.”**

So, here, in speaking of Jesus' resurrection, it calls him the “firstborn” from among the dead. In that sense he is the first one to have the new resurrection life for all of eternity.

Another passage that clears this up is **Philippians 2:8-9** which says: **“And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name.”**

Notice the word “therefore”; it connects the work of Christ with his exaltation. We find this same idea in **Hebrews 12:2** where it speaks of Christ enduring the cross for the joy set before him.

So, the idea is that, in some sense, Christ's exaltation before the world is connected with the work that he did and particularly with the resurrection. This is certainly not to say that Christ isn't intrinsically glorious and worthy of praise. However, because of his

incarnation, his life, his death, and his resurrection, he has been revealed and confirmed before mankind as the true and glorious Son of God.

The **second** promise is found in verse 8. It is a promise of dominion over the nations. This is a great missionary verse that I have seen on many missionary prayer cards. It is also a clear place in the Old Testament where we see that God's intention has always been to save people from every tongue, tribe, and nation and not to just save Israel.

In comparing verses 6 and 8 we find the dilemma which theologian George Eldon Ladd helped clarify. In one sense God has already established Christ and his kingdom; we see this in verse 6 where God asserts that he **has already** established his king. Yet in another sense there is still work to do. In verse 8 there is the promise of the **future establishment** of Christ's dominion over the nations. Ladd helped to resolve this tension, which is also found in much of the New Testament, by explaining it with the phrase that the Kingdom of God is "already but not yet." It has already been established but it will finally and completely be established at Christ's second coming.

In **Acts 1:8** Jesus connected himself with this promise and he connected this promise to the Great Commission; our missionary mandate. Just as verse 8 says that the "ends of the earth" will be Christ's possession, so Christ tells his disciples that they will be his witnesses to the "end of the earth." And so, here is our missionary mandate; to make Christ known among the nations and to declare his rule and reign.

The **third** promise is found in verse 9. It is a promise of victory over his foes among the nations. This should be understood in light of verse 12, that there is hope for those who gladly submit to him; but for those who don't there is only the fearful expectation of judgment and crushing defeat.

#### **IV. A call to rightly respond to God and Christ in glad submission VV9-12**

In the final three verses the Psalmist calls on us to rightly respond to God and Christ in glad submission. He exhorts us to do **three things**. **First**, he calls on us to serve the Lord with fear. **Second**, he calls on us to rejoice with trembling. **Third**, he calls on us to "kiss the son."

The image of kissing the son is intended to communicate humble submission. The idea is that of a person bowing and kissing the hand of a ruler as a sign of submission. Along with this image in verse 12, the Psalmist offers **two options** based on a person's response to the son.

The **first** option is to not gladly and humbly submit to Christ. The consequence that this brings is that he will be angry, his wrath will be kindled, and you will perish. The **second** option is to gladly submit to him; this results in finding refuge in him (from the wrath of God) and in being blessed or happy.

Brethren, a day of wrath and destruction is coming and the only hope for that day is to have found refuge in Christ. I don't want to take for granted that everyone here is a

Christian. If you are here and you have not and are not trusting in Christ, I would exhort you to flee to him in order to find refuge for that day.

**Conclusion:**

To conclude I would like to bring you back to a couple of applications and to point out a couple of new ones.

**First**, as we have seen, God has chosen to make Christ the focal point of salvation. A God honoring and God glorifying life is a Christ exalting life. I would encourage you to examine your life and to ask yourself whether or not you are exalting and honoring Christ in the way that you live.

**Second**, if you are a believer, are you living in glad submission to God and to Christ or are you fighting him? Verse 12 says that those that find refuge in Christ are blessed or happy. Are you seeking to find your joy and your satisfaction in Christ and in the hope of eternal life, or are you vainly pursuing it in the things of this world? I would exhort you not to vainly fight against God but rather to gladly submit to him and to find the true happiness and satisfaction that he offers.

**Third**, this passage should motivate us with a missionary zeal. If we love the Lord then we should join him in his passion to exalt Christ and to make Christ's name great among the nations. In fact, this should be the consuming passion of our lives and it should be costly to us one way or another. Paul Washer says that missions should be costly for every believer; either it costs us our lives because we go to the mission field or we give sacrificially and pray incessantly for missions. Do you share God's missionary zeal to exalt Christ?

**Fourth**, this is related to the third, we should rejoice in God's victory. Although God calls us to be His instruments to take the gospel to the nations, we are already assured of His ultimate victory. We are assured of that in this Psalm and we are assured of it in the New Testament. In **John 10:16** Jesus promised that he had "other sheep" that he would also bring. In **Revelation 7:9** we are told that there will be people from "every nation, tribe, people, and language." In *Let the Nations be Glad*, John Piper says that this assurance of Christ's final victory should spur us confidently into missions knowing that our labors will not be in vain and knowing that Christ will in fact save for himself people from every people group in the world.

I pray that all of this will lead us to live mission involved, Christ exalting, lives of glad submission.