

**# 3 God our King Psalm 24**

**READ the Psalm together.**

Another of David’s epics reminds us that he was so aware of the power of God in creation.

1. As we get into the third of our ‘Psalms of Creation’ it is worth reflecting that the creation can be masked by all that mankind has been able to ‘manufacture’.

Are scientific and technological wonders likely to make us less aware of God the creator?

David is in no doubt about God being both the creator and sustainer of life on earth. He has authority because he both made it and sustains it. ‘He founded it upon the seas’ – the ancient image of chaotic waters reminds us that God created order out of the chaos and God put his created earth upon the waters and he ‘established’ it there – in other words, his creation is secure and immovable.

‘Everything in it’ sometimes translated ‘its fulness’ or ‘what fills it’ tells us that God has authority over and concern for ***all*** creation – inanimate and animate, vegetation animals and humans.

1. What is the significance of ‘everything in it’ for us?

How does creation care relate to what it means to be a Christian if God is sovereign over all?

How important is it for Christians to be engaged with environmental issues?

How should we engage?

Make sure you get to church on ‘Climate Sunday’ - September 24th

Having established the creative power and continuing authority Yahweh, the psalm turns to look on the person who may enter God’s presence. The structure of the psalm means that a pre-condition of entering into God’s presence is an acknowledgement that he is the sovereign God over all creation. Some commentators have suggested that pilgrims approaching the Temple Mount in Jerusalem would have passed ritual cleansing baths (mikve) where they would have bathed before they arrived at the sacred place.

1. At first glance, the standard of entry seems quite high (clean hands, pure heart, no idols, no swearing).

Does this put you off even trying to be in the presence of God?

*‘Clean hands’ usually means hands that have no blood on them (i.e. someone who has killed another person)*

*‘Pure heart’ talks about a relationship not defined by outward acts but by a heart dependent on God.*

*The last two are clearer – we need to be people who worship and serve God and not idols and our language is always truthful.*

Does this convince you that you are able to enter God’s presence.

(Bear in mind that none of us are perfect with these four criteria)

There is great reward to be had in God’s presence. One commentator said

***‘The worshipper whose inner and outer worlds are integrated to Yahweh, receives blessing from the Lord’*** (Gerald Wilson – NIV Application Commentary)

In other words, those who are clear that God is sovereign over all that he made and long to please him will know God’s blessing in their daily lives. They will also be vindicated (receive justice) so can enter the presence of God. We receive a ‘righteousness’ that enables us to enter in. (not that we are made perfect).

1. ***‘Such is the generation of those who seek him’***.

How do we seek God?

What can we put in place that means we consciously seek God?

How do we cope when it feels like we can’t find God?

If this Psalm feels a bit out of our reach it’s not meant to. It is not talking about super saints (if such people exist) but rather people who are trying to work through their daily lives. We do not have a glorious divine moment every day – much of our lives are pretty mundane. But our direction of travel is towards the place where we can meet with God in our ***everyday*** lives. The hymn writer Horatius Bonar got it right when he wrote

‘***Praise in the common things of life***

***Its goings out and in.***

***Praise in each duty and each deed***

***However small and mean’.***

The King of Glory wants to meet people like us.

1. The last four verses are meant to be recited like a liturgy.

Why not take time to read it out loud together. (remember, this would have been done with no sound enhancement so give it plenty of energy – that’s how it should be read).

Are we sometimes too restrained in how we talk about God? – Look again at all the superlatives in this passage.

How do we meet God in our everyday lives?

Why is it important for God to be ‘strong in battle’?

Lifting up the head is a sign of joy and hope – lifting up someone else’s head is encouraging them to look forward with hope and joy that God is at work in his world. Here in the Psalm the gates are to lifted up – the gates of Jerusalem were almost certainly on hinges so the idea of lifting gates is metaphorical. So, this image conveys the idea that, as we are gathered, we long for the doors to be opened so that our warrior King can enter and this will bring us real joy in our hearts and give us hope to press on.

1. We have seen the King of Creation and the King of his people in this Psalm and the fact that he wants to be among us, his people.

What does it mean for us today to open the gates and let in the King of Glory?

Are there areas of our lives where we have shut him out?