



January 4, 2015  
Psalm 24  
Pastor Larry Adams

## Remember Our Sovereign King

Hello, my name is Larry Adams, and I want to take a moment to personally thank you for tuning into this week's podcast where you downloaded or are streaming this week's Bible message. I hope it will be a great encouragement to you, and it's our prayer that God will use it to strengthen your faith.

I just want be sure to tell you too that we in no way intend for this message to be a replacement for your weekly involvement in a good local church. We hope that you are involved in a church in your community to worship, grow, and serve and to sit under the authority of pastors and teachers who can speak into your lives. We also realize that around the world there are places where there is no local church, so we're hoping that these messages each week will be a great encouragement to you and anyone else you may be gathering with to pray with, encourage, and to share with in this message. Thank you again for downloading this message, and we hope it will be a great blessing in your life.

If you have your Bibles today, I'd like you to turn with me to Psalm 24. Not only is it communion, but we're gonna be continuing on together in our study of the Psalms. Today we're looking at the third of the trilogy of psalms, Psalm 22, 23, and 24: Psalm 22, the Psalm of the Savior, "**My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?**" Psalm 23, the Psalm of the Shepherd, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." Today is the conclusion of the trilogy, the Lord who is our Sovereign King. Here's the way David recorded it in Psalm 24:

### Of David. A psalm.

- <sup>1</sup> The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it,  
the world, and all who live in it;
- <sup>2</sup> for he founded it on the seas  
and established it on the waters.
- <sup>3</sup> Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord?  
Who may stand in his holy place?
- <sup>4</sup> The one who has clean hands and a pure heart,  
who does not trust in an idol  
or swear by a false god.
- <sup>5</sup> They will receive blessing from the Lord  
and vindication from God their Savior.
- <sup>6</sup> Such is the generation of those who seek him,  
who seek your face, God of Jacob.
- <sup>7</sup> Lift up your heads, you gates;  
be lifted up, you ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may come in.
- <sup>8</sup> Who is this King of glory?  
The Lord strong and mighty,  
the Lord mighty in battle.

- <sup>9</sup> Lift up your heads, you gates;  
lift them up, you ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may come in.
- <sup>10</sup> Who is he, this King of glory?  
The Lord Almighty—  
he is the King of glory.

Let's pray together.

*Father, we have no idea the significance of those words, and we have no idea often of how we violate them every single day. Your grace and mercy to us is overwhelming. In fact, if you were to peel back the heavens right at this moment and give us a glimpse of the glory you possess as our Sovereign King, not a one of us could get our faces off being pressed against the floor. We couldn't get low enough in front of this kind of majesty, and yet we live in a world that often tries to define you and tell you who you are, to deny you, and sometimes even trying to push you to the fringes as though you don't exist.*

*Today we are reminded in this psalm and at this communion table that there is one God who exists in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who has come to save us from our sins and to reign over our lives as King of kings and Lord of lords. Today at this table I pray, God, you will have your way with us, and that the precious and powerful truth of Psalm 24 will penetrate our hearts as we begin a new year with a focus on God's eternal kingdom and on you our eternal King. We thank you Lord. In your precious name, Amen.*

Most Americans don't even know what happened, and a whole lot more could probably care less. It was one of the most significant decisions ever made by the Supreme Court and has changed the face of America. It may be a decision from which America will never recover. If you know me, you know I don't say those things lightly.

It was June 29, 1992, the Supreme Court handed down a decision that may be seriously one of the most dangerous of all time. It was a case called "Planned Parenthood versus Casey," more devastating even than "Roe versus Wade."

James Dobson, I believe writing at the time on the summary of that decision, said:

Writing for the majority, Justices O'Connor, Souter, and Kennedy said, "At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning of the universe, and the mystery of human life." With those words, the court discarded its historic reliance on a law beyond the law, or a transcendent standard. In other words, what was at stake in this case was, is God the author of life, and does he have the right to define it or does man? Is there an absolute to which all of us are accountable, or does man make their own rules based on their own opinions and preferences? That's what was at stake.

The Founding Fathers based the constitutional on the understanding that human affairs are governed by the moral law of the universe or what they termed "the law of nature and of nature's God." That's a quote. That's why the Declaration of Independence reads like it does, "All men are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights." In other words, all rights, all existence, all morality, all standards come from God.

Human dignity and freedom are precious gifts from God rather than from government or its leaders. The Creator is also the ultimate definer of right and wrong, but after the Casey decision, this understanding of the moral absolutes was supplanted by the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning of the universe, and the mystery of human life.

James Dobson went on to write:

It brings to mind the words of King Solomon who wrote, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it is the way of death."

Columnist John Leo, at the time said of the Casey ruling:

This "Mystery Passage," as it's become known, can be cited easily next time to justify suicide clinics, gay marriage, polygamy, interspecies marriage (the right to marry your dog or cat), or whatever new individual right the court feels like inventing.

Chuck Colson wrote:

The "Mystery Passage" could mean absolutely anything through a future court including the right to marry your toaster if you wish. The bottom line of the Casey decision is how we define reality. The new definition flows from a postmodern philosophy that acknowledges nothing right or wrong, nothing moral or immoral, truth does not exist, and there are no absolutes that transcend time. Everything is relative and subject to individual interpretation. For the US Supreme Court to descend into this abyss of moral relativism is disastrous.

The Constitution has been the shield, the defender of basic liberties at this stage for over 230 years based on the law of nature and of nature's God. Now, according to Justice Kennedy and five of his colleagues, its meaning has become nothing more predictable than the shifting sand of individual opinion.

The most devastating opinion ever handed down by the Supreme Court, and most Americans don't even know it happened. It was a massive moral shift in 1992 from which America may never recover. All of this, the inevitable erosion of basic ethics, morality, and absolutes when people lose sight of their responsibility to a holy, transcendent, and sovereign God. When man becomes the ultimate authority, only judgment can follow which is why David's call to worship our Sovereign King is so desperately needed in our world today.

Psalms 24 is a psalm of perspective, posing a question and an invitation with a solution. The perspective is found in verses 1 and 2:

The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it,  
the world, and all who live in it;  
<sup>2</sup>for he founded it on the seas  
and established it on the waters.

Satan has spent a great deal of time eroding that great truth. You see, there is one who reigns over all peoples and nations, that's God himself, and we're all accountable to him whether we acknowledge it or not. There are no rivals. There are no exceptions. There is one ultimate absolute and that is God. So, it poses the question in verse 3:

Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord?  
Who may stand in his holy place?

You see, in view of such a sovereign God to whom we will all give account, it raises the obvious question, If God is that moral, that absolute, and I know that I'm not, then how in the world could I ever expect to be in his presence? Heaven is a pipe dream for anybody logical enough to think it through because a sinful people will never gain access into the presence of a holy God.

So who can be there? Well, the answer is scary; it's exclusive and it's absolute. Verse 4:

The one who has clean hands and a pure heart,  
who does not trust in an idol  
or swear by a false god (or swear by what is false).

Such is the generation of those who seek him,  
who seek your face, God of Jacob.

Clean hands, pure heart, no idols, not self or anything else. Those who access God have one god, the only god, and they swear allegiance to him alone. They are the ones who seek God's face, not his hand what God can give, but his face. They seek who God is, and he's enough, which is why David poses the invitation which is the solution in verse 7:

Lift up your heads, you gates;  
be lifted up, you ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may come in.

<sup>8</sup>Who is this King of glory?  
The Lord strong and mighty,  
the Lord mighty in battle.

<sup>9</sup>Lift up your heads, you gates;  
lift them up, you ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may come in.

<sup>10</sup>Who is he, this King of glory?  
The Lord Almighty—  
he is the King of glory.

“Lift up your heads and see,” he said. “Open up your life to let him come in to reign.”

Communion reminds us that all of that's possible because of the death of this King, the Sovereign Jesus Christ himself. Communion is our remembrance of the death of Jesus, the reminder that our Sovereign King who created the world, this ultimate absolute, is the one who became a man which we just celebrated at Christmas. He died a death in our place for our sins on that cross because none of us has clean hands and a pure heart. He died to save us from our sins. That's why on this January 4<sup>th</sup> I can't think of a better way to begin a year than focused on Jesus Christ and his sacrifice and his sovereignty at this table.

You see, eating this meal will not make you a Christian. We share it at every communion. It won't get your sins forgiven. It won't earn you grace. It won't get you into heaven. That's not how it works. The only way to be saved is by coming into a relationship with Christ through faith in his completed work on the cross. His death, burial, and resurrection in our place was sufficient payment for our sin, and we put our hope and trust in him and him alone.

Eating this meal will not do that for you, but eating this meal as Jesus intended will remind us of his sacrifice and of the reign of our Sovereign King. Along with David's reminder in Psalm 24, we have a perspective that can not only change our year, it can change our life and it will protect us from succumbing to the eventual and inevitable downward slide of a people who turn away from God. We are reminded in Psalm 24 and communion that we need to remember to live our lives in full surrender to our Sovereign King.

Why is this so important? David said in Psalm 24 it's the key to blessing from the Lord, and it is the key to vindication from God our Savior. Living in full surrender to our Sovereign King is the key to blessing from the Lord. He said in Psalm 24 verse 3:

Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord?  
Who may stand in his holy place?

<sup>4</sup> The one who has clean hands and a pure heart,  
who does not trust in an idol  
or swear by a false god.

<sup>5</sup> They will receive blessing from the Lord

I hear it all the time. In fact, I want it for myself. “Lord bless us.” You ever pray that? “Bless my wife. Bless my husband. Bless my job. Bless my kids. Bless my grandkids. Bless our home.” We pray it all the time. Scripture teaches us to do it. But if you ask most people what it means to be blessed, they’ll describe it in light of their circumstances: good health; happy marriage; obedient kids; financial security; feeling safe, content, and secure; and on and on our list goes of how we describe the blessed life. That’s what we’re asking God to give us.

But you ask God what a blessed life is, you get a very different picture, a very different picture. In fact, listen to Jesus describe the blessed life to a crowd that had gathered by the Sea of Galilee in the greatest sermon ever preached called the Sermon on the Mount as he shares from it this key to the blessed life called the Beatitudes. Listen to this, Matthew 5 verse 3, he said:

**Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

<sup>4</sup> **Blessed are those who mourn,  
for they will be comforted.**

<sup>5</sup> **Blessed are the meek,  
for they will inherit the earth.**

<sup>6</sup> **Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
for they will be filled.**

<sup>7</sup> **Blessed are the merciful,  
for they will be shown mercy.**

<sup>8</sup> **Blessed are the pure in heart,  
for they will see God.**

<sup>9</sup> **Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they will be called children of God.**

<sup>10</sup> **Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

<sup>11</sup> **“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.**

Now, you still want to pray for a blessed life: poor, mourning, meek, hunger, thirst, persecuted? Doesn’t sound like a blessed life to me. Listen to Peter’s words of encouragement that he wrote to a group of suffering Christians in the first century. 1 Peter 4 verse 12:

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. <sup>13</sup> But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. <sup>14</sup> If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. <sup>15</sup> If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. <sup>16</sup> However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. <sup>17</sup> For it is time for judgment to begin with God’s household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

Now, people, all of this is a perspective that is being lost in a world that's losing its sight of the sovereignty of God, a sovereign God who reigns over all the details of our lives. The blessing of God is life the way God intended it to be. Sin has destroyed that model, and God is in the process of rebuilding it. He's building a life that was always intended to look like his life, so we would expect that God is gonna bless those who seek his face by becoming more and more like him. That's the blessing. We lost that life to sin, and Jesus died to buy it back.

When we live the blessed life, the life that looks more and more like Jesus, we're gonna be treated more and more the way Jesus was treated especially in a world that turns its back on the sovereignty of God and his moral absolutes. "When you see that happening," Peter said, "you know you are blessed." In other words, when you're living for Jesus in a world that isn't and they start to treat you the way they treated Jesus, then you rejoice because now you know you've got the real deal. God is working to produce the life he promised to produce, a life that looks like his. Jesus is living in you, and you are becoming more like him. That's why David wrote the way he did in Psalm 24. That's why he said in verse 1:

The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it,  
the world, and all who live in it;

He's in charge.

He founded it on the seas  
and established it on the waters.

He created it all.

<sup>3</sup> Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord?  
Who may stand in his holy place?

<sup>4</sup> The one who has clean hands and a pure heart,

Like his.

who does not trust in an idol  
or swear by a false god.

If you go the way of falsehood you'll never be blessed. That's why he said:

<sup>5</sup> They will receive blessing from the Lord  
and vindication from God their Savior.

<sup>6</sup> Such is the generation of those who seek him,  
who seek your face, God of Jacob.

Those who recognize Jesus as their Sovereign King, who open their hearts to let the King of Glory come in, who live to honor him and obey him as Lord and King, they will receive blessing from the Lord. The blessing is that you will be in a world more and more like Jesus, that's the blessing. They will have lives lived out the way God intended and will have the peace and assurance that they really do belong to God.

Yes, God can give us good health. He can give us financial security. He can give us obedient kids and a feeling of safety, but he did say, "**In the world you will have trouble, so take heart! I have overcome the world.**"

If you listen to people who promise that blessing is good health and finances and obedient kids and a feeling of safety, and all you have to do is have enough faith to take hold of that blessing, they're not being theologically or intellectually honest. They're not. You'll fill auditoriums with that teaching, but it's misleading people. God may give that, and if he does that's a blessing, but he promised the real blessing that would come to everyone who seeks his

face is that they would become more like Jesus in a world that isn't. They would be able to live out and model what living under a Sovereign King in a kingdom ruled by him actually looks like.

The point is, whether your circumstances are easy or hard, you will live with the assurance that you are blessed to be in Christ and have him in you, and you will live with him forever and ever. Open up your hearts. Let the King of Glory come in.

Not only the key to blessing, but living in full surrender to our Sovereign King is the key to vindication from God our Savior. He said in verse 3:

Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord?

Who may stand in his holy place?

<sup>4</sup>The one who has clean hands and a pure heart,  
who does not trust in an idol  
or swear by a false god.

<sup>5</sup>They will receive blessing from the Lord  
and vindication from God their Savior.

<sup>6</sup>Such is the generation of those who seek him,  
who seek your face, God of Jacob.

They will receive vindication from God their Savior.

Back in 1992 when people like Chuck Colson and columnist John Leo were writing that this decision made by the Supreme Court was gonna open up the way to things like gay marriage, suicide clinics, marrying your pets, people laughed and called them crazy. "Gay marriage? Who in the world is ever gonna approve two homosexuals uniting in marriage? That's a man and a woman. Suicide clinics? How will we ever get to the place in the human race that we would be authorizing the intentional killing of people who are terminally ill? Marrying your pets?" I hope you're reading enough to know that there are already people pushing for that, for the right to marry their dog or their cat. They're also pushing to marry two women or three, or why limit it to that little number? How about two or three husbands for each woman? If she so chooses, who's to say that's not right?

You see back in 1992 they laughed at people who said this decision would lead to such things. Now, it is becoming a reality. Twenty-two years later no one's calling them crazy. Those things are becoming mainstream. God has vindicated them and show them to be right. Those who stand with God will always be vindicated in the end, because God's word is truth and it will always come to pass. That's what David wrote in Psalm 24 when he said in verse 3:

Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord?

Who may stand in his holy place?

<sup>4</sup>The one who has clean hands and a pure heart,  
who does not trust in an idol  
or swear by a false god (or what is false).

<sup>5</sup>They will receive blessing from the Lord  
and vindication from God their Savior.

<sup>6</sup>Such is the generation of those who seek him,  
who seek your face, God of Jacob.

They receive vindication from God their Savior. Vindication is a term that means "proved to be righteous" or "proven to be right." David said, "Those who trust in God, who seek his face, who honor him as King will be vindicated by God who is their Savior." He will save the very people who trust in him out of a world that says they're crazy. Right now in the world it doesn't look like

Jesus or the people who follow him are winning, but those who trust in the Lord will never be disappointed. They will be proven right in the end because they are right now.

The ultimate vindication has already been accomplished when Jesus died on the cross. He died there to pay for the sins of the world, mine and yours and everyone's. Those who trust in Jesus as their Savior will be glad they did because "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved," Paul said.

In the end, trusting Jesus as Savior will be proven to be right. You will never regret any ounce of devotion you give to Jesus Christ to follow and obey him as your Savior. You will always be vindicated as being right in trusting Jesus Christ for everything which is why David ushered the invitation at the end of Psalm 24 verse 7:

Lift up your heads, you gates;  
be lifted up, you ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may come in.

<sup>8</sup> Who is this King of glory?  
The Lord strong and mighty,  
the Lord mighty in battle.

<sup>9</sup> Lift up your heads, you gates;  
lift them up, you ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may come in.

<sup>10</sup> Who is he, this King of glory?  
The Lord Almighty—  
he is the King of glory.

Communion confronts us with this issue every time we come to the table. Is this Jesus, the King of Glory, living in you or are you still seeking to live as the king of your own life? Are you trusting in Jesus Christ and him alone for your salvation or you trusting in some other false God that cannot save? Is God your moral absolute or are you the moral absolute or the voice of a culture that tells you to believe whatever you choose? Is Jesus you're only way to God or have you believed the lie that there are many ways all leading to the same place? Those who trust in Jesus will receive blessing from the Lord, a life that looks more and more like his, and vindication from God their Savior that those who trust in him will never be disappointed. They will always be proven right and righteous.

Jesus said, **"This bread is my body. This cup is my blood. It's given for you. So as often as you eat it,"** he said, **"remember me your Sovereign King who is your Savior."**

*Lord, everything about the gospel is miraculous. In the beginning of this new year, it is imperative that we have a perspective that's truly from God and not the world, that we understand what's happening in our times and culture. Weighed against the word of God, the absolute moral truth of a God who is and has always been and always will be, it's imperative that we allow our lives to be shaped by your word and not the word of a changing culture.*

*You're the God who reigns supreme over nations and kings, over Supreme Courts, Congresses, and legislatures. You reign over all leaders and you reign over me. Today, we are here at this table to remember this, thanking you for being our Sovereign King, the King who came to die.*

*As we eat this bread and drink this cup, may we be reminded again that those trust in the Lord will never be disappointed. Today, in this hour, let each of us in this service and in our own hearts, lift up our heads and open up the gates of our heart that the King of Glory may come in. We'll thank you, Lord. In your precious name, Amen.*