

I.N.I.

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany
Feb. 9, 2020
Psalm 72:8-14

In Christ Jesus, the King of kings, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

In our Sunday morning Bible Class on Ecclesiastes we learned that Solomon spoke 3,000 proverbs and wrote over 1,000 songs. Many of those proverbs are found in his book of Proverbs. Two songs or Psalms are recorded in the Bible. The one we just read as our sermon text, Psalm 72 and also Psalm 127 where we read the familiar words: **UNLESS THE LORD BUILDS THE HOUSE, THEY LABOR IN VAIN WHO BUILD IT...BEHOLD, CHILDREN ARE A HERITAGE FROM THE LORD, THE FRUIT OF THE WOMB IS HIS REWARD. LIKE ARROWS IN THE HAND OF A WARRIOR, SO ARE THE CHILDREN OF ONE'S YOUTH. HAPPY IS THE MAN WHO HAS HIS QUIVER FULL OF THEM.**

This morning's Psalm by Solomon, Psalm 72 is called a Messianic Psalm. That means that it speaks about the Messiah in a prophetic way. There are 17 Messianic Psalms. In Luke 24:44 Jesus says that there are things written about Him in the Psalms. He said: **"THESE ARE THE WORDS WHICH I SPOKE TO YOU WHILE I WAS STILL WITH YOU, THAT ALL THINGS MUST BE FULFILLED WHICH WERE WRITTEN IN THE LAW OF MOSES AND THE PROPHETS AND THE PSALMS CONCERNING ME."** The next verse then says: **THEN HE OPENED THEIR MINDS SO THEY COULD UNDERSTAND THE SCRIPTURES.**

The only Scriptures that were extant at that time were the books of the Old Testament, including the Psalms. This morning we also pray that the Holy Spirit open our hearts and give us the ability to understand and apply the Scriptures concerning Jesus, the Messiah to our hearts and lives.

These Messianic Psalms speak of the only Redeemer of all of mankind, Jesus, the Christ. And in these Psalms we are told of Christ's person and work; of His birth and betrayal; of His suffering, agony and death; of His resurrection from the grave and of His triumphant ascension into heaven. In our Psalm we are told of Jesus' ruling over mankind with Righteousness and Peace.

In our first Scripture reading this morning we read the first and last portion of this Psalm. The first portion, verses 1-7 speaks of the chief benefits of Christ's Kingdom—Righteousness and Peace to His people. The last portion, verses 15-20 speaks of the length of Christ's Kingdom---it is everlasting; and the middle portion, our sermon text, verses 8-14 speaks of the extent of Christ's Kingdom---to the ends of the earth!

When this Psalm was written, Israel's power and glory had reached its climax; its highest point. All of the neighboring heathen nations had been conquered. Like never before or since in the history of this people, PEACE reigned supreme. We are told that every Israelite dwelt safely under his own fig tree. The land flowed with prosperity, riches and blessings.

By the Holy Spirit, Solomon was permitted to see into the future, to see a future kingdom that would even be greater, would far surpass and be more blessed than his and his father David's. He saw the eternal kingdom of the Messiah-King, the seed of David. It is to Him, the eternal King, that Solomon directs this hymn of praise. To the King of kings for the greater blessings and glory of His reign.

This kingdom is not just a rule over one nation, but over all nations; extending over all the earth. We read in verse 8: **HE SHALL HAVE DOMINION ALSO FROM SEA TO SEA, AND FROM THE RIVER TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH.**

The great kingdom of David and Solomon was described as reaching from the River to the Sea; meaning from the Euphrates River to the east to the Mediterranean Sea to the west. But the extent of the kingdom of the Messiah-King will extend from the River to the ends of the earth; from sea to sea. This does not mean from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea, or from the Atlantic to the Pacific, but from one end of the world to the other. The earth is surrounded by and borders on the great seas. So the dominion of Christ, His rule is boundless, covering the whole earth. For Jesus is not a local King, a national ruler, but an international, world-wide Monarch, who rules over all people.

And because of this fact we have also seen the fulfillment of the following verses—9-11: **THOSE WHO DWELL IN THE WILDERNESS WILL BOW BEFORE HIM, AND HIS ENEMIES WILL LICK THE DUST. THE KINGS OF TARSHISH AND OF THE ISLES WILL BRING**

PRESENTS; THE KINGS OF SHEBA AND SEBA WILL OFFER GIFTS. YES, ALL KINGS SHALL FALL DOWN BEFORE HIM; ALL NATIONS SHALL SERVE HIM.

Solomon uses colorful descriptions as to whom the Messiah-King shall rule over---**THOSE WHO DWELL IN THE WILDERNESS.** We think of those who live in Africa; the Indians of North America in the past; the people living on the islands in the sea. The Gospel message has extended to the wildernesses of this world so that we now hear people in deepest, darkest Africa praising Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Many of the people on the scattered islands of the Pacific and the Indians in America have thrown away their idols of wood and stone; given up their worship of ancestors and Totem Poles, volcano gods and sea gods and now bow the knee to the Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier of all of mankind—the Triune God.

While the enemies of the Gospel appear to be strong and numerous, they will have to lick the dust before their Lord and King. They cannot stop the spread of His Kingdom. For His Word will accomplish that for which it is sent out—the Conversion of hearts to faith and trust in Jesus Christ. The Gospel of Christ crucified and risen again tears down every opposition; humiliates its enemies and continues to spread from shore to shore, nation to nation, from people to people, so that not even the gates of hell can prevail against it.

Even kings from mighty nations will acknowledge Jesus as their King in loving submission. Solomon speaks of kings from Tarshish. Tarshish was the westernmost port of the known world at this time—corresponding to modern day Spain. We could say “the kings of the West.” The “isles” are those who dwelt in the Mediterranean Sea on islands like Crete and Cyprus. To the east in Arabia lies the ancient city of Sheba and to the south in Egypt lies the realm known as Seba.

All of this foretells that heathen kings and rulers from nations in all directions---to the north, to the south, to the east and to the west will bring gifts of tribute, love, obedience, service, and submission through hearts of faith. They shall pay homage to Christ as their King. They shall fall down before Him and worship Him as their Savior-God. It is indeed a beautiful truth that not only we believers at Peace Thru Christ; or even believers of the Madison area; or even believers in Wisconsin or in the United States of America have been chosen; but that God has chosen His own from all nations of the world; from all tribes and all peoples. And He is still bringing more and more into His Kingdom of grace and peace everyday through His powerful Gospel message of salvation.

The last 3 verses of our text wonderfully reveal to us what our King will do for us, His subjects. We read: **FOR HE WILL DELIVER THE NEEDY WHEN HE CRIES, THE POOR ALSO, AND HIM WHO HAS NO HELPER. HE WILL SPARE THE POOR AND NEEDY, AND WILL SAVE THE SOULS OF THE NEEDY. HE WILL REDEEM THEIR LIFE FROM OPPRESSION AND VIOLENCE; AND PRECIOUS SHALL BE THEIR BLOOD IN HIS SIGHT.**

King Jesus will rescue the poor and needy. He will have compassion upon all those who are helpless and cry out for deliverance. He will redeem those who are oppressed. Is this not a perfect picture of lost and condemned mankind; of you and me apart from God and on our own in this life? We were spiritually poor and helpless; lost in sin and in need of redemption and salvation, oppressed by Satan, sin and held in the tyranny of death. We were under the rule and dominion of the Prince of this world; the Devil and under the power of our own sinful flesh. We were in spiritual poverty and in the slavery of sin.

But our Savior-King has come to us, as one of us. He has stooped down to us the lowliest of creatures to lift us up and set us free; to give us the needed help and deliverance. What grace, love, and mercy we see in our King!

He set us free from sin, death and the devil by Himself becoming a captive. He forfeited His own life so that we might be redeemed from all of our spiritual enemies. He laid down His life so that we would have eternal life with Him forever. Our King gave up His throne in heaven in order to give us a throne forever and ever. He shed His blood as the ransom price for all of us who were in the captivity of sin and death and the devil.

And everyday He listens to us cry out to Him. He meets our daily needs and provides for our physical and spiritual welfare. He promises us: **CALL UPON ME IN THE DAY OF TROUBLE AND I WILL DELIVER YOU.** Our King declares: **I WILL STRENGTHEN YOU, YES, I WILL HELP YOU, YES, I WILL UPHOLD YOU WITH THE RIGHT HAND OF MY RIGHTEOUSNESS...I WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU NOR FORSAKE YOU.**

Now it may happen and it has happened that Jesus' subjects may be called upon to shed their own blood for His Kingdom. We think of the Old Testament prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah who suffered so much at the hands of their enemies for the sake of the Gospel of the Messiah and His Kingdom. We think of John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Messiah, who was beheaded for proclaiming God's Word. We think of Stephen, the first recorded New Testament martyr; or James, the brother of John, who was the first martyr of the 12 apostles and millions more since then until now. Their blood is indeed precious in the eyes of their King; and it is through martyrdom that the King delivered them from this veil of tears to the everlasting Kingdom of joy and peace.

In fact the Lord tells us in Psalm 116:15: **PRECIOUS IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD IS THE DEATH OF HIS SAINTS**---precious is the life and death of every believer. Again Jesus tells us in Revelation 14:13: **BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHO DIE IN THE LORD FROM NOW ON.** **““YES,” SAYS THE SPIRIT, “THAT THEY MAY REST FROM THEIR LABORS, AND THEIR WORKS FOLLOW THEM.**

All of this Solomon saw through eyes of faith a little less than 1,000 years before it took place. All of this we too see through eyes of faith a little more than 2,000 years after the fact. And we still see it happening today. The Gospel of Jesus Christ spreading from sea to sea, from the islands to the wilderness. We see kings and rulers of our day bowing down to the King of kings. We see the spiritually poor and those captive in sin being set free and made rich through Jesus forgiving love. We see the Lord's realm and rule passing from heart to heart through the powerful Word of His Gospel message.

Solomon saw it and rejoiced. He was found in the temple worshiping and praising His Lord and King. May we respond in like manner!

Come, worship our Lord and King. Be part of His Kingdom by serving Him, living for Him, bringing gifts to Him, laying our cares and concerns, problems and troubles before Him, and if need be shedding our blood for Him and His kingdom, for He gave all that He had; His perfect life as full payment for us. Blessed be His glorious name.

Amen and Amen.