

Songs of Summer: Psalm 47
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Let's open our Bibles to Psalm 47. It's easy for us to miss what God being King of the world really means. Not only might we forget that He's King of the world, when we remember that He's King of the world, we may have the wrong perspective of what that really means. There's not many on the property today that would have ever lived under the influence of an earthly king. There are some who moved here from other countries that are worshiping with us today that know what it's like to have an earthly king, to know what it's like at least if they're not to be a ruling king for there to be an influential king. We understand a king from different angles. We use it in a lot of different ways. We think of the word King when we talk about movies- there's The Lion King. We think of a king when we talk about sports. There's King James playing basketball. We think of a king when we talk about music, and we say "The King," we know immediately to respond with what? Elvis! No other name goes there! When we think of food, we think King of Pops or Burger King. We think of last names like Martin Luther King or BB King or Carole King. The closest influence that many have had from a real king on our property today would be growing up using the King James Version of the Bible.

But what does it mean for us to recognize and remember that God is King of the world and that He is King of the earth? I want to talk about that today. Not everyone knows this, but one day everyone will admit this. There are people that live in parts of the world that have no idea that there is a God who is King of the world. There are people that live in this world today that have no idea what you're talking about when you say "King Jesus," and it would mean nothing more to them than us saying "Burger King." The Bible teaches us that we follow the King of the world, we serve the King of the world, and that one day, every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord of lords and King of kings.

Let's look at Psalm 47. We'll pick up in the next Psalm in our journey this summer through Psalms 42 through 50. Psalm 47:

Clap your hands, all peoples!
Shout to God with loud songs of joy!
For the Lord, the Most High, is to be feared,
a great king over all the earth.
He subdued peoples under us,
and nations under our feet.
He chose our heritage for us,
the pride of Jacob whom he loves. *Selah*
God has gone up with a shout,
the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.
Sing praises to God, sing praises!

Sing praises to our King, sing praises!
For God is the King of all the earth;
sing praises with a psalm!
God reigns over the nations;
God sits on his holy throne.
The princes of the peoples gather
as the people of the God of Abraham.
For the shields of the earth belong to God;
he is highly exalted!

I want to give you the main idea from this passage of Scripture, and then we will break it apart in the time that we have together. Psalm 47 teaches us that God, the Most High King, by His authority calls all peoples and nations to worship Him. God the Most High King, by His authority and actions calls all people and nations to worship Him. We are to worship Him with all action and anticipation.

I want us to remember together that we are worshiping the King of the world. That is why we've gathered here today. This is what has brought us to this property. God by His authority calls us to worship Him, by His authority as King of the earth. We see His authority in Psalm 47 by the names that are attributed to Him. When you look at Psalm 47, you see many different titles and names and descriptors that are given to the God that we worship today. I circled in Psalm 47 this page of my Bible the different ways that God is referred to; it's full of circles.

You start in verse one and you see, "Shout to **God** with loud songs of joy." Verse two: "For the **Lord the Most High** is to be feared." Verse two also: "A great **King** over all the earth." Verse five: "**God** has gone up." Verse five: "The **Lord** with the sound of the trumpet." Verse six: "Sing praises to **God.**" Verse six: "Sing praises to our **King.**" Verse seven: "For **God is the King** of all the earth." Verse eight: "**God** reigns." Verse eight: "**God** sits." At the end of verse nine, it says, "For the shields of the earth belong to **God, He** is highly exalted." These titles and name descriptors describe a God of authority, but specifically one title is given here to God that puts Him in a position that has greater authority than any other, and it's the title in verse two: "For the Lord the most high is to be feared." The "Most High" is capitalized in our English translations. It is a descriptor, not only a name for God, but it describes His authority. He is the Most High King, He is the Most High Lord, He's the Most High God. Do you remember another passage of Scripture that identifies God as the Most High? Another passage of Scripture in the Old Testament that reveals God as being the Most High?

Back in the fall, we worked through the Old Testament book of Daniel. We called it "Waking Up to Different," and we saw in the book of Daniel the rise and fall of kingdoms. You see the fall of the Israelites, as they were taken captive and brought from Jerusalem into Babylon. King Nebuchadnezzar was ruling and reigning; you see his rise to his kingdom rule, and then you see the fall of his kingdom. Then

his son rises to a position of authority- Belshazzar. And then his son falls from a position of authority. Look in Daniel chapter 5 for just a little bit of a refresher there. You have this revelation that the God we're talking about in Psalm 47 is the King, the Most High God- that He rules and reigns over all kingdoms.

Look at Daniel chapter 5. Nebuchadnezzar has fallen, and his son Belshazzar has taken his place. Follow along with me or listen to me as I read Daniel 5, beginning in verse 13.

"Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king answered and said to Daniel, 'You are that Daniel, one of the exiles of Judah, whom the king my father brought from Judah. I have heard of you that the spirit of the gods is in you, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you. Now the wise men, the enchanters, have been brought in before me to read this writing and make known to me its interpretation, but they could not show the interpretation of the matter. But I have heard that you can give interpretations and solve problems. Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple and have a chain of gold around your neck and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.'"

The king of Babylon believes that he is giving Daniel this great position of authority. And he's saying, "I'm going to make you third ruler. I'm going to give you some authority. As king, I'm going to grant you some authority." And what he's asked Daniel to do is come in and read the writing on the wall. Maybe you weren't with us when we went through the book of Daniel, but I'm sure that along the way somewhere you've heard the phrase "the writing on the wall." This is where it took place. This writing was there by a hand from heaven, and Belshazzar's wanting to know - "What does this mean? What does this mean?"

Verse 17: "Then Daniel answered and said before the king, 'Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another. Nevertheless, I will read the writing to the king and make known to him the interpretation. O king, the Most High God-'"

There's the title. There's the reference. It's in Psalm 47 that the people are worshiping the Most High God. Daniel the prophet acknowledges that what's going on in the kingdom of Babylon is attributed to the Most High God. He says, "O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father kingship and greatness and glory and majesty."

Who was Nebuchadnezzar? He was the enemy king. He was the enemy king that had gone to Jerusalem and taken captive God's people and brought them back to Babylon and held them in captivity. How did Nebuchadnezzar get his authority? The Most High God established him and gave him authority. It says he has given him kingship and greatness and glory and majesty.

“And because of the greatness that he gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him. Whom he would, he killed, and whom he would, he kept alive; whom he would, he raised up, and whom he would, he humbled. But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit was hardened so that he dealt proudly, he was brought down from his kingly throne, and his glory was taken from him. He was driven from among the children of mankind, and his mind was made like that of a beast, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. He was fed grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, until he knew that the Most High God rules the kingdom of mankind and sets over it whom he will. And you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this, but you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven. And the vessels of his house have been brought in before you, and you and your lords, your wives, and your concubines have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or hear or know, but the God in whose hand is your breath, and whose are all your ways, you have not honored.”

Daniel is describing for this kingdom of Babylon that even though you're considered an enemy of God's people, who you are as king even in Babylon has happened simply because there's an authority higher than you. There is a King over you. You think you are the high leader of this land, but there is one who is Most High. There is one who is over you, and it is a demonstration here of the authority of the Most High God. The story goes on to say that the interpretation of the writing on the wall meant that his kingdom was coming to an end. And then verse 29 says, “Then Belshazzar gave the command, and Daniel was clothed with purple, a chain of gold was put around his neck, and a proclamation was made about him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. That very night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed. And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old.”

We see the rise and fall of earthly kingdoms. There is a Most High King, a Most High God, the Most High King who rules and reigns over this earth. Psalm 47 is a song that was written by the worship leaders to acknowledge and to celebrate the authority of God, the kingship of God, and the rule and reign of God. We not only say that he's King of the world by His authority, but also by His actions. It says the Most High King “is to be feared, a great king over all the earth.” And then verse three and four offer a very personal testimony of the Israelite people of how the Most High God had worked in their life. It says, “He subdued peoples under us, and nations under our feet. He chose our heritage for us, the pride of Jacob whom he loves.”

Verse three says, “He subdued peoples under us, and nations under our feet.” If you walk back through history, you'll see in the Israelite people that the personal testimony was that again and again in their battles, God worked. They were not able to celebrate because their chariots were so strong, their horses were so strong, the chariots were so fast, or their skills were so great. They would look around, and they would say, “God the battle is not ours, the battle is yours.” Think about the Battle of

Jericho. They come to that city and think, "How will we take the city?" They walk around the city, they shout to the Lord with praise and worship of God. God gave them the city. The Battle of Sennacherib that we made reference to last week where they thought, "How will we ever win?" And you see an army that that just basically dies before their eyes. There are testimonies of the battles that God's people would go to fight and the enemy armies would turn on themselves and begin to fight themselves. Again and again and again what they would say is that "It's not by our hand, oh God but it's by Your hand. You deserve the praise, and You deserve the glory."

And here this Psalm is a song of praise of how God had given them victory in their battles. In verse four: "He chose our heritage for us, the pride of Jacob whom he loves." The poetic words here are a reference to the land of Canaan. It was a reference that God had chosen for them this land that we see in Scripture referred to as Canaan to be the land that they would live in and the land that that would be their inheritance. And then verse five: "God has gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of the trumpet." It is a picture of God accomplishing His plans. The phrase "he has gone up with a shout-" it is the picture of a winning warrior, the picture of a winning king returning to his palace, returning to his throne having the battle been won and the enemy been defeated, plans accomplished, he goes back to his throne with the shouts of the people and the sounds of the trumpet.

What we're describing here is God's grace. We're describing that the people were saying, "God, **You** are a great King. **You** are the Most High. **You** have subdued. **You** have chosen for us." God has gone up with a shout. It is a picture of God communicating to them that "It's not because you are a good people. It was not because of what you deserve, but because of My love for you and My grace for you. I have chosen you and I've accomplished My plans." Now in our life, let's play that out- God's authority in your life, God's action in your life- is He ruling and reigning in your life? Do you see the grace that God has poured out in your life? As you think back, here it is, we're at July 9. We are nine days into July. As you take a little inventory of the past week, do you see the battles God has won in your life this past week? The temptation to quit something that God's called you to do- God won there this week. The opportunity that came to you, and you resisted that temptation because God won that battle. There is in your life a battle that is raised again and again and again, and you go to God's word and you go to pray before the Lord and you see that God once again won in your life. Think about your salvation- God pouring His grace out on you to forgive you of your sin.

If I were to ask for a show of hands here in the sanctuary right now by saying, "How many of you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?" I would expect that just by interacting and seeing you and hearing you and watching you that the majority of this room would lift your hand and say, "Yes, I know." Was that because you earned it? Was it because God looked at you and said, "There's a good person, and I want to save them"? It's God's grace choosing in love to pour out

His grace on you. Ephesians 1:1 speaks of us being chosen in Christ. Think of God accomplishing His plans. When you read in the New Testament about the death of Jesus Christ, the burial of Jesus Christ, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the ascension of Jesus Christ, God is accomplishing His plans to the point where Hebrews chapter 1 tells us that Jesus having died and been buried and risen and ascended to heaven now sits down at the right hand of the Father. He has gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of the trumpet, He's taken His seat on the throne in victory.

Can I remind you that this is why we gather? This is why you're here. You may be wondering, "why am I here?" Some of you in your lifetime as parents have kids that have asked you, "Why do we have to go to church again?" Right? Any kids ask you that? Come on, participate. Nobody? Any of you your husband ask you this morning "Why do we have to go to church?" Why do we do it? We could be a thousand different places. We could find a thousand different things to do on Sunday and say, "That's my time. That's the only time I have to myself. That's the time to head off on that trip. It's my Sunday."

Here's what it is: because you and I worship King of the earth, you and I worship the Most High. And by His authority and by His actions of grace, we gather in this room together in the name of Jesus to offer our praise, to offer honor, to offer glory, to show our love with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength to the King of Kings and Lord of lords. If somebody asks you, your kid asks you, your spouse, your friend, your neighbor, says, "Why do you feel like you go to church?" Here's the answer. Ready? You look them in the eyes and say, "Because I worship the King of the world, and it's my opportunity to gather with others who worship the King of the world and lift our praise and thanks to the God who in grace saved me from an eternity in hell." You could just go on and on. We worship the King. I'm going to worship the Most High King.

God, by His authority and by His actions calls all peoples and nations to worship him. What do we do when we come together? This Psalm shows us what we do. We come to worship the King of Kings. We're called to worship. Verse one is really a call to worship. It says, "Clap your hands, all peoples! Shout to God with loud songs of joy! For the Lord, the Most High is to be feared, a great king over all the earth."

All peoples and nations are pictured in this Psalm of coming together and worshiping with awe and with actions and with anticipation. This Psalm was not written by an individual to be sung on the back deck or on the backside of the mountain by a single person. This song was written for corporate worship. This Psalm was written by the worship leaders of the temple; this is a Psalm of the sons of Korah; it's to the choirmaster. It was something that was to bring the whole crowd of followers of the King together, and they would worship Him in awe. He says in verse two: "For the Lord the Most High is to be feared." I want you to say that with me. "For the Lord the Most High is to be-" what? Feared.

Last week, we looked at Psalm 46 where it says, "We will not fear," and this psalm says that the Lord the Most High is to be feared." The fear we were talking about last week was fear of the enemy, fear of the one who is less than the great King of all the world. This is a fear that has to do with reverence and awe and wonder. It's a great reminder to us that when we come before the Lord in worship that we are coming by the blood of Jesus Christ into the presence of the holy King of kings and Lord of lords. Will you come before the Lord today in awe who He is?

It's hard, isn't it? When the world gets the affections of our heart and the busyness of our days capture so much, it's almost like if we don't set an alarm on Monday for the next Sunday, we may even forget to be here. We get here and we just run in. This Psalm is here for us today to remind us that our worship is to be from a position of reverential fear. We are to stand in awe, but it is also to be a worship of action. Reverential fear doesn't mean physical stillness, it doesn't mean lock down and don't move. Awe has to do with wonder and amazement and respect. When you come to Psalm 47 here, you see action. In fact, in reading through it, it led me to write in the margins of Psalm 47 that "Psalm 47 is a very noisy and loud song." It was not the only song they sang.

Last week we looked at Psalm 46 and it says, "Be still and know that I am God." There's something about some of our personalities that we grab ahold of that and say, "Amen. I like that. I just want to be still. I want to be quiet." I remind you that neither was that the only song. In the description that we have here, there is a season, there's a time, there's a place as a part of our worship where we come in awe before the Lord. And it is to move from being still to being loud. It is to move from being still and knowing that he is God to being loud and worshiping Him as king. In this Psalm you have clapping, you have shouting, and you have singing. And they're commanded! Hear that! They're commanded! They're expected! There's a call for that! It's not clap if you have rhythm. It is not clap if you feel like it. It's not sing if you sound good. It's not shout if you have a strong voice. It's not shout if you're happy! In fact, what happens is when you clap unto the Lord, as you shout unto the Lord, as you sing unto the Lord, as you obey this kind of worship before the Lord, He stirs your heart. You sing yourself to joy. You worship to a place of recognizing who he is, and in worshiping you're reminding yourself that He's king.

There are a dozen action verbs in these nine verses. It's active. Worship is active. And I just ask you today to survey your heart and life as you gather here in the sanctuary for worship and as you gather in the life building for worship. If an outsider walks into this room for the very first time, takes their seat, they won't know the words and they don't know the routine. But they watch and they listen and they see. Would it be the impression- would you give the impression in your clapping? Would you give the impression in your shouting? Would you give the impression in your singing? Would you give the impression in your obedience to God that you worship the Most High King? We don't clap for performance. We're not

saying, "Tim, man what an incredible voice!" We say, "Thank you Tim for reminding us that we have an incredible God!"

Jason says it in every new members class again and again and again- every time we meet for new members class, he says to those that are coming new into church. He says, "Our goal on a Sunday is for you to get in your car and not say, 'Wow, what great singers they have or wow, what great preaching they have.' Our goal is for us to get in the car and say, 'Wow, what a great God we have.'" Amen? What a great God we have! And it is action! I know personalities play a role in this. I ask the Lord, "Would you plant just one boisterous soul in each service?" Sometimes it just takes a leader. Sometimes it just takes one person to get the clap going. We are so dignified.

But just listen. I grew up in a church where there was strong Bible teaching. They were faithfully teaching the word. My love for Scripture comes from the Sunday school teachers and pastors that I had at Mount Hope Baptist Church. But there were some strongholds when it came to expressing ourselves in worship. And you just didn't raise your hands in worship at Mount Hope Baptist. If you raised your hand in worship, they'd ask you, "What's your question?" It was a reaction to the charismatic movement that had spread in the area. The thought of lifting your hands in worship or shouting to the Lord or clapping to praise God was seen as something that was a slippery slope headed toward the deep end. Just like you can head toward the deep end in disorder, you can head in the other direction of coldness and stiffness. What I'm asking you to do is simply this- to survey your heart and ask the Lord, "Is there anything that is hindering my free expression of worship to Almighty God?" That's it. And the Spirit of God- I just trust that He would be so big that it He could work in our hearts.

I'm telling you that there's something about when you freely worship. God has made you to freely worship. The flowers bloom in worship to God. The oceans roar in worship to God. The skies thunder in worship to God. The only creation of God that hesitates when it comes to worship are those who have been blessed most by the Creator. You and I have the opportunity to keep the rocks from crying out and to clap unto the Lord, to shout unto the Lord, and at times to be still before the Lord and to know Him.

Can I say to you that this is why we go? The reason we gather is to give worship like this to the Lord, but the reason we go into the world and invite people to know Jesus Christ is so that they too can become worshipers of God. You've heard it said before- John Piper's quote is that "Missions exist because worship doesn't." What we do when we go into the world- just pick a country- our church family is scattered all over the globe. I was thinking this week about church family that we have in the U.S. Today there's church family that have passed through here and that are living in San Diego, California. There's church family that have come through here that are now living in Washington State. There's church family that are now living in

the Northeast and Vermont and Massachusetts. There's church family today that are now living in Miami, Florida. If you look at the Northwest, the Southwest, the Northeast, or the Southeast, you see people that have scattered from our church family living on every corner of the nation.

On this very day we have friends and family out of our church that have gone to countries all over the world. And why? Why do we gather? We gather to worship! Why do we go? To introduce others to worship! To introduce others to Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Because here's the reality: what we're part of right now is really just dress rehearsal. What we are part of right now is practice for eternity. And is it true what the coach says? That we will play like we practice? Today it's like we're in the engagement phase. You and I have been engaged to the Son of God, to the groom of heaven as the bride of the church. We're looking forward- Revelation 19 says- to the wedding supper of the Lamb. And as we approach that wedding supper of the Lamb, what you and I get to do is gather together and get to know God. And we gather together to worship.

Now I want to ask you in closing- is God the King of your heart? If He's not, then repent of from whoever is king and turn and follow the King. You may say, "Yes, he's King of my heart, but I've just kind of forgotten Him." Repent of forgetting Him as King. Come back and remember Him. Rejoice in Him and follow Him and love Him and serve Him.