

The Lordship of Christ

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Preacher: Prof A.Loughridge

[0 : 0 0] I would like first of all to acknowledge the cordial welcome given to me by your minister this morning. To say what a privilege it is to come to the island of Lewis, to Storland in particular, and to have fellowship with the Lord's people in an area of the Church of Christ that is well known to many of us, an area that remembers us thoughtfully and powerfully in the problems that we have back in my native Alster.

It is my privilege to have known the previous ministers in this congregation. Some thirteen years ago, my wife and I had a brief holiday in the island and worshipped in the congregation here.

In the seminary it was in the morning, and just about the third seat back there on the Sabbath evening. But then much longer ago, back I think in 1952, I began a profitable correspondence with your former minister, Reverend Kenneth McCray.

We had met from time to time, and especially at the very first of the Banner of Truth conferences in Leicester. I was attending at the very first conference, I actually actually just presented at that conference, and he was the main speaker.

So we went at once in LePau, with the things that concerned the faith of the Gospel. And so I come to you in the name of God, and in representing the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland, as a very close affinity with yourselves.

[1 : 4 2] We are a competitively small church with some 40 congregations, mainly in the northern part of Ireland. We have our college staffed by part-time professors, and we are, like yourselves, a psalm-singing denomination.

We have close fellowship with you for now some 30 years. We have been exchanging greetings between our various church bodies, particularly the visit of your moderator of assembly, which you look forward to eagerly each year.

And we reciprocate that by sending our moderator to your assembly each May. And so it is a privilege just to be with you, and to share in this ministry, and to be enriched by the fellowship with the Lord's people.

Now, I'm sometimes asked, what is the hope of a settlement in your province? I've got to answer regretfully that after 22 years, really, since the strike began, we see very little sign of progress.

There's another kind of attempt to initiate political solutions. We've had seven or eight different secretaries of faith, and each man has his own ideas how to solve the problem.

[3 : 1 0] But the courage and the disaster and the rebellion goes on, and we are left in amazement, and left in a great sense of sorrow and loss.

And so it is that we turn to God, and we turn to the Word of God for our comfort. And the text that I take this morning is a text, I think, that will help us, and certainly helps us in Ireland, to see the way forward.

And that is a recognition of the Lordship of Christ, that he is king, and unless he is king and lord of all, and that kingship of his is recognized, have we any hope for blessing in the future?

And so we turn to the 110th sign that was read in our hearing, and in that first verse we read this. And what a challenging word, what a comforting word.

The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. Of course, there are no enemies of Christ than the IRO, and all for all types of terrorists.

[4 : 23] But this we can apply to our own particular situation, that there will come a time when all political initiators are failed, and the authority of Christ alone can bring an end to this kind of disaster and tyranny and tragedy.

The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. Now the Psalms reflect the glory of Christ in his person and his work.

There are never a time when the Psalms were more precious to us, than all today, because they not only reflect the true nature of man, and the true need of man, but they set before us Christ in all his fullness and majesty and sufficiency.

We have, for instance, the eighth Psalm, which speaks of his lowly birth, of his humiliation, not a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death. We have Psalms like the 22nd and 69th, that take us to the cross of Calvary, and see him forsaken, suffering for our sins, dying on that cross of shame.

We see him in the 68th Psalm, rising and ascending, and taking the seat of honor at the right hand of God. We see him in the 23rd Psalm, as a shepherd, guiding, leading, feeding, comforting his people, and bringing them through the valleys of testing, and into those areas of blessing, and ultimately into his Father's house.

[6 : 10] But most frequently, the Psalm speaks to us of the royal dignity of Christ, as King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. And that is the Psalm that we look at today, that stands out, among many others, as a son of exalt Christ, our priest king.

And the Lord said unto my Lord, sit at my right hand, until I make thine enemies my footstool. But there are three points, I think, that will help us to grasp the teaching of this psalm, and especially focus attention on the ledge with Christ, and what that means to his redeemed people.

We look then at Christ and his ceaseless activity, and the first of those, resting under the member of the son in action. What is then considered, first of all, the seat that he occupies?

The seat that he occupies, the seat of honor, of dignity, of majesty, and of glory. The Lord said unto my Lord, sit on my right hand.

So Christ our Savior occupies this seat, and very properly, for a number of reasons. He occupies it, first of all, by divine appointment.

[7 : 39] Here is David, listening as it were to a conversation between the Father and the Son, and through the wisdom of the Spirit, putting it on record, that God the Father said to Christ the Son, sit on my right hand.

And so Christ has taken that seat of honor. Of course, he was there for all eternity, but now having finished the work that was given him to do, he resumes that seat, and he does so, because the Father says to him, this is your rightful place, at my right hand, in exultation, in honor, in majesty, and in glory.

And surely a statement from God the Father concerning the rightful place of Christ the Son, is a clear, the book, to those who would downgrade the Son of God.

So what the Father is really saying to his Son is this, you have a right to sit here, you are co-equal with me, co-equal in authority, and in honor.

And so Christ takes his seat, because the Father says, that is your rightful place. We'll adjust to see him enthroned in the majesty at God's right hand.

[9 : 01] He sits by divine appointment. But he sits at God's right hand on that seat of honor by his own inherent right.

The Lord said unto my Lord, says David. The Father says to the Son, but the word that is translated, the second, Lord, in that first line of the psalm, is that very precious word, the word Adonai, which indicates that in itself, that is Lordship, that Christ in himself is Lord.

But when the Father indicates that his dignity and majesty and gives him that seat of honor, the Son, because of who he is, as the Lord, in his own right, takes that seat, as it were, in his own right.

He has the fitness for that seat. He is worthy of all respect and of all reverence. As the Son of God of all eternity, it is his divine pre-revelation to be there with the Father on the throne of majesty and glory.

And so we rejoice that Christ is not someone just who has been elevated without right and without standing, but someone who has been, one who has been, set there by the Father not only because it is his right, but set there by the Father because he himself has this inherent basic right to Lordship.

[10 : 41] For the Lord Jesus Christ is and always has been the Lord of all. He sits then by his own inherent right. And we might end our commentary, but then there are further considerations.

And this time David comes forward and he indicates another of the grounds in which the Lord Jesus Christ sits at the right hand of God.

He sits there by the devout acknowledgement and the humble acknowledgement and the humble response of his own people. David says, the Lord said unto my Lord.

He is not only the Lord, but says David, he is my Lord. And soon God the Father recognizes him and says, sit at my right hand.

And when the Son has the inherent right to sit there because he is the Lord of all. He is not only king but but but but fact not only because of inherent right but because those whom he has brought into subjection say to him, my Lord.

[12 : 03] And that is one of the privileges that you and I have as his people. And we began our service this Sabbath morning singing that rising song of Zion. Psalm 145 and each one of us in our own lips and from our own hearts said, O Lord, there art my God and King.

My King. And that's what David said. The Lord said unto my Lord. And this of course is a very precious privilege that we have. Not only to see what God has done in recognizing his Son.

Not only to see the Son sitting here in majesty and glory. But to be able to say because we are redeemed and brought into a relationship to the covenant of grace to say He is my King.

I recognize Him. He is my Lord as well as my Savior. The vital acknowledgement then from his own people is a feature in this Lordship and indicates the importance and the honor and the dignity of the seat that he occupies.

But then he occupies that seat in token of a great triumph. The Lord said unto my Lord sit at my right hand.

[13 : 30] And I turn to the tenth chapter of Hebrews and I read those precious words. It describes first of all the priesthood of the Levites, the priesthood of Erdem, and it said every priest standeth daily ministering.

There was no end to the ministration of the Levitical priesthood. That is until Christ the true priest came but then says the writer but this man the Lord Jesus the true priest this man when he had finished the work sat down.

And so when he read this word prophetically spoken by David in Psalm 110 the Lord said sit Hebrews 10 gives us the completion of that wonderful prophetic statement.

He sat down at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens. It is a token of his triumph. It is a reference of his victory.

It is a clear indication of his finished work. The seat that he occupies says I have done what the Pharaoh has asked me to do I have done what I have undertaken to do and now in token of completion in token of achievement in token of victory I sat down.

[15 : 00] There is one further point as we look at the seat he occupies he occupies that seat in eager expectation of ultimate triumph.

this is what God said to him as the psalmist records it sit at my right hand until I make my enemies thy footstool.

And that's the comfort for God's people that blessed until we were in that waiting period until we see the ultimate glorious triumph.

And we put it again as we look at Hebrews 10 and verse 13. he finished the work he sat down and then says that the word in that tenth of Hebrews from henceforth expecting that his enemies be made his footstool.

And there again was the psalmist and the apostle joining of it hand in hand and saying that what Christ was appointed to do he has done and now he is sitting at God's right hand in the expectation that his enemies should be put under his feet.

[16 : 19] And Paul puts that truth before us in another film in his writing of the glorious triumphant resurrection of Christ in the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians he says he must learn till he has put all enemies under his feet.

And so we address in the Lordship of Christ we look at the seat he occupies we delight that he takes that seat of honor and privilege and dignity and majesty by the father's appointment in his own inherent right by the recognition of those like King David and ourselves in total of the triumph he achieved at the cross and in glorious expectation of ultimate victory.

The seat he occupies. But secondly we look at the scepter he wields. The scepter he wields.

He's not sitting there in idleness. He is sitting there as the recognized Lord who is administering the fruits of his victory.

The Lord says verse 2 shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion leading thou in the midst of thine enemies. And our Savior Christ the King of Kings on the throne of glory holds the scepter of righteousness and he wields that scepter for the glory of his name and for the honor of his father and for the benefit of his people.

[18 : 00] It is of course in the first instance a symbol of authority. The Lord who said the Lord of thy strength the scepter the visible indication of his lordship there was of course in that first sentence the declaration of his lordship now the scepter indicates a visible evidence of lordship and he holds that scepter and he wields it in the father's name.

We sang there in the 45th psalm on that very point a scepter of righteousness is a scepter of thy kingdom said the psalmist and that is the scepter that Christ holds the scepter that Christ wields and from that psalm we have the quotation in the first chapter of the Hebrews again drawing attention to the fact that Christ Jesus the Lord of glory the king of kings wields a scepter not a scepter of tyranny or of oppression to Christians humble but a scepter of righteousness which is the very essence of his being and you will notice too that he not only wields this scepter in his father's name and wields this scepter by his father's authority but he wields a defiant attitude in the face of rejection and unbelief the

Lord you said thou Lord of Zion wield thou in the midst of thine enemies and when the Lord's people rejoice in his lordship and in his wielding of the scepter they see that here is the true secret of their protection he wields it in the face of his enemies the enemy says and did say we have no king but Caesar the enemy today says we do not submit to recognize that Christ is king the unbelievers throughout the world today rejects him and rejects his kingly authority and it is in that atmosphere that Christ Jesus sits at the right hand of God and exhibits for all to see the scepter of righteousness to show that there will be righteous judgment righteous government righteous supervision righteous control he wields it in that atmosphere of unbelief and rejection he wields it in the midst of his enemies but further he wields it in response to the praise of his people there is a difficulty in that last line of the second verse as to who exactly is the speaker there may be and some commentators say it was the father and that would be quite understandable the father saying to the son that is a scepter take that scepter of righteousness rule thou in the midst of thine enemies because that would be quite in keeping with the whole teaching of this son and the whole teaching of the relationship between father and son in regard to the son's kingly office but on the other hand it is very probably the word of the psalmist he has been listening as word to this conversation between the father and the son he has it my right hand he says by faith and through the spirit he is my lord and then looking to

Christ as lord he says to him rule thou in the midst of thine enemies in other words God's servant king David which desires that his greater son the lord Jesus should be widely recognized and should take to himself this great power and rule and you and I today have that comfort and I think in our prayers it would be right that we should repeat this kind of petition lord thou king lord thou king over all world supreme seated on the throne of majesty and glory exercise thy sovereign power and grieve of thy people and grieve even in spite of the rejection and the unbelief that's so prevalent among thine enemies there's more than forgotten emphasis today but longer ago I can remember as a boy in our prayer meeting one godly elder used to often pray and he would plead with the lord that he would take unto himself his power and ruler he had this

I think in mind round thou in the midst of thine enemies rule the scepter show thine authority and I think we take comfort from that today that we can see our saviour Christ not pushed aside not defamed and dishonoured but sitting in majesty and ruling in sovereign power the scepter that he wields then finally let us look for a moment or two at the subjects he controls you can't have a king unless there's a kingdom and you don't have a kingdom unless there are subjects and so when the lord said to the lord Jesus when the father looked to his son and set him at his right hand he was not only recognizing virgin and sovereignty but he was also drawing attention to the fact that there was a people a people who were the subjects a people who were under his sovereign control a people who must always render obedience and submission there is no sovereign in limbo no sovereign in the abstract the sovereign presupposes the people the king suggests the subject let's look for the psalm says some wonderful things some beautiful things about those who are the subjects of king Jesus and we trust that by God's mercy and grace we come along that blessed group for one thing the subjects are a purchased possession of the king and they stand with him in a blessed covenant relationship look at the very first word of the third verse and you read this thy people thy people shall be women in the day of thy power so that is the key to it all the subjects are the lord's own people brought to him in that covenant of grace and they have been purchased by him through the shedding of his blood that's why we choose one of our songs of praise today the second song because the second song indicates that

[25 : 34] God the father has an another son but the son says to the father I want the most parts of the earth for my possession I need subjects of him to do and the psalmist in 110 says here they are the new people that have been set apart to give your name upon them they have been changed from eternity to be yours they have been redeemed for your very own their new people and that is a kind of subject you must recognize and submit to the king of kings can you notice that there are people who stand in this personal relationship this conscious relationship that there are people who see good willingness and submission their people shall be women look at the why people shall make themselves a free woman offering to thee and of course that is the fruit of grace when grace breaks the pride of the unvulgeneral heart when the power of the spirit enlightens and quickens and when the sinner comes to faith and

Christ he is a willing subject and a rebel challenge in authority he is now able to say my God and my king it is therefore this willingness and submission it's a plural word indicating the broad scope of this submission thy people shall be willing misses in the day of thy power it's the same look as we have for the word that describes the free will offerings of the people as you entered the congregation today you put your free will offerings there on the plate they did it as an act of love an act of faith an act of happiness of your love for Christ and for his church it was your freedom offering of course that is what Paul is saying in the beginning of Romans chapter 12

I beseech you thou fore brethren by the message of God that you present your bodies that you make of yourselves a freedom offering unto the Lord it shall reasonable service and so these are the kind of subjects under the control of King Jesus a precious possession willingly submitting to his authority but let me further notice that these subjects are clothed in splendid garments and the beauties of holiness from the wind of the morning was the joy of the youth a difficult phrase but it surely indicates freshness evenness there's no frantic no slimy of infirmity fruitful evening and edge as Paul puts it through the outward man to perish the end of the man is removed day by day and so there must ought to be in the subjects of

King Jesus this freshness this bitter this bliss this comfortness this eagerness there ought to be just as the poetic figure puts it here the joy of loose from the wind of the morning and just as in the brightness of a summer morning we so the Jew descending to freshen the face of nature so the Jew of heaven descends upon the subject of the King it gives them refreshing it gives them vigor it gives them strength it gives them beauty and it gives them hurtfulness their devotion is so fresh they are covered with these garments what is the supreme garment of course that the child of God was that the subject of the King was in the beauty of holiness from the room of the morning thou hast to do of your youth it is surely an indication of the kindness of the garments of those who are

Christ the we rid of these splendid garments and of this fresh devotion we rid in Revelation 19 that the arms of King Jesus are clean and fine women white and clean so these evidences of the beauty and dignity and purity that must ever be associated with those who are the submissive subjects of the King of Kings now these subjects of course are seen in two different guises they are in the one hand soldiers ready for battle and in the other hand are people ready for service thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power or as it is put in one translation in the day when thy ghost goes to war and so as his subjects who not only have redeemed possession we not only willing to submit to his authority we not only cling to the spotless garments of his righteousness we not only have fleshness in our devotion but we are ready ready to be forced in his name and under his leadership to do battle with the forces of evil the subjects that he controls and now finally we want to think for a moment or two about the salvation that he has accomplished because our king is a priest and priesthood suggests sacrifice and the sacrifice that is referred to here suggests an ademptive sacrifice and so these people these people made willing by his grace these people who have his own men upon them are the partakers of a great salvation and that salvation is set before us briefly in the closing part of this psalm let's notice one or two features about that salvation how is it accomplished how do we enter into its blessings what do we do so in the first instance by virtue of the eternal priesthood in the fourth verse we are introduced to a remarkable man of whom much more is said in

[32 : 49] Hebrews 7 the Lord is swollen will not repent thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek this is what God is saying to the one who is already recognized as king and who is seen as in that position of dignity and honor you are not only a king says the father you are a priest a priest that belongs to that very remarkable honor now says the writer to the Hebrews that Melchizedek was a priest of the most high God and is one that means two things he is a king of righteousness and he is a king of peace and those are the two things that we need surely most of all from our priest king we haven't righteousness our own righteousness is his filthy rags we need righteousness but he who is the priest after the order of Melchizedek is in himself righteousness he strips off the filthy garments and he clothes us with his righteousness or on the other hand our hearts are torn with bitterness and strife and what we need is the peace of

God that pass at understanding and our king the priest after the order of Melchizedek is also a king of peace and he ministers peace to the native soul and soon we enter into these rich blessings of salvation through the glorious priesthood of God's Son a priesthood that is unique that indicates righteousness that promotes peace and grace as those who are partakers of grace but to royal dignity he hath nervous says the one unto our God kings and priests but he has accomplished this salvation not only by virtue of a glorious and eternal priesthood but by virtue of an overwhelming conquest over every kind of terry look at these verses the king at thy right hand the lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath judging on the heathen fill the places with dead bodies and win the heads over many countries these are verses we would like to see applying in the wider world today we've got terrorism in

Ireland we've got terrorism which spread into the mainland we've got war in the Middle East we've got the dangerous situation we've got godless men rising up in the fields against the king of kings and God says the king shall strike three kings in his day of wrath judging among the faith and filling the places with bad bodies and wounding the heads of many countries every kind of fool political social domestic spiritual these are overwhelmed in the work of our priest king but we notice that while the word shall is used here in a future sense the word the word literally is in the past tense and we might just let that phrase the Lord the king has Christos so the victory in a sense has never been won this is a prophetic perfect indicating a completed act with future repercussions and the act was completed in the triumphant victory of

Christ and now through the exit that follow there will be the victims of his wrath those who will be stricken down in their arrogance those who will be wounded in their rejection of him he is king and he brings us salvation because he crushed his foes he won the victory at Calvary then finally our saviour king brings us salvation by virtue of his triumphant death and glorious resurrection and exaltation the last verse of the psalm he shall drink of the broken way therefore shall he lift up the head there's a number of possibilities in this there may be first of all a refuge to his humiliation drinking of the broken way asking the women at the well give me to drink he sat down being weary for maybe an indication linked with that picture we have in the book of judges where

Gideon's 300 in pursuit of their enemies came to the book in a way without hesitation without delay and this would seem to indicate that our saviour took a hasty guilt as it were in pursuit of his foes so committed was he to their total overthrow but there was another possibility and that is when we accept the humiliation of Christ and the fact that we drunk for his refreshment when we accept the urgency with which he set his face to win the victory the reference here and some just let it this way he shall take a long draft from a raging torrent a long draft from the raging torrent and I believe that that figuratively represents our savior taking the cup of wrath the bitter cup of sufferings and death and he drank of that cup for you and me to the bitter drinks he shall drink of the burnt in the way he shall drink from the raging torrent that he put across his path but then that did not overwhelm him and destroy him the final word is this therefore shall he lift up the head and lifting up of the head is surely a figure indicating triumph victory exaltation so the king who sits in the right hand of

[39 : 29] God by God's decree and in his own right and because his people wish it so the king who sits at God's right hand in triumph and in expectation the king who leads the sector of righteousness the king who can choose those whom he has purchased his own special possession is the king who brings us a great salvation and we are partakers of that salvation through his grace through his offer of mercy and we see him with the uplifted head exalted running triumphant not only the king we recognize but the king who will one day come we say even soon come Lord Jesus let us pray oh

God our gracious heavenly father we thank thee for the privilege we have had of sitting around the world looking at this wonderful psalm and thinking about our son our savior and our lord and king we thank you for these prophetic pictures and the fears of any way done to service to truth or in any way misinterpreted truth we ask our forgiveness for us to exalt the lord jesus christ and to see him in his beauty and majesty and glory to see him the crucified risen learning lord to see him as our personal savior and king we pray that part of our service may be very glad to us all and that christ may be glorified in our midst we thank thee for the lord people in this place for the ministry that is faithful from sabbath to sabbath and we pray that throughout these coming days as they face difficulties as they enjoy privileges they may be constantly conscious that their king the lord jesus has them to submit and to say thou art my god and my king hear them the prayers we offer bless us as ministry continues in another place and enrich us through the wisdom of thy grace and we ask all these things confessing unworthiness and seeking cleansing through jesus christ our lord and saviour amen