

BELPRES CHURCH

Sermon Title: The King is Among Us

Annie Duncan

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Scripture:

Psalm 96

- Sing to the LORD a new song;
sing to the LORD, all the earth.
- ² Sing to the LORD, praise his name;
proclaim his salvation day after day.
- ³ Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous deeds among all peoples.
- ⁴ For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise;
he is to be feared above all gods.
- ⁵ For all the gods of the nations are idols,
but the LORD made the heavens.
- ⁶ Splendor and majesty are before him;
strength and glory are in his sanctuary.
- ⁷ Ascribe to the LORD, all you families of nations,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
- ⁸ Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
bring an offering and come into his courts.
- ⁹ Worship the LORD in the splendor of his^[a] holiness;
tremble before him, all the earth.
- ¹⁰ Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns."
The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved;
he will judge the peoples with equity.
- ¹¹ Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;
let the sea resound, and all that is in it.
- ¹² Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them;
let all the trees of the forest sing for joy.
- ¹³ Let all creation rejoice before the LORD, for he comes,
he comes to judge the earth.

He will judge the world in righteousness
and the peoples in his faithfulness.

Transcript:

Well, good morning.

Good morning.

Good morning. My name's Annie Duncan. I'm the executive pastor here, and it is so wonderful to be with you in worship. If you're here or if you're worshipping online, thank you for being here. I'm going to walk us through Psalm 96. That is the Psalm we are walking through today. So all 13 verses. They go like this, sing to the Lord a new song. Sing to the Lord all the earth. Sing to the Lord. Praise his name, proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples. For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise. He's to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens. Splendor and majesty are before him, strength and glory are in his sanctuary, ascribe to the Lord all you families of nations, ascribe to the Lord, glory and strength.

Ascribed to the Lord the glory due his name, bring an offering and come into his courts. Worship the Lord and the splendor of his holiness. Tremble before him all the earth, say among the nations, the Lord reigns. The world is firmly established. It cannot be moved. He will judge the peoples with equity. Let the heavens rejoice. Let the earth be glad. Let the sea resound in. All that's in it. Let the fields be jubilant and everything in them. Let all the trees of the forest sing for the Lord, sing for joy. Let all creation rejoice before the Lord. For he comes, he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples, his faithfulness. Psalm 96, it's a good one. Well, we are in the middle of a sermon series walking through the Psalms.

And Psalms are songs and prayers that people sang and prayed and worship. And similar to songs and prayers that we have in worship to get today, they have a variety to them. One might be a song of thanksgiving, another might be a prayer of remembrance or even another, a prayer of lament. There are so many different ways that we can pray. And so this summer, as we're walking through different kinds of Psalms, we're learning different ways that we can pray before God. And the Psalm that we just looked at today, Psalm 96, this is a kingship Psalm. It's a royal Psalm. And in, it's author King David, writes about the unmatched, unparalleled splendor and glory of the Lord. And this Psalm, it's a great pairing to the Psalm that we walked through last week. Pastor Rich Leatherberry preached through Psalm 73, a lament, a prayer of lament, a Psalm of lament last week. And on paper, you might think, well, those sound like very opposite Psalms, one being a Psalm of lament, another being a Psalm of kingship declaring God's greatness.

But last week, Pastor Rich said that lament is us praying our feelings. Lament is us grieving, hurting, struggling, crying out to God in frustration or even anger. Pastor Rich said, "It's the prayer that helps us live between the brokenness of our world and the goodness of our loving God." Now, Psalms 96, as you just heard, it doesn't complain to God. It doesn't bring God any frustration or anger. And it also doesn't thank God for what God's done. It's a king's ship Psalm. It simply is declaring who God is. So what makes pairing a Psalm of lament and a Psalm of kingship together so powerful? Because they get to coexist. It's not an either or kind of deal, but it's a both and. We get to bring God everything that we have going on. And sometimes that might be lament, sometimes that might be, we've got a lot of questions for you today, God. And that doesn't exist apart from still declaring, God, you're on the throne.

So I think that there's power in that because with God we don't have to choose. We get to bring both to him. And maybe that's where you're at this week. Maybe you're still kind of stuck in that lament place that you were last week and saying, I can't move from here yet. And that is totally fine and it's totally normal. We actually need to stay in lament sometimes longer than we like. Right? And I'll challenge you as we walk through this kingship Psalm to see how they both can coexist together. Because sometimes when we declare God's glory, it might not look exactly like how King David is declaring God's glory. Sometimes, especially when we're in a place of lament, declaring God's glory might sound something very simple as, Jesus, you are here. And that is a really, really powerful thing to declare. When we're in a place of lament, we have to know that we are not left in the darkest valley alone, but Jesus walks through the valley with us.

Jesus is that king that is among us, and that's the title for the sermon this week. The king is among us. Psalm 96, it really deserves a prelude, a postlude, maybe even a click track in the back. I don't know if that's a thing. The musicians can tell me whether I just made that up or not. But it deserves all of this sound because it's such a celebratory Psalm. I mean, just listen to these couple verses in the middle. For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise, he's to be feared above all gods. And that fear there has more to do with God's awesomeness than God being scary. For all the gods of the nations are idols. But the Lord made the heavens, splendor and majesty are before him. Strength and glory are his sanctuary. Ba dum tss. Like music, right? Can you hear it? I can hear it.

So Psalm 96, it's this kingship Psalm that's talking about God's sovereignty, God's power, God's authority, rule and reign. It's kind of like a coronation ceremony. At a coronation ceremony, you might hear something like hear ye, hear ye, presenting Queen Tanya, the first of her name, Lord S of the nation. And don't at me, Scott Dudley, if you're listening online, I know that sounds more like Game of Thrones than maybe an actual coronation ceremony. But in King David's time when each nation had their own gods and their own ways of praying and worshiping, King David is declaring that God is the God of all the gods. God isn't just a God of a particular people or a particular nation, but God is God overall.

And I think Scott says this often, if he's not Lord of all, he's not Lord at all. You guys are listening. Good job. Or at least five of you are. Which is why in verse five it says that all the other gods are un-gods before our Lord, because our Lord made the heavens. This is the God that we worship. This is the king that's among us. So like King David, have you ever been captivated by God? Has God ever taken your breath away? When we understand that we worship a God, a king that's on the throne, we can't help but respond in some way. And that might be prayer, that might be praise, that might be worship. And again, it's going to look different for each of us because we're all going to respond in different ways. And as we walk through Psalm 96, we'll see how King David responds and it can give direction to how we respond too.

So let's walk through this a little bit and see what happens when the king is among us. First, when the king is among us, we sing a new song. Psalm 96 starts off by repeating three times, asking us to sing a new song. Sing a new song, sing a new song. And whenever you see repetition in scripture, pay attention, because it's usually trying to drive a point. And so verses 1 and 2, it says, sing to the Lord a new song. Sing to the Lord all the earth, sing to the Lord, praise his name, proclaim his salvation day after day. So we are to sing before our Lord. We are to praise God. We are to worship God and bring God a new song. And this is something that King David says, it's for the whole earth to do. And that when we sing and praise God, we're proclaiming how God has saved us.

So what about this very first part where it says, sing God a new song. What does that mean? Well, we're always experiencing new things about who God is. Each day brings us deeper in relationship with God. So what new thing have you experienced about God lately? Sing about that. Pray about that. Right? I mean, today in this present moment, each and every one of us right now, we've experienced the minimum of who God is, not the maximum. Think about that for a second. We've experienced the minimum of who God is, not the maximum. There's always something new to learn about who God is and the way that his love transforms and forms us. It's a process and it's a journey. So I've told this story before, but it's been a long time. So here it is again. Over 10 years ago, I got up before the sun and I went for a morning run.

And as a creature of habit, I always ran the same route. It's part of the control freak in me. I like to know how long it's going to take. I like to know the minutes I can get in and I like to run a pretty tight ship in the morning. Efficiency, right? It's a great way to start the day. But on this particular morning, as the sun started to brighten, I got to a fork in the road and where I always would normally go left. And I felt this very strong nudge from God to go right, and I like to control things. So you have to understand, this nudge was so strong that I couldn't ignore it. So at that fork in the road, instead of going my normal left, I went right. And I climbed up a little hill, and at the top of that hill I saw the sun peeking out from the clouds and the most amazing sunrise.

Now, if I had gone left, it would've been a normal morning and that's fine, but I got that nudge from God and I went right, and I got to see this beautiful sunrise. And I learned something new. I

got to sing a new song to God that morning because I had always known that God loved me. But in that moment I learned that God also liked me. God enjoyed me. God wanted to show me something new. And so the song I got to sing to God that day was, God, you're a God of really big expressions of love, but you're also a God of everyday expressions of love, like showing Annie a sunrise. And it left me completely captivated. And now maybe you're sitting there and you're like, oh, you've seen one sunrise, you've seen them all. No big deal. Well, it was a big deal to me.

And so that is the point. God knew how to get my attention. Maybe a sunrise isn't your jam, but God knows how to get to your attention. God knows how to inspire awe in you so that you declare God's glory. So it might not be a sunrise, but I want to ask you then, what is it for you? What captivates you about God? It might be different than me. It might be a sunrise too. I don't know. I'm asking you. So the songs that we sing to God, it declares who God is and they're new songs, right? They take us from, God, I knew your love was this big, but I didn't realize it was this big or, God, I knew that your love never fails, but I didn't realize that your love wouldn't fail in this particular spot in my life. Whoa, God. The songs we sing to God, they might all be different and that's okay.

The point isn't that they're all the same, but the point is that they point to God's glory. So when the king is among us, we sing a new song. And second, we ascribe greatness to God. Again, King David, he repeats himself here three times and he repeats that phrase, ascribe to the Lord. "Ascribe to the Lord all you families of nations, ascribe to the Lord, glory and strength ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name, bring an offering and come into his courts." Now, we don't use that word ascribe all that often, and if you do, I'd love to know how you're using it. But ascribe means to regard equality to. Ascribe the glory of who God is. So, God, you are the ultimate creator. God, you are awesome. That's ascribing greatness to God. And in this section, King David, he's calling all the peoples together, all the peoples together to describe God's greatness and glory.

And last weekend, all the peoples together, all the peoples together were in Seattle at the Taylor Swift concert. And I didn't go. I kind of wish I had, but several of you all went. I saw it on social media, just all the pictures, all the posts. And I'm not about to Swift shame anybody, so don't stop listening. But I did think it was interesting, the types of things I was reading on social media, especially while writing this sermon about the king on the throne things. These are things that I actually heard and read on social media, things like, "It was the best day of my life. I can't believe I was in the same venue as T. Swift" "There's nothing like being in Taylor's presence." "I will never ever forget this night, Taylor is pure magic." "I will never be the same after Taylor."

You, guys, it's quite clear that those who attended the concert last week, they were captivated, right? Captivated by Taylor. So who captivates you like that? Maybe it's Taylor Swift, maybe it's somebody else. Maybe it's nature just being out in nature and seeing things like Mount Rainier. We all know the feeling of being captivated and King David's point in Psalm 96 is that just like

Taylor Swift concert goers can ascribe greatness to her, all on blast social media, right? Even more so can we ascribe greatness to God because Taylor might be one of the greatest performers of all time, but we serve a God that is literally the greatest of all time. The goat, right? This is what kids say. You guys get this. I had to explain it over there. But the goat. God is the goat. The goat of all goats. And if you think about people that we talk about when we talk about, oh, they're the goat.

They're a goat in a category. Taylor Swift is the goat of performing, right? Michael Jordan, the goat of basketball. Give me another one. Tiger Woods, the goat of golf. Serena Williams, the goat of tennis. They all have categories. We ascribe greatness to them because we see evidence of it. But God is the goat over all goats. There's no category that can contain him. Come on. That's crazy, right? So what evidence have you seen of God in his goatness? What evidence have you seen of God being the God that's on the throne? That should put you in awe. I mean, it puts me in awe. So what is it about God that puts you in awe? Going back to the story that I shared earlier, when I saw that sunrise, I was like, whoa. I literally stopped in my tracks and I was like, whoa.

Now, King David, in Psalm 96, he says things like, "Great is Lord most worthy of praise, splendor, majesty, strength and glory are his." King David uses way more words than just my one word response of whoa to describe God's glory. And that's okay because again, this Psalm, it's descriptive, it's not prescriptive, it describes God being on the throne. It describes God's glory and it shows us ways that we can do that. But how we each individually do that is going to be different. And so maybe this is a muscle that we all need to work a little bit more as the people of God to ascribe glory to God. So this week Bell Pres, ascribe God some glory. Maybe you're driving across the 520 bridge and the mountain's out. So there's some mountain traffic and you're not going very fast. Instead of being frustrated, ascribe God some glory. Be like, God, you made that. Mount Rainier, whoa, God, you are amazing.

And maybe give them a little honk of praise, right? And then as cars are looking at you, you can be like the king is among us. Okay, maybe don't actually honk your horn. But this actually drives at another point because part of ascribing glory to God, it's not just done individually, but it's done all of God's people joining together and giving God glory together. King David says, "Ascribe to the Lord all families of nations." And it's not just a particular people, but it's everybody together. The king among us is for us all. And that brings us to our third and final point. When the king is among us, we join with all creation and rejoice. The end of Psalm 96, it says six times over and over again, it uses this word, let. "Let the heavens rejoice. Let the earth be glad. Let the sea resound and all that's in it."

Let the fields be jubilant and everything in them. Let all the trees of the forest sing for joy. Let all creation rejoice because before the Lord, for he comes. He comes to judge the earth and he will judge the world in righteousness. And the peoples in his faithfulness." It's as if King David is saying, come on everybody, come on, let's all join together. Let's have a party. The king is on

the throne. Let's sing. Let's dance. Come on. You can hear it. There's urgency here. This is a party. This is a celebration. And to put this Psalm in a little bit more context, nearly all 13 verses of Psalm 96 can be found in 1 Chronicles. And the occasion for this party was that the arc of the covenant had just been brought back to Jerusalem. And King David was excited. And the arc of the covenant, it signified God's presence among God's people.

So the cause of this celebration was that the Lord king was back. The king was among his people again. And now today we know that God's glory has been poured out on all flesh. We don't have to go to a particular location or have an arc to experience God's glory, but it's been poured out onto all of us. The veil has been torn, and we get to experience this all the time because the Holy Spirit has been poured out. The king is among us everywhere. And did you catch in this section what gets King David really excited? It's the fact that God, the king, is coming to judge the earth. In verse 10, it says that God will judge all people with equity. And God's kind of equity is pure. It's not flawed at all. And he's going to come and judge the world in righteousness and all the peoples in his faithfulness.

And I think sometimes when we think about that word judge or judgment, it's not celebrated, but it's in a more like negative connotation. But God's kind of judgment is celebrated here because there will come a day when all will be made right. And we get glimpses of it. But one day we're going to experience that in fullness. And so we put our faith and hope in God and what God's promised. And the point of judgment puts an exclamation point on this entire Psalm. It's King David's ending point of why he's so captivated by God. Because when we experience God in new and powerful ways, we're going to sing a new song. We're going to ascribe some glory God, and we're going to come together and realize, God, one day you're going to put it all right. In Revelation, which is the very last book of the Bible, it says that the people sang a new song there too.

The song in Revelation is sung to the lamb, it's sung to King Jesus, the king on the throne. And it goes like this. You are worthy. Jesus, you are worthy because you were slain. With your blood, you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and serve God. Just as King David says to sing a new song to God about how God has saved us, one day, we are going to stand before the king. Woo. I'm not sad. These are my meaningful tears. We're going to stand face to face before the king. Everybody together. I mean, there's never going to be a choir like this ever before. Every tribe, every tongue, every nation, face to face saying, holy, holy, holy. Over and over and over again. Woo, that gets me excited. But until that day when we come face to face with King Jesus, we experience the king among us now.

I think we've already sang this song or we're about to sing this song, the king among us, the king is among us. And the lyrics go like this. His glory surrounds us. His fire is falling as we sing. The Savior is for us. His love is victorious and revival is rising in his name. So Bell Pres, this week, pay attention to what makes you in awe of God. What makes you in awe of God? We cannot praise God too much. We cannot praise God too often. We cannot be overly joyful. The king is among us. And so we get to declare that together and praise him and sing to him.

God, we thank you that you are on the throne. God, we thank you that we get to declare everything that we have going on in our lives and at the same time, bring those things to you and declare that you are on the throne. You are worthy of all praise. So, King Jesus, show up to us this week. Show us ways that we can be in awe of you. Help us to work those muscles in new and powerful ways, Jesus. We love you. We thank you for who you are. It's in your name that we pray and everybody said together.

Amen.

Amen.

Discussion Questions:

Read this week's scripture(s) & answer the below questions with your friends, family, or All In small group.

Opening Question: Looking back to last week's sermon and scripture... How did you live differently or practice what we talked about in your life this week? What did you do and how did it go?

Scripture Reflection Questions: Read this week's scripture together and discuss the following:

- What do we learn about God (e.g., traits, personality, what matters, priorities) in this passage?
- What do we learn about people, and ourselves in particular, this week?

Sermon Reflection Questions: Reflecting on this week's sermon, discuss the following:

- When was the last time being in God's presence captivated you? Describe what you felt/sensed/experienced.
- In what ways is God's judgment good news for people of the earth?

Closing group prayer: Spend a few minutes together in your group sharing prayer requests and then praying together for each other. Thank God for the time together, the conversation shared, the other people in the group, and for encouragement in the week ahead.