

Psalm 2  
Feilding Baptist  
21.4.24

*Call to Worship*

Welcome to worship at Feilding Baptist Church!

Psalm 46 (NIV UK)

For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. According to alamoeth.[b] A song.

- 1 God is our refuge and strength,  
an ever-present help in trouble.
- 2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way  
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
- 3 though its waters roar and foam  
and the mountains quake with their surging.[c]
- 4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,  
the holy place where the Most High dwells.
- 5 God is within her, she will not fall;  
God will help her at break of day.
- 6 Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;  
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.
- 7 The Lord Almighty is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our fortress.
- 8 Come and see what the Lord has done,  
the desolations he has brought on the earth.
- 9 He makes wars cease  
to the ends of the earth.  
He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;  
he burns the shields[d] with fire.
- 10 He says, 'Be still, and know that I am God;  
I will be exalted among the nations,  
I will be exalted in the earth.'
- 11 The Lord Almighty is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Father God, thank you for Your strength. Thank you that we can take refuge with you. Thank you for being our help in times of trouble. Our troubles can be overwhelming, they can cause us to forget the good things, our high points, your victories. So I pray that this morning will be a positive time, where our faith is strengthened, reinforced, and that we would be grateful for this time to worship together. Thank you for this time to be grateful for Jesus, and for the freedom that Jesus has brought us. Thank you for the Holy Spirit, our guide, our inspiration, our ever present help. Thank you for being our strong fortress. Amen.

*Message - Who Rules the Earth?*

When we're troubled or unsettled, take refuge in Jesus.

It's the fences that I don't like in zoos. I like to be free, and I like to see animals free. I don't like the idea of animals being in an unnatural restricted space just for me to see. I like to see animals free. Like in wildlife sanctuaries. With predator proof fences birds especially can live freely without the need to worry about stoats, rats, hedgehogs, and cats...

Apparently, in one such sanctuary this week, a pile of feathers was found. Truly concerning. It appeared that the security of the sanctuary had been breached. But on closer inspection, with only some degree of relief, it was found that the resident falcon had chosen to sample some of the other residents.

Not unlike our Little Kat, who despite an ample supply of biskats, she sees a need to diversify her diet, preferring at times things with legs on. Sometimes two, sometimes four.

Bad things happen in the wide world, and also in the refuge of the sanctuary. As we looked at hope last week, our basis for hope in God, this week we tie in taking refuge in God. Our hope in God is because of God's faithfulness and compassion towards us (Lamentations 3). Our hope in God is because of God's incredible love for us (Romans 8). And our hope is in the person of Jesus, because of the grace and truth that He brings and provides. In these rock solid things we have hope. These give us good reason to take refuge in God.

But, we live in a world that sees independence from God as necessary. So we have this psalm, the second psalm in the Psalter, a psalm that is quoted in Acts and Hebrews, which suggests to me that it just might be of some significance, might be worth taking notice of. Let's read.

Psalm 2 New International Version - UK

1 Why do the nations conspire[a]  
and the peoples plot in vain?

2 The kings of the earth rise up  
and the rulers band together  
against the Lord and against his anointed,  
saying,

3 'Let us break their chains  
and throw off their shackles.'

4 The One enthroned in heaven laughs;  
the Lord scoffs at them.

5 He rebukes them in his anger  
and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,

6 'I have installed my king  
on Zion, my holy mountain.'

7 I will proclaim the Lord's decree:  
He said to me, 'You are my son;  
today I have become your father.'

8 Ask me,  
and I will make the nations your  
inheritance,  
the ends of the earth your possession.  
9 You will break them with a rod of iron[b];  
you will dash them to pieces like pottery.'

10 Therefore, you kings, be wise;  
be warned, you rulers of the earth.

11 Serve the Lord with fear  
and celebrate his rule with trembling.

12 Kiss his son, or he will be angry  
and your way will lead to your destruction,  
for his wrath can flare up in a moment.  
Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Footnotes

Psalm 2:1 Hebrew; Septuagint rage

Psalm 2:9 Or will rule them with an iron  
sceptre (see Septuagint and Syriac)

May God bless these words to our hearts and minds.

v1-3

This is a royal psalm, used at coronations, like the hymn Praise My Soul the King of Heaven, sung at both King Charles and Queen Elizabeth's coronations. This royal psalm is reminding the king to keep their eyes on God, to take refuge in God. It's reminding the incoming king, and us, that there will be plenty of people who will encourage us to remove our eyes from God. But blessed are those who take refuge in God. We have a choice.

Back to verse one we have the distractions, the nations are, well, restless, angry, raging, conspiring, depending on your translation.

Psalm 2:1

NASB [Why are the nations restless?](#)

NIV [Why do the nations conspire/rage?](#)

NLT [Why are the nations so angry?](#)

MSG [Why the big noise, nations?](#)

And it's not that these nations are conspiring and restless with each other. It's an internal disquiet. It's stuff happening within the borders.

Perhaps there's a double intent of this psalm? Yes, it's to ask the king at a coronation, but perhaps it's asking us, what makes us restless? Outside of us and inside. What disturbs our heart? What makes you restless, or angry? When do you rage? When is there dissatisfaction inside you?

But the question isn't a what, but - why? Why are the nations restless? Why do the peoples plot in vain? Why do we feel uptight and upset at different things? It's easy in marriage or when we're flattered to get annoyed about stuff... But when we stop and consider why, the annoying thing is often not so great.

But here, the answer to the why, comes as a shock. The nations are restless not because they are drifting from God, they are restless because they are deliberately distancing themselves from God. They're seeking independence from God! They want to be in control of themselves. They want to do their own thing. They think they know best. They want to be God.

That's why they're restless. Turning their back on God hasn't brought peace after all.

It's not surprising that these first two verses turn up as a quote in Acts 4. It's the section after the passage we looked at, a few weeks ago, so surely you read it as well? Remember, Peter and John were going into the temple, and they healed the blind guy on the steps. The rulers, elders and teachers of the law say, Hang on a minute, we can't have that sort of thing going on here. So they arrest Peter and John, and see them in the morning.

The courage and fluency of their defence leaves the Sanhedrin perplexed, how can these ordinary men speak like those who have been schooled? So they let them go, telling them to stop talking about Jesus.

Acts 4:23-31 New International Version - UK

The believers pray

[23 On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. 24 When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. 'Sovereign Lord,' they said, 'you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. 25 You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:](#)

[““Why do the nations rage  
and the peoples plot in vain?  
26 The kings of the earth rise up  
and the rulers band together  
against the Lord  
and against his anointed one.\[a\]”\[b\]](#)

[\[27 Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. 28 They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. 29 Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. 30 Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.'](#)

31 After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.]

#### Footnotes

- a) Acts 4:26 That is, Messiah or Christ
- b) Acts 4:26 Psalm 2:1,2

The Sanhedrin has turned its back on Jesus! Jesus is the Anointed One in Psalm 2:2! Here the people of the Sanhedrin are doing exactly what Herod and Pontius Pilate had done only a few weeks earlier in condemning Jesus, seeking to be free of Jesus. It adds fuel to what Stephen said in Acts 7, about these people v51

You are just like your ancestors: you always resist the Holy Spirit!

They, should that be we, when we try to be free of God, when we try to be in control, to do our own thing, be independent, ends up in restlessness, anger, rage, and conspiracy. Yes, conspiracy! Conspiracy is a lack of trust. And it's also about me being right and others being wrong. Conspiracy is also about independence and freedom.

John 8:36 (NIV - UK) reminds us that

36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

In fact, independence from God is not freedom but bondage (NICOT, 71). We are caught by death, evil, sin, Satan. Only God can free us from these things. Freedom comes from God, through Jesus. If we want to be truly free, we need to find refuge in God.

So, verse one, why do we conspire and plot against God? David is incredulous! It's so stupid! Which brings us to v4...

#### v4-6

The next three verses match the first three verses. v1 The nations conspire and people plot, v4, God laughs and scoffs!

v2 The kings of the earth rise up in their perceived strength, v5 God rebukes them and terrifies them.

v3 They seek freedom by breaking away from God, v6, God calmly installs the chosen king.

#### v7-9

And it's the chosen king that is the significance of v7. God through Luke writing in Acts wants us to get this point, that this is a prophecy about Jesus that we're to see. Again it's in Acts, chapter 13. Paul is speaking to the people in Antioch. Acts 13:32-35

32 'We tell you the good news: what God promised our ancestors 33 he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm:

“You are my son;  
today I have become your father.”[Psalm 2:7]

34 God raised him from the dead so that he will never be subject to decay. As God has said,

“I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David.”[Isaiah 55:3]

35 So it is also stated elsewhere:

“You will not let your holy one see decay.”[Psalm 16:10]

God has installed King Jesus (v6). God has broken the enemies to pieces (v9), what does it say, **dash them to pieces like pottery**. This wonderful image is lost on us. In ancient Greece you would smash

your plates and glasses after a meal so you didn't have to do the dishes. Well, in Egypt, you would have pottery with your enemy's faces painted on them, then smash them to smithereens!

I'm not sure it's a worthy outlet for anger, but they didn't have golf back then.

### **v10-12**

With that image in mind, smashing pottery, we might expect the last three verses to begin, 'So now...' Well, it's close, therefore. What is therefore, there for? Remember this is a royal psalm for use at coronations, a reminder in v10 for the kings to be wise.

Let's turn that back on us, the call for us to firstly, be wise. Secondly, accept this warning. Thirdly to, v11, serve the Lord with fear, that is respect, and (fourthly) celebrate His rule with trembling. Don't be like the nations who try to reject God, to live apart from God, embrace God, but live with Jesus!

And fifthly, the squirmy v12, about kissing the Son, is about kissing the feet of our King. It's about us being humble and obedient (NICOT, 70). It is this that leads to life.

Finally, the last line, which looks to be the whole point of what we've read - take refuge in God, that is how we will be blessed. Blessed as we were reminded last week from Lamentations, blessed because of the faithfulness of God, blessed because of the compassion of God, blessed because of the goodness of God.

We read in Romans 8 about incomparable love of God. What a blessing that is. We're blessed by the grace and truth that Jesus brought and offers. We're blessed with hope.

Psalm 2 begins with 'Why?' Why would you not want the blessing of God? Let's take refuge in God, Father, Jesus, and Holy Spirit.

### *Benediction*

by Nathan Nettleton

(inspired by Luke 16:19-31 and 1 Timothy 6:6-19)

Go now and take hold of the life that really is life.  
Shun the eagerness for money  
but be rich in good works.  
Pursue righteousness, godliness,  
faith, love, endurance and gentleness.

And may God be your refuge and fortress;  
May Christ Jesus free you from all that ensnares you;  
And may the Holy Spirit provide you with everything  
for godliness and contentment.

We go in peace to love and serve the Lord,  
In the name of Christ. Amen.