

Political Power, Purity Spirals, and the Perfections of Christ

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 06 July 2025

Preacher: Chris Oswald

[0 : 00] Let's pray. Let me pray actually for you in particular as you're sitting here this morning.

! Oh, Father God, we have such a hope.! We have such a hope. We serve the living God. You have demonstrated your faithfulness both in Scripture and in history, and we have no reason to doubt you.

Lord, there's only one person that we can lean on with all of our weight and know that you will never fail. You will never leave or forsake us. You have all of the, not only willingness, but ability to be steadfast in your love toward us.

We praise your name for how faithful you are, not only to us as individuals, but how faithful you've been to this earth that you created, to the human race who you made, who rebelled against you. Lord, you have been more than faithful. We praise your holy name, dear God. In Jesus' great name we pray. Amen. Be seated. During the Revolutionary War, the primary weapon was, of course, the black powder musket, single shot.

[1 : 16] And for those of you who are unfamiliar with how that works, well, you drop the lead ball into the barrel, and then you'd stuff a piece of paper, wadding, cloth, into the barrel to keep that bullet from falling out, and then you would fire your musket and voila.

Well, during the Battle of Springfield in Massachusetts, during the Revolutionary War, one of the men on the good side, Reverend James Caldwell, he has commanding a small regiment, and they ran out of wadding paper, which was, of course, absolutely necessary to fire the muskets.

But he saw a church nearby, and he told his men to run in and grab some hymnals. And so they ran in and grabbed hymnals and came back out to the battle, and he says, Give them watts, boys. Feed them watts. It meant go into the hymnals and look for the Isaac Watts hymns. And tear those up in particular and use those as your weapons of war.

That's a song that we sang a couple of songs before. Jesus shall reign where'er the sun doth its successive journeys run. His kingdom stretch from shore to shore till moon shall wax and wane no more.

[2 : 31] That particular hymn was shot at the British in the Revolutionary War, amongst other famous Isaac Watts hymns, including Joy to the World, which at that time, and as it should be, was not known as a Christmas carol.

It was just a hymn that people sang, and I really would love to get back to that. Isaac Watts specialized in this great vision of Jesus advancing through history, expressed often in the word dominion.

And his song that we sang just a moment ago, Jesus Shall Reign, is actually based on, at least partly, Psalm 72. In one particular section of Psalm 72, it says, In his days may the righteous flourish and peace abound till the moon be no more.

May his dominion from sea to sea and from the rivers to the ends of the earth. May desert tribes bow down before him and his enemies lick the dust. May the kings of Tarshish and of the coastland render him tribute.

May the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts. May all kings fall down before him. All nations serve him. Now, as we've seen through several other psalms, it's just so common to find at least two layers of interpretive meaning in the psalms, one of them being a Christological layer of meaning.

[3 : 59] And so Psalm 72 is most certainly, ultimately, about Jesus. And that's what Isaac Watts was thinking about as he wrote his hymn. But the first layer of interpretation, which I guess you could say is a more literal one, is that someone is praying for political power.

Someone is praying for political power. Now, if you're interested in politics, you're excited right now because you get to hear about politics on a Sunday morning and praise God for that. And if you're not, I would just encourage you, like, just suspend your disbelief or your disinterest for a second. These are glorious truths. I promise you that. Someone is praying for political power. Who is it that's praying, first of all? It says at the beginning of the psalm that this is a psalm of Solomon. But at the end of the psalm, in the final verse, we have this. The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended. Here's the two possibilities. One is that this is actually better translated a psalm for Solomon, a prayer for Solomon, and that David is the one praying this for his son who will soon take over the throne.

Or it's possible that this is Solomon's prayer. But the main idea to get a hold of is that this is a prayer specifically asking for political power. I just read that in section, like, 8 through 11, verses 8 through 11.

[5 : 21] It includes this phrase, May the kings of Tarshish and of the coastlands render him tribute. May the kings of Sheba and Sheba bring gifts. May all kings fall down before him.

All nations serve him. This is a prayer not for a place amongst the nations, but this is a prayer to be a superpower, to be the dominant nation among the nations.

This is asking God for political power. In verse 15, you see more of it. Long may he live. May the gold of Sheba be given to him. May prayer be made for him continually and blessings invoked for him all the day.

May there be abundance of grain in the land and on the tops of the mountains may it wave. May its fruit be like Lebanon and may people blossom in the cities like the grass of the field. May his name endure forever.

His fame continue as long as the sun. May people be blessed in him. All nations be blessed in him. All nations call him blessed. So again, whoever's praying this, it could be Solomon praying for himself.

[6 : 23] It could be David praying for Solomon. The request is simple, political power. I want, Lord, would you give this king not only in significance in his own territory, but would you give this king significance across all territories?

And the first thing we'd say about this, because I think this is an important concept, I think power is something we need to think a lot more about. We need to be more familiar with and comfortable with how the Bible, how God talks about power in general.

And so one of the things we could say right away is, this would be point number one, whoever is praying this is going to the right place. They're asking God for political power.

The first key to true political power is to understand where it comes from, and the Bible says that it comes from the Lord. Revelation 13.1. There is no authority except God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.

Let me give you just a little preview, and like if you're not interested in any of this. I guarantee if you're not interested in power or understanding it, you're going to pick the wrong people to be around, because you'll wind up eschewing people who have ambitions as if they're arrogant, which is not always the case.

[7 : 35] So it's really good to think about this stuff. And one of the things we see is that they are going to the right place. It is God who gives political power. Jesus tells Pilate, you would have no authority unless it had been given to you from above.

Daniel 2.20, blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might. He changes times and seasons. He removes kings and sets up kings. So they're going to the right place and asking for the political power because it is indeed God who gives it.

Number two, second point, they're making the right plan. As you look more carefully at this psalm, you will see that the prayer isn't asking for political power just because.

He has asked for something else before asking for political power. Look at verse one. Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the royal son.

May he judge your people with righteousness and your poor with justice. Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people and the hills in righteousness.

[8 : 38] May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the children of the needy, and crush the oppressor. What's going on here is he's not simply, he's going to the right person, he's asking God for political power, but he's not asking for it just on its own.

He's actually asking for something before the power, and that is, may this king, may I or my son, be a defender of the defenseless. This is an interesting layer to this.

He's not asking for political power just because. He's actually asking, may I be the kind of person who defends the defenseless, and because of that behavior, may my throne continue, and my throne endure.

In other words, the plan is, I'm going to ask God for power by asking God to help me be the kind of person he blesses. Right?

I'm going to ask God for success by asking him to help me be the kind of person whom he blesses. And the kind of person whom he blesses, particularly in the political world, but not only, is the kind of person who cares for the defenseless.

[9 : 52] That's why he goes from saying, God, help me to look after the poor, or help my son to look after the poor. Help them to defend the defenseless. Help them to crush the oppressor.

Then he says, may that kingdom endure forever. The kingdom that does that. May the king who does that kind of stuff endure forever. And so what you've got in Psalm 72 is this is just alternating. It's a call. Let the king stand up for the weak. Let the king stand up for the poor. And may he endure forever. And then it says in verse 12, for, why do we want him to live forever?

Why do we want his kingdom to expand and take over the whole world? For, he delivers the needy when he calls. The poor and him who has no helper. He has pity on the weak and the needy and saves the lives of the needy.

From oppression and violence, he redeems their life. And precious is their blood in his sight. And then from there, you get another whole section of, therefore, may his kingdom expand.

[10 : 55] May he be the winner in every war. May all of the other nations come and give tribute to this one who has dedicated the use of his power in the way that God expects men with power to use it.

To defend those who cannot defend themselves. So they're going to the right person for their political power. God's the one who gives it. And they have the right plan. I will ask God to make me the kind of king worthy of expansion.

I will ask God to make me the kind of man worthy of being blessed. Worthy of having increased influence. And so forth. And this is a dynamic that you'll see all throughout the scriptures.

It is the king who stands up for the weak who God wills should advance and expand his territory. People forget that at the beginning of Psalm, or Proverbs 31, Lemuel, the king's mom, before she tells him what an excellent wife is, she tells him what an excellent king is.

And this, listen to this. It's Proverbs 31, verses 1 through 9. What are you doing, my son? What are you doing, son of my womb? Ladies, this is, you've got to talk to your voices. What are you doing, my son?

[12 : 08] What are you doing, son of my womb? What are you doing, son of my vows? Listen to what she tells her son. Do not give your strength to women, your ways to those who destroy kings.

It is not for kings, O Lemuel. It is not for kings to drink wine, or rulers to take strong drink. Why? Lest they drink and forget what has been decreed and pervert the rights of the afflicted.

What is Lemuel's job as king? To soberly offend the rights of the afflicted. Give strong drink to the one who is perishing and wine to those who are bitter and distressed.

Let them drink and forget their poverty and remember their misery no more. But you, son, you open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute. Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.

So God has a role for political power. And that role is, broadly speaking, to defend the rights of the needy. Romans 13 says that the government bears the sword.

[13 : 20] Why? To carry out God's wrath on the evil doer. First Peter says that every institution, every government exists for one thing only, to punish those who do evil and praise those who do good.

So the plan of the prayer is quite correct. I'm going to ask God to make this king the kind of king whom he will bless. Now, let's take a few minutes to think through how this played out in Solomon's life.

I'll give you the three to four minute version of Solomon's life. There's some details I think are important here. Solomon takes over for David with David's blessing. In 1 Kings 3, we're sort of introduced to the early days of his rule.

One of the things we see initially, immediately actually, is that he takes an Egyptian woman to be his wife, which is, in the Bible, is basically code for he put a time bomb in his house.

It never goes well. It's always a mistake. We're actually forbidden from doing this. And so, the first thing we see Solomon do is sin. And then it says, but he loved the Lord.

[14 : 30] And then it says, however, however, he offered thousands of offerings on the high places, which is also something God is very much against.

Now, actually, as Solomon, this is all 1 Kings 3, as Solomon is arresting after a long day of sacrificing on the high places, God visits him in a dream and says, ask anything at all and it will be yours.

Now, we probably all know, what did he ask for? Wisdom. But why did he want wisdom? He wanted wisdom to execute this particular vision of leadership.

He wanted wisdom to be able to understand the right and the wrong and to stand up for those who needed standing up for. The Lord mercifully, after several sins are revealed very early on in his life, God appears to him and says, what do you want?

And Solomon said, you have shown great and steadfast love to your servant David, my father, because he walked before you in faithfulness and righteousness and an uprightness of heart toward you. And you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and you've given him a son to sit on his throne this day.

[15 : 44] And now, O Lord, my God, you have made your servant king in place of David, my father, though I am but a little child. I do not know how to come out, how to go out or come in.

And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen to have a high regard for the people. He takes it very seriously. These are God's people. I am in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude.

Give your servant, therefore, an understanding mind to govern this people that I might discern between good and evil for who is able to govern this great people.

Now, God is absolutely pleased with this request because, again, the heart of it isn't just give me wisdom for wisdom's sake. It's give me wisdom so I can do my job, my job being to care for this great people.

The Lord responds, because you have asked this and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, behold, I now do according to your word.

[16 : 49] Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall rise after you. I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you all your days.

And if you walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days. So Solomon doesn't start off perfect, but thanks to God's mercy and God's lack of perfectionism, God's perfect, but he's not a perfectionist, especially when it comes to politics.

Good hint to all of us. Politics is the art of the possible. It's a fundamentally pragmatic thing. God says, you know, you're wrong on these areas, but you're the king and I want to bless you.

What do you need? And Solomon rightly answers, I need wisdom so that I can take care of your people. And God's like, absolutely, absolutely. That's exactly what I wanted you to ask for.

I'm going to bless you with everything else, including expansion, as a consequence of you putting the people first. Now, how does this go for Solomon? Initially, we see tremendous fruit from this approach.

[17 : 58] His people first approach, leaders eat last approach, has him being blessed and the evidence of his wisdom is great. And we see early signs that Psalm 72 is going to happen because we see the Queen of Sheba coming in to seek his wisdom and other nations coming in to seek his wisdom.

There's a golden era within Solomon's reign, but why doesn't it just keep going? Why aren't we worshipping Solomon now and not Jesus? There's layers to that theologically, of course.

Well, eventually, Solomon started using his power for self-centered reasons. He began to accumulate everything there was to accumulate, so much so that at the end of the story of Solomon, after he dies, the people go to his son and say, your father was extremely hard on us.

Your father laid a heavy yoke on us. And specifically, he was taxing them excessively, he was inscripting them into forced labor, and he was taking their daughters to be in his concubines. This man who started off trembling before the Lord, asking for wisdom so that he could execute justice on behalf of the Lord for God's people, falls the way we often see power take people, where there's this incredible invitation to self-centeredness.

[19 : 33] And listen, friends, if you've ever made it on another rung, whether that's an income rung, a health rung, whatever, if you've ever ascended, you will, you probably, if you have self-awareness, understand that basically, immediately, there are new invitations to selfishness in that ascendancy.

You hit a certain nest egg number, you reach a certain fitness level, you have a certain level of influence at work, whatever, as soon as that hits, there's almost always an invitation for you to be a selfish dork about it.

And that's how the story of Solomon ends. Now, let's go just quickly to the Christological layer. Many years later, many years later, at the outset of his ministry, Jesus appears in his home synagogue in Nazareth, and he asks for the scroll of Isaiah to be handed to him, and he reads from Isaiah 61.

The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

Y'all hear the same thing, right? The same kingly function taking place in Isaiah 61 as described in Psalm 72. Jesus is saying the exact same thing, just reading from a different passage.

[21 : 00] There are many passages that say it this way. The Lord has called me to stand up for those who are enslaved. The Lord has called me to stand up for those who can't stand up for yourself.

And after he read that, he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and everyone's just staring at him in the synagogue. And there's this uncomfortable tension, and at some point Jesus says this, Today, this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.

And the promises of Isaiah 61 are just like what we see in Psalm 72. If you are the kind of leader who lays down your life for others, and you stand up for those who can't stand up for yourself, you have every right to expect your kingdom to expand.

That's how Isaiah 61 and Isaiah 62 unfold, and I won't read all that to you. You can skip ahead on those slides just for the sake of time. So I guess you could say this, write plan, write prayer, you know, God give me political power, write plan, give me political power by giving me the kind of character that allows me to stand up for the weak.

Wrong person, I guess you might say. It happened to some degree in Solomon, but to a much greater degree in Christ.

[22 : 23] So that's just the next position of Psalm 72, and let me spend the next, you know, 10 minutes or so giving you some application on what we've just seen.

Firstly, if you want to be great, or you want your children to be great, follow the pattern you see in Psalm 72. Appeal to the Lord, not for the thing itself, but that God would give your children the kind of character that would warrant his blessings.

Do not simply pray for your children to be successful, to avoid all of the, here's, I would say these are probably three layers of parenting. The first would be a non-Christian but good parent, and their aim is going to make sure that that kid has everything he needs to accumulate enough financial stability so as to be relatively self-sufficient.

say like, good but lost parent A would be, I want you to be able to do well in your job. I want you to have a good job. From there, you could say that saved, good parent, level one, would be something like, I'm going to, in addition to helping them provide for themselves, I really want them to like avoid a lot of the big life-changing sins.

So this is where protection comes into play and we're trying to take care of our kids and protect them. There's a third level though and I don't think that most parents understand this and that is, I want my child to be like historically great.

[23 : 57] In eternity, I want my child to be a big deal. And the way that I will do that is I will help them find service to be more familiar than selfishness.

I will make service normal and selfishness strange. So what you do if you want something to be great is you ask it to be worthy of greatness and the Bible's got a simple plan for that. Lord God, if I'm praying for my kids, Lord God, help my kids eat last. Help my kids have the instinct to lay down their lives for people who need their service. Help my kids find their strength and use it to serve the weak. And if I ask those things, Angela and I, this was mainly our prayers for our kids that God would help them use their strength to serve the weak.

Do you think that's because Ange and I are so concerned about the weak? Or, do you think it's because we love our kids? We like the weak.

[24 : 56] You know, we're nothing against them. We love them. But what we were asking wasn't because we were so concerned about the weak. What we were asking was we were so concerned that our kids be in God's blessings.

And the way for that to happen is really obvious. You teach your kids to be servants. And when they serve, they will become great. There's so much misunderstanding about this.

In Matthew 20, 25, the disciples are jockeying for position as they often do. And Jesus says, you know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them and their great ones exercise authority over them.

It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant. And whoever would be first among you must be your slave. Even as the Son of Man came not to serve, but to serve, not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

That verse gets read very poorly often as if Jesus is telling them, you guys want to be great, stop trying to want to be great. That's not what's happening at all. He's saying, here's how to be great.

[26 : 09] You guys want to be great, here's how to be great. Serve. Give your life as a ransom for many. That's the path to greatness. It's the path that Jesus himself followed so that now he has a name above every name and his kingdom endures forever.

So the first point is, it's actually a wonderful thing to want people to be great. It's wonderful for you to be great. It's wonderful for you to want your kids to be great. Here's how that works. It's actually all over the word. Let them lay down their lives.

Let them use their strength to serve the weak. Let them be instruments for justice and you will see God bless them. That's what Ann's just talking about tomorrow night at Ladies Night.

Secondly, this psalm provides a very simple and biblical explanation for the purpose of political power. The Bible's very clear on this. The purpose of political power is to stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves.

Every other thing a politician offers to do is basically outside of their job description. This is the one thing we want you to do, guys. We just want you to stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves.

[27 : 11] Now, that means that means that at some points in history it is easy to see which nations deserve extinction and which nations deserve expansion.

Let's take the lazy, historical, godless way of talking about this is colonialism and guns, germs, and steel. No, it's a lazy, materialistic explanation.

Here's the explanation. British versus India. Well, which one was burning widows and enslaving an entire people group? Which one deserved to lose and which one deserved to win?

Spain and the Mayans. Which one deserved to win and which one deserved to lose? And the modern approach is to say, well, they were both flawed on both sides.

Well, of course they were both flawed on both sides. But that's not the question. The question is, who is using their political power to do the most fundamental thing you're supposed to do the best? And so, actually, if you're wanting to understand why history has unfolded the way it has, I would suggest just asking this simple question.

[28 : 23] Generally speaking, what we really want in life is not for this nation to win or that nation to win or the West to win or the East to win or anything like that. We just want the people who are going to be the nicest to our kids and our wives.

We want the people who will stand up for the weak to win. I would argue that throughout much of history, the left can't admit that that's happened repeatedly.

And it happened in this very place with the Native Americans amongst others. And if you can't kill Rousseau in your mind, Rousseau believed that the Native, there was this state of nature in which

people were naturally at peace and civilization comes and messes everything up. It's just completely nonsense. The world was full savagery and every kind of deep, deep chauvinism. Let me just say it this way and I'll move on.

Can't become a history teacher right now. How about we say this? The guys who believe in the existence of the concept of consent, we'd like them to win more than the guys who don't.

[29 : 32] How about that? That seems to fit here and the Bible is really clear. The people who believe in that deserve to win and the people who don't deserve to go extinct. That's reality.

Third point. This makes it very important that we be careful where we get our definitions from. In the Christian West, it has long been the case that he who defines who the poor are becomes the director of the national policy.

Christian West believes that we should look after the weak and the defenseless. And so whoever gets the right to decide who the weak and defenseless are winds up being kind of in charge.

But one of the things we see from the Christological fulfillment that's kind of interesting to me is Jesus gets up and he says, you know, this is happening right now. I am freeing the oppressed right now. And he was taking, he was assuming the center and he was saying, I get to decide who the oppressed are.

I'm telling you who the oppressed are and you are the oppressed. And the religious leaders would say, yes, they are oppressed by Rome and so forth. The religious leaders were accumulating power for themselves by saying that the real problem was political, Rome, so forth.

[30 : 50] And Jesus is like, no, your oppressors, to the extent that they're human, your oppressors are the religious leaders. And even more so sin and the devil and so forth. So one of the things as we do politics as Christians is we are always extremely skeptical of someone who assumes this is who the weak are.

This is who the poor are. Therefore, we must serve and bend to them. This was magnificently displayed when someone decided that those who wanted to wear masks needed to be deferred to those who didn't.

Someone took the center and used that as a pivot point for power. So we have to be very careful who defines who the weak are. And here's where I think we could probably agree at least in this room.

Maybe we don't listen to anyone's definition of who the oppressed are who wouldn't agree to the following. By far, the most oppressed and endangered people in America are those currently living in feminist wombs.

maybe we should say if you can't agree to that, then we can't have a conversation about who's oppressed. The most dangerous, endangered human is not the black man who gets pulled over by the white cop.

[32 : 13] It's not the woman walking on a university campus. It's the embryo inside of a woman who thinks she has a right to kill it. So, for me personally, I'm all about caring for the oppressed.

I'm just not going to give anyone, just anyone, the power to say who the oppressed are. I'm going to think that one through for myself, thank you.

And the reality is is that there is no more tyrannical and oppressive group in the West than feminists. There are 60 million babies dead as a consequence of this particular ideology.

All the while, these people diabolically claim to be oppressed. So, I think you could probably see what I'm getting at. If the fundamental purpose of government is to stand up for those who can't stand up for themselves, we don't entrust the government to tell us who the oppressed are.

We use our own minds, we use the word, and we say, well, here's a group of oppressed people. What are you doing for them? And on that question, amongst other questions, will sort of hang whether we as a nation deserve to expand or we deserve to become extinct.

[33 : 32] Fourth, Jesus' deliverance was never meant to stop at the spiritual. It's not as if because we see Jesus fulfilling this psalm in a spiritual way, we get to walk away from politics.

The truth is is that God has given political power in the world to be used to care for the people we're supposed to care for, the weak, the defenseless, and so forth. So just because Jesus came and fulfilled this at a spiritual level doesn't exempt us from thinking carefully about the political.

In fact, if we love our neighbors, we will want policies that help them and their children and protect them when they can't protect themselves. Fifth, and this is where we'll end it.

And this is more of a warm and fuzzy thought, but after all that heat. One of the glorious things about seeing the perfections of Jesus is that it helps us to be realistic with everything else. When Jesus becomes the central hero of history, the people and the human institutions that you interact with don't have to be heroic anymore.

[34 : 46] They don't have to be romantic. They could just like maybe work and maybe not even and definitely not perfectly. See, we're meant to kind of hero worship.

And when you read the philosophers, you'll find that many of the philosophers had some hero, heroic human in view. You know, Nietzsche had the Ubermensch and Hobbes had the Leviathan. And Aristotle had the magnanimous leader. And what they're doing is they're envisioning this perfect leader who just is, this is the leader we need to take care of us.

And one of the things that's interesting is is that when you decide that Jesus is your hero, people can just be people again. You don't have to have everything out of every person.

And I think this is really key for politics. politics can simply be a flawed, pragmatic means to an end versus my Savior, my Lord and my Savior.

[35 : 53] The standard I hold for politicians can be much lower if I hold Jesus much higher. I'm not looking for this person to be my Savior. I'm just looking for this person to do better at taking care of the weak.

when we worship Jesus in his rightful place, we get removed from this terrible cycle that I think all of us have been in.

I made a quick chart on PowerPoint to describe this. So, advances, there you go. So, this is life without Christ. It's a series of rising expectations for the new thing in your life followed by a period of idolization and then disillusionment and despair.

When you're in your 20s, teens and 20s, men and women, this is you interacting with you. You see all this potential you have.

You see all the things you don't want to do, all the compromises you don't want to make. You want to avoid all of these errors and so forth. You want to be a certain kind of person. You develop this very romantic vision for yourself and your expectations increase for yourself all the way to the point where you think you're really something and then you're idle because it's an idle.

[37 : 14] This is what God does to idols. It falls on its face and it's broken up and you're in a disillusionment period. Probably the next one that happens is marriage. You think, well, this is really, you know, I know, man was not made to be alone, but man, if I just had this helpmate, that would be great.

And so your expectations increase for that and at some point, you know, it's just great and you begin to idolize that probably before you get married. And then at some point within marriage, actually multiple times within marriage, a disillusionment and despair crash will follow.

This is what happens to most people as they engage in politics. they start off with a sense that it could do almost anything and that there are so many goods that we could accomplish if we just got our political wins and then it ascends to some level of idolatry and then we start seeing all the cracks in the foundation, all the flaws, all the lies, and we become disillusioned and pull back.

This is true of self-improvement at any age, but especially in middle age, I'm going to make up for a bunch of bad habits that I developed, I'm going to overcome this or that thing and you develop expectations.

This is true if you have saved a fair bit of money. This is just true across the board. A life without Christ, this is just going to be your life. What's sad about it is that every new thing that comes along you think this is the one that won't disappoint you.

[38 : 48] But there's another way. When you enter into worship with Jesus, which is, I've got another chart for that, when you enter into worshiping Jesus, this is actually going to be your experience with Jesus.

Your expectations will build and build and build and then at some point you'll look around and realize he's exceeded all of your expectations. And you trust him some more and then your expectations build and build and build and again you find he exceeded your expectations.

Now, what's nice is that when this is in your life, you still have to deal with all the other stuff. but because you have one area of your life where he doesn't disappoint you, he doesn't fail, you can trust in him and he will always come through for you, then everything else in life sort of falls down to like, well, it's important, but I don't have to freak out about it.

I don't have to purity spiral over this or that thing. It matters, but it's not my God, which I think is actually what Psalm 72 is doing. It's showing us the importance of political power. It really can and should be used, but it also shows us the limitations, because ultimately there is but one person who will absolutely execute justice perfectly every single time and never fall into selfishness, and that is Jesus Christ, our Lord.

[40 : 10] So I want to leave you with that call, that beautiful call, to say, you know, I don't need to look at politics and say, ooh, this is gross, everyone's a liar, I'm running away, I'm having nothing to do with it, I don't need to get disillusioned with it.

I also don't need to idolize it, because I have a Jesus. He can fulfill all my needs. I can go do this stuff, work, marriage, self-improvement, without getting my existential hopes wrapped up in it. What you could see in, for instance, Ephesians 2, is that Jesus did come to save you when you could not save yourself. He did come and liberate you when you could not liberate yourself. You were dead in your sins and trespasses, you were enslaved to your passions, you were following the ruler, the prince of the power, the ruler of the air, and he came and stood up for you when you were the most oppressed. That doesn't mean that he only cares about your spiritual oppression, but he knows full well that at the end of the day, all other oppression flows out of the heart.

And if he can create, over the history of thousands of years, a group of people who are free from internal oppression, that has a very interesting consequence on the world.

[41 : 25] So for communion, I will just go ahead and read from Ephesians 2. verse 2.

filled. They're like, you're going to overthrow Rome? You're going to fix this problem or that problem? No, I'm going to fix the one in here. You're dead. You need to be saved.

So he gives them grace. Verse 4, but God being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ, by grace you have been saved and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages, he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your doing. It is the gift of God, not a result of work, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Let's pray. Lord God, we praise your holy name that you are the defender of the helpless. helpless. We praise your holy name that you value that so much that it's actually the basis, that's why you created political power, and it's why you bless some nations and end others.

[43 : 07] We pray for our country that we would do what is right. We pray that you would help us to stand up for the most oppressed people in the world right now, which are unborn babies.

We pray that you would help us, God, to stand up for people in this country who cannot stand up for themselves. We ask, Lord, that you would do this not only for the sake of these children and for the sake of your glory, but also for the sake of the country we do love.

Please, Lord, help us to be right on this. God, we pray for our kids. Would you help our kids to be instruments of justice for decades into the future, that they would reflexively stand up for what is right, even at their own cost, that they would reflexively choose service over selfishness.

We pray this, Lord, not only for the sake of all the good that that will accomplish, but also for the good that it will be given to them as they obey you. We pray, God, that most of all, we would have our hearts excited by Jesus Christ continually.

He never lets us down. And if we can enter into a life of worship where Jesus is big, everything else takes its proper proportions. Lord, I pray today that you would fill our hearts full of faith as we partake in your table, as we're reminded that you did give your life for us.

[44 : 24] And I pray, God, for anyone in this room who is living this cycle of expectations, idolizations, and disillusionment. God, take that away from them and give them you.

Why do they spend money on that which does not satisfy? Lord, please give them you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Come and get your elements and turn to your seat and we'll partake together.

God, if you know Thank you.