

Week 19: The King's Prophecy
Psalms 16, 22, 67, 69
May 11/12
Hidden Qualities of a Godly Leader

Summary & Goal:

As we move into the Kingdom Era in our Chronological Bible series, we're also working through a five-week sub-series called, *Hidden Qualities of a Godly Leader*. While notable leadership can certainly encompass many virtuous qualities in general, these 'hidden qualities' we'll be looking at in particular focus on what makes Godly Leaders, truly, 'Godly' Leaders. In this week's study, we will be looking at prophecy—spoken through the mouthpiece of David the psalmist—about the godly leadership of Jesus in the book of Psalms.

Main Passages:

Psalm 16
Psalm 22
Psalm 67
Psalm 69

Session Outline:

A Godly Leader:

1. Focuses on Fulfillment (Psalm 16)
2. Trusts through Trial (Psalm 22)
3. Blesses with Blessing (Psalm 67)
4. Rests in Restoration (Psalm 69)

Session in a Sentence:

Godly Leaders behold the God who walked through all of life's circumstances.

Kingdom Connection:

The Kingdom of God is not an ethereal, intangible reality up in the sky, nor is it a personal, subjective way of life. Rather, it is a concrete, tangible reality on the earth, embodied in a historical, objective person in time: Jesus Christ. In the person of Jesus Christ, the Kingdom of God came down to earth, took on flesh, lived and breathed among us, experienced what we experience, suffered what we suffer, and came to lead by first going through what we have gone through ourselves. Significantly, the Kingdom of God—knowing that we could never relate to it on our own—came to relate to us for our own sake. In Jesus Christ, we're able to see the hidden qualities of a Godly Leader, thankfully, because God came to lead us.

Missional Application:

David penned these four Psalms in times of both trial and triumph. His cries of agony and adoration, however, prophetically point to a person who would one day lead us by entering into our own ups and downs. Godly leaders, therefore, behold the God who walked through life's trials and triumphs first, seeking to apply this good news to their own unique context and into the contexts of others.

Introduction:

The movie *Hot Rod* is a classic comedy known perhaps only to high school boys. It's a film that features a son, Rod, who strives to gain his father's approval by becoming an acclaimed motocross stunt man. He believed his father was once a famous stuntman, only to find out that he was not one after all. His father's lack of presence and experience in the motocross world only left Rod disabled to truly actualize his dream career. Tragically, the movie communicates a profound point: effective leadership works best when someone who has already gone before us, can walk beside us as we try to navigate on a new path. Otherwise, it's not substantial leadership; it's just hollow advice.

The following lesson is divided into 4 points, each point derived from one of the four Psalms for this week.

1. A Godly Leader Focuses on Fulfillment (Psalm 16)

*O my soul, you have said to the LORD,
"You are my Lord,
My goodness is nothing apart from You." Psalm 16:2
Chronological Bible May 7th, pg. 509*

*You will show me the path of life;
In Your presence is fullness of joy;
At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore. Psalm 16:11
Chronological Bible May 7th, pg. 509*

As a king, it is surprising to hear from David that 'My goodness is nothing apart from you' (16:2). If anyone had access to 'good things' on earth, surely it was King David. David had all the comforts of this world; he had family, friends, wealth, pleasure, power, security, good looks, and the approval of others. And if there was something that he didn't have, then he could easily attain it by virtue of his royal position. Yet, isn't it profound that David says, 'My goodness is nothing apart from you'?

Ultimately, David is making the statement that everything minus God equals nothing. He's not saying that blessings are not good things in themselves; rather, he is saying that they do not fulfill in the way that God does. An old church father, St. Augustine famously said, "Our hearts will be restless until they rest in you."

Theologian John Piper also chimes in quite profoundly, noting that verse 11 communicates two dimensions of fulfillment in God here: 'fullness' and 'forevermore.' He states that these two words communicate a type of joy that is maximal both in depth and in length. You can't get any greater than 'fullness,' and you can't get any longer than 'forevermore.' God is conveying through David's psalm that fulfillment can only happen through God because we were primarily made for God, not things.

I've heard it said that the scariest thing in life is not to climb up the 'ladder' of fulfillment and *fail* to reach the top. Rather, it's actually *reaching* the top rung of the ladder only to realize that the ladder was leaning upon the wrong building. What 'ladder' of fulfillment are you climbing up for the hopes of achieving fulfillment? A 'perfect' family unit?

Being married? A cancer-free life? A promotion in your job? The approval of others? Although these things are certainly blessings from God, they will never fulfill like God.

We know of one person who did have a perfect life. This figure owned more than King David ever did. This figure had the perfect family unit. This figure had the perfect life of comfort and power. Yet, this figure gave it all up. His name is Jesus Christ. He left all that He had as an equal of God (Philippians 2). Why, or how? He was able to give it all up gladly and go to the cross because the love of the Father was everything to Him. If anyone knew and had access to all of the world's fulfillment, it was Jesus. Yet, He found His true fulfillment in God's love for Him.

2. A Godly Leader Trusts through Trial (Psalm 22)

*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?
Why are You so far from helping Me,
And from the words of My groaning? Psalm 22:1
Chronological Bible May 8th, pg. 513*

*For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted;
Nor has He hidden His face from Him;
But when He cried to Him, He heard. Psalm 22:24
Chronological Bible May 8th, pg. 513*

One of the most difficult things to do is to trust God through trial—believing in His goodness and power and wisdom so much that it actually quenches worry and cultivates confidence instead. In Psalm 22, David was undergoing an intense trial, and by every look at his circumstances, it seemed as if God had left him out to dry.

Have you ever been through a trial so intense that it seemed like God had completely abandoned you? David felt that way, too. The Bible includes raw, gut-wrenching stories like these to let you know that you're not alone. God encourages you to share your heart with Him, just like David did here. David didn't understand what he was going through, and he didn't understand how God could possibly be present or working in his situation. But prophetically, David's voice and concerns are echoed from another figure—the one who would give him confidence that God had not abandoned him after all.

Jesus Christ uttered these exact words at Calvary, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" in Matthew 27:46. Except, when Jesus expressed these words, it was not because He *felt* like God had abandoned Him. It was precisely because God *had* abandoned Him. On the cross, Jesus suffered and died in our place, experiencing the just wrath of God for our sin so that we wouldn't have to be abandoned by God.

By faith, we can gain Jesus' perfect righteousness, which means God will never abandon us. The text says in verse 24, "For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; Nor has He hidden His face from Him; but when He cried to Him, He heard." In other words, because Jesus suffered in our place and was cast out for our sin, that means our suffering does not mean God has cast us out if we are his children.

Because of the Gospel, though we might not ever understand every particularity of our suffering, we can know what our suffering does *not* mean; it does *not* mean that God has abandoned us in our suffering. Because Jesus came into our context and suffered, God is able to relate to us and empathize with us in a way that would have otherwise been impossible. Therefore, knowing He has suffered for us in our greatest trial of sin, we can know He is loving us and holding on to us tightly in our circumstantial trials—and so we can have trust.

3. A Godly Leader Blesses with Blessing (Psalm 67)

*God be merciful to us and bless us,
And cause His face to shine upon us,
2 That Your way may be known on earth,
Your salvation among all nations. Psalm 67:1-2;
Chronological Bible May 12th, pp. 536-537*

This is a verse that we see glazed on coffee cups or stamped on bookmarks in Christian bookstores. It's a warm verse that resonates with us all. However, perhaps the most important word—and maybe the most overlooked—in the entire passage is not the word 'blessing,' but the conjunction, 'that,' some translations use "so that."

Many people read the first verse, "God, be gracious and bless us and make your face shine upon us..." But too often, they stop at verse 1, even though there is no period at the end of verse 1. The transition into verse 2 reveals the purpose of asking for God's blessing, which is "*that Your way may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations.*"

This should be our prayer—individually and corporately. God, bless us, glorify us—*so that* people can know You! God, bless me at work—*so that* my coworkers can know You. God, bless me at grad school—*so that* my classmates can know You.

I've heard it said that *God did not design us to be reservoirs, but rivers*. Reservoirs are stagnant and become engrossed with weeds, mildew, and mold. Nothing lives in a reservoir. Nobody benefits from your life if you're a reservoir. But rivers, on the other hand, are healthy bodies of water and ecosystems. They're not stagnant. They branch out and supply nourishment for lands and species. And in the same way, Christians are to be vessels, rivers of God's blessings, which extend into the lives of other people so that they can know Him.

Jesus realized that the greatest blessing of all was not 'what' He could give to people, but 'Who'—because the greatest blessing of all blessings is to know God and to be in a right relationship with Him. Jesus leveraged every blessing He had—down to His own life—so that people could know God. And as such, Godly Leaders follow Jesus' example in the same way.

4. A Godly Leader Rests in Redemption (Psalm 69)

*You know my reproach, my shame, and my dishonor;
My adversaries are all before You.*

²⁰ *Reproach has broken my heart,
And I am full of heaviness;
I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none;
And for comforters, but I found none.*
²¹ *They also gave me gall for my food,
And for my thirst, they gave me vinegar to drink. Psalm 69:19-21*
Chronological Bible, May 13th, pg. 541

One of the most important attributes of a Godly Leader is that he does not tether his self-worth to the ever-changing opinions or approval ratings of others. To be sure, having others' approval and acceptance is a blessing; however, it will make a terrible form of self-worth.

David knew that if he lived by others' acceptance, then he would die by their rejection. And so, when the rejection came—and it comes for all of us—he did not drown in despair because his self-worth was anchored in God's immovable love for him instead.

But how do we know God's love for us? The main way we can see God's love for us is by looking at the cross of Christ, where Jesus was rejected by God so that we could be accepted by God. On the cross, Jesus "*looked for someone to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.*" (v. 20). On the cross, even His closest friends and disciples abandoned Him. And on the cross, Roman soldiers *also gave [Him] gall for [His] food, and for [His] thirst, they gave [Him] vinegar to drink.*" (v. 21). Jesus took the wrath we deserved so that God could give us the acceptance Jesus deserved.

Godly Leaders, therefore, behold and live in light of the love and acceptance of God for them. They don't seek it or depend on it from others, which will invariably fail to deliver. They should rest in their redemption instead, knowing that their self-worth has been satisfied in Christ. Only until we rest in God's acceptance for us will ever be truly able to not look for it from others. And until we do that, even our best relationships will inevitably be defined at the deepest level by the coldness of reciprocation and transaction. Only until Godly Leaders rest in their redemption, will they finally be able to bring redemption to all of their other relationships.

Conclusion:

In the life of David, we see a cry for God to rescue him from the delusion of his highs and from the despair in his lows. His voice points prophetically to Jesus Christ, who would one day embody what it means to be a truly Godly Leader—through all of life's highs and lows. Jesus would show us what it means to truly be fulfilled; how to trust God in trials; how to bless others through God's blessing; and how to rest in God's declaration of love. By beholding Jesus' life and death for us—Jesus, who walked through everything we've encountered— we are enabled to live as Godly Leaders ourselves.