

THE KING OF GLORY - PSALM 24:1-10

LIFE OF DAVID IN THE PSALMS #12

Marcus didn't need it. From all reason it was foolish for him to buy it. But Marcus wanted it. He desperately wanted to own it. So Marcus showed up with the many others on that day of the auction.

The bidding started at 10,000 - certainly a bargain in anyone's eyes. But then it quickly started to move up the ladder. 15,000; 18,000; 20,000. Now the bidding slowed. They were moving out of the range of most of the bidders. Marcus looked over into the eyes of his only remaining competitor, a man named Flavius. Marcus could see that his rival wanted to own it as much as he did. But Marcus knew that he had the edge. He knew that he had more money. He would just keep raising the ante until he outbid his competitor. 21,000; 22,000; 23,000; The response was slowing now. 24,000; 25,000. Finally, Flavius was silent. And when that gavel hit the podium and he heard the auctioneer shout *sold*, Marcus knew that his lifelong dream had now come true. He finally owned what he had always only dreamed of possessing.

It is ironic that the item that Marcus sacrificed so much for would soon cost him his life. For Marcus would only live with his prized possession for 2 months - and then it would kill him.

For I haven't been speaking of an auction that occurred this year or even this century. No, this auction occurred over 1,800 years ago, in March of the year 193 A.D... And the 25,000 that Marcus paid for the object of his dreams was not in dollars, but it was rather in a currency called sesterces. You see the elite Roman

Praetorian guard had mutinied. They had grabbed control of the Roman Empire. Then they had devised a plan of how to get rich. They would hold an auction. They would appeal to the covetous natures of Rome's richest patrons. They would sell the whole Empire on the auction block and split up the money between them. Marcus Didius Julianus, one of Rome's most wealthy citizens, had swallowed the bait. Now he could say that he owned it all - the Mighty Roman Empire. He was the Emperor of Rome. Two months later, Marcus was dead - assassinated. He had given almost everything he had to own what he most desired. And now what he thought he owned had killed him.

Many people fall into the trap that took the life of Marcus Julianus. For it is part of our basic human nature to desire, to own, to possess, to control. People will do almost anything to own something else. They will work themselves day and night, they will take all kinds of personal risks, they will leverage themselves to the limit. And too often, what they sacrifice so much for ends up killing them. No, it doesn't assassinate them. It usually doesn't even kill them quickly. But slowly, through stress, through anxieties, through all kinds of pressures, that which a person thinks he owns often ends up sapping the very life blood out of him.

One of the most important lessons that any person can learn in life is the one modeled by King David in Psalm 24. David was the king of the most powerful nation in the Middle East by the time he wrote these words. He could have been puffed up in pride over all of his accomplishments. He could have become enamored with all that he owned and controlled. He could have been obsessed with all kinds of anxieties and worries. But instead of falling into these perilous

traps, David exemplifies a realistic view of himself and God and his relationship towards material things. This allowed David to have a relationship with God in worship that was unparalleled in his day. It was David's relationship with God that allowed him to have joy and peace and contentment in his life.

We have all come to worship the Lord this morning. Let's allow King David to instruct us in this most important matter of worshipping God this morning as we read Psalm 24 together. For David was a man who had learned the art of worshipping. This was one reason why he was so successful in life. As we read his own words as recorded in Psalm 24, we must remember the fact that these words were written by a man who had carefully and systematically conquered every nation and land in the Middle East.

READ Psalm 24:

1. The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;

² for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters.

³ Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place?

⁴ He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false.

⁵ He will receive blessing from the LORD and vindication from God his

Savior.

⁶ Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, O God of Jacob.

⁷ Lift up your heads, O you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.

⁸ Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.

⁹ Lift up your heads, O you gates; lift them up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.

¹⁰ Who is he, this King of glory? The LORD Almighty -- he is the King of glory.

1. Look first of all with me at the **foundation for worship** that is found in the first 2 verses.

1. The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; ² for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters.

*The history of this universe is found in the struggle for ownership. By the time God created the heavens and the earth, Lucifer had already rebelled against

God and been cast out of heaven. Many other angelic beings had followed him in his mutiny against God. So when God created the beautiful garden of Eden here on the earth and threw the sun and stars into their heavenly orbit, the first thing that Satan did was to try to grab ownership of the earth from God. He filled the slithering body of a serpent and tempted Eve to transgress God's commandments to her. And then he used Eve to tempt Adam into sinning. He quickly had a foothold in their lives and through their sinful rebellion, he tried to wrest the ownership of this earth from God himself. He has been so successful that the Bible even calls him the *Prince of the power of the air* and *the god of this age*.

Mankind, in his sinful rebellion against God, has also tried to claim ownership to this earth that has been created by God. It is interesting to note the reaction to Cain after he had in a premeditated and willful way killed his brother Abel. God, of course, was not pleased with Cain's selfish and cruel action. So God punished Cain by exiling him to the outermost regions of the earth. *You will be a restless wanderer on the earth*, God ordered Cain as recorded in Genesis 4:12. But what did Cain do? He disobeyed God again. The first thing he did was to go to the land east of Eden and build a city to settle in. He named this first city on planet earth Enoch after his firstborn son. It was as if Cain was trying to take ownership of the earth from God.

Now there is nothing inherently wrong with owning a piece of land and a house. God allowed his people to own property in the Bible. And we should be careful that we have proper title when we own a house so that our investment can be protected. But one of the differences between the godly and the ungodly in the

Bible is found in their recognition of who ultimately is the owner of the earth and all that is contained within it. Godly people have always recognized that God is the ultimate creator and owner of it all - and that they have only been allowed part of it for their own usage because of God's gracious goodness to them. Ungodly people have devised every way imaginable from denying God's existence to devising clever theories like evolution in their attempt to take rightful ownership of this earth from God.

David's words are interesting here, especially in light of the fact that he had just systematically conquered all of the nations of the Middle East. In his day, that made him the owner of these lands. In his day, David could have claimed to be Lord of the Middle East and nobody would have objected. But David recognized who the rightful owner of the earth was. The earth and all it contains belonged to the Lord. *The earth is the Lord's and everything in it.*

This recognition is the foundation for worship. When we come to worship God, we are honoring the owner to this planet and all that is in it. That means we are confessing that all that we have earthly title to and even our own selves really belong to the Lord. So He is the ultimate master, He is the ultimate title holder, He is the ultimate source and sustainer of all things. He alone deserves the recognition for that position - and we give him that recognition when we worship.

2. Now let's move in the second place to see the **Qualifications for Worship** that David brings out in verses 3 and 4. For if we are to truly worship as great a being as God, it is only reasonable that we must come to Him on his terms, not on ours.

One of the tell-tale signs that we are trying to subtly wrestle ownership from God is found in our attempts to dictate our worship of God. Even many Christians sadly try to worship God on their own terms. They will worship as long as it makes them feel good, or as long as God meets their needs, or as long as they are in control. Now as we are going to see momentarily - God has graciously given to us many blessings as a result of our worship. But ultimately God must dictate the conditions of worship to us - we cannot dictate the conditions of worship to God. That would be usurping His rightful position. David recognized that fact. Notice what he wrote in verses 3,4.

³ Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? ⁴ He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false.

There are 3 qualifications that David sets forth here for one who is to be able to worship God as he should:

a. purity - *clean hands and a pure heart.* The hands are symbolic of our actions before the Lord. With the hands we do. Our activities in life must be consistent with God's standards if we are to ascend into His hill in worship for fellowship with Him.

The heart represents our affections. With the heart we desire, we love, we feel. If we are to ascend into His hill in worship, we must do so with the proper love for the Lord. We must not be motivated by selfish, ulterior motives, but by the purity of a desire to know our creator in a more full way, with gratitude for who he is and all that he has done for us. We may not come to God with a

hypocritical spirit, living one way but claiming to believe another. We must rather come in purity, with clean hands and a pure heart.

Now happily God does not expect us to clean up our own lives before coming before him in worship. That would be an impossibility. Before the temple of the Lord, God placed the great bronze altar of sacrifice. So the worshipper would offer his sacrifice accepting God's cleansing for his sins before entering into worship with God. We recognize that Jesus Christ has provided the final sacrifice for sins today. But we must appropriate that sacrifice to our lives in order to have clean hands and a pure heart if we are to have any effective worship of God.

b. obedience - *One who does not lift up his soul to an idol.* The first of the commandments that God gave to the children of Israel was to not make any graven image or idol representation of him. So this statement of David, being the first of God's commandments, probably represents not only itself but all of the commandments of God. Certainly we cannot hope to worship God if we do so approaching idols for that would be coming to God on our terms, not His. But we must also be careful that we are in obedience to all of God's commandments to us if we are to have effective worship of God. If we are in willful violation of God's commandments we will not be able to have the fellowship with God that will bring satisfying worship - it just isn't possible. In Psalm 66, the Psalmist wrote, *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.*

c. honesty - *one who does not swear by what is false.* God is a God of truth. We must come to him honestly. He cannot fellowship with that which is deceitful or false.

Now these are God's terms for worship that are based upon his unchanging character. God is a God of absolute purity- he is a righteous and holy God. God is infinite in all of His being - He cannot be contained in an idol or graven image. God is a God of truth - he is faithful in all of His promises. Therefore, our worship of him must be in purity in obedience and in honesty.

3. But we would be remiss if we didn't conclude by seeing the **Results of Worship** in verses 5 and 6.

⁵ *He will receive blessing from the LORD and vindication from God his Savior.* ⁶ *Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, O God of Jacob.*

There are 2 results of worship that David enumerates here - blessing and vindication.

*The word that is overwhelming translated *blessing* in the Bible can also mean **prosperity** or **praise** or **gifts** or even a **treaty of peace**.

*The one who worships God on God's terms is made prosperous by God. His soul and spirit is enriched. He is filled with joy and peace. God gives to him all kinds of treasures that no amount of money can ever purchase.

*It is amazing that God praises the one who worships him on his terms. The worshipper has come for the purpose of praising God. But the God who will be a debtor to no person ends up praising him. He lifts him up and exalts him. He honors him. David never lost the wonder of God exalting him from the lowly position of shepherding to the exalted position of being king of Israel.

*The one who worships God on God's terms receives gifts from God. It is

one of the ironies of worship that as we recognize God's rightful position as the owner of the earth and all that it contains releasing our own selfish claims, God is then free to give us all kinds of gifts and presents. He delights in showering his goodness on his children.

*The one who worships God on God's terms has received a treaty of peace from God. He is at peace with his creator. He has peace in his heart. He doesn't have to live his life in a state of enmity or warfare.

*The second result of **vindication** is normally translated righteousness in the Bible. It can also mean justice or even salvation. The one who worships God on God's terms sees the righteousness of Almighty God and is lead into growth in personal righteousness as well. He is put in a relationship with God whereby God can vindicate him and give him justice and salvation.

Remember, in these days it was commonly recognized that while the subject kingdom was expected to pay tribute and give allegiance to the conquering kingdom, the conquering kingdom was expected to protect and save the subject kingdom when in danger. It is interesting that David seems to pick up on this practice which was common knowledge in his day as he says that as the worshipper of God recognizes God's rightful position in his or her life, God then rewards the worshipper with vindication, justice and salvation.

So then:

*The foundation for worship is a recognition of who God is - the owner of the earth and everything that is in it.

*The qualifications for the worshipper are purity, obedience and honesty.

*And the rewards of worshiping are blessing and vindication from God himself.

We don't have time this morning to give justice to the concluding verses of this Psalm. But let me just conclude by contrasting David and his attitude to another king in the O.T. who built an Empire - a man named Nebuchadnezzar.

There are many similarities between these 2 men. Both were obviously capable and courageous men. Both took nations that were disorganized politically and militarily and built them into great empires controlling the nations surrounding them. But there was a great difference in the attitudes of these 2 men. Daniel 4:30 describes Nebuchadnezzar standing on the roof of his palace overlooking the great city of Babylon and saying, *Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power, and for the glory of my majesty?* If one were to ask Nebuchadnezzar *who is the king of Glory?*, his immediate answer would have been *Me, of course.* God had to humble Nebuchadnezzar because he did not recognize who was the rightful owner of the earth and all that was in it. So the end of chapter 4 of Daniel describes a 7 year period in Nebuchadnezzar's life where he lost his mind and wandered around the fields grazing like a cow.

But here in Psalm 24 we have another great Empire builder - David. He has taken a nation that was under the dominion and control of the Philistines and brought it to a position of dominance over the entire Middle East. But his attitude is certainly different from Nebuchadnezzar's, isn't it? When David asks the question, *who is this king of Glory?*, his answer is *The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle, He is the king of glory.* David recognized who God was and

gave to Him the honor and glory due to His name.

And isn't it interesting that while most people have forgotten all about the accomplishments of Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon today, David is still honored by many across this world. How many boys do you know who have been named Nebuchadnezzar? David still remains a very popular name throughout much of the world. In fact, God would choose to have his one and only Son who came into this world to be given the title - *the son of David*.

God alone is the owner of the earth and all that is in it. He alone deserves worship and honor for who he is. When we worship God, we must come to Him on his terms, not on ours. But nobody who sincerely worships God is ever disappointed. For the worshipper of God receives far more than he ever gives. That is just how great God is.