

Nobility

Psalm 2

Fourth of series: Developing Mature Character in the Psalmidic School of Prayer

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Worship at 8:30, 10, and 11:30 a.m.

Let us bow in prayer. Now majestic God, address us through the power of your Word in Jesus, the Christ. May your Holy Spirit teach us about who you are and who you call us to be as your noble children. We now hear the Word with open hearts and minds. In the name of Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

Psalm 2 is the most frequently quoted psalm in the entire Bible. One must ask the question: what is it that makes this psalm so powerful and influential? I would argue that it is the reality that God will address people – no matter what. God's Word will be spoken – no matter what. Even in the face of resistance, God's Word will go out. That there is a choice that we have to make between our rebellion against God or our responsiveness to God's invitation to nobility. The reception of the Word of God... the openness in history... from ancient times... has caused people to become a noble and royal priesthood.

Hunter Weimer told the story last night at the gathering of the celebration of the translation of the New Testament that we celebrated this morning: 2500 people gathered together and consuming the two cows and the nine pigs. That sounds little bit like two fishes and seven loaves, I think. 2500 people very much in the festive moment and paying attention to a lot of things that are happening – somewhat to the centerpieces of the celebration, but an awful lot to the party.

Father Caabay stands to speak, and when he stands to speak with the New Testament in his hand, and speaks in the native language of the people, it becomes silent and focused – people are paying attention to what he has to say. What is happening in that moment? I have argued the case that they know that God is about to address them in their own language. That there is a moment of transaction where they receive the nobility of the power of the word of God into their lives. And that the gift of that word is being given because people like the Quakenbush's are willing to sacrifice to do translation in Second and Third World countries around the world.

God wants to address us. And when God addresses us we are called out of our immediate difficulties and provincialism into a grandeur of life, and future, and eternity. We are called into the very nobility of God in Jesus Christ.

Wycliffe has published an anthology of artistic works from several of the people who not only do translation, but also do artwork. The title of this work is called, *In the Image of God*. It is a celebration that people from all over the world are made in the image of God. It is a recognition that that image can be marred in darkness by the cultures and practices of people who resist God in rebellion; and the magnificence of what happens when they hear the Word of God: about Jesus, the Christ, who invites them back into a new kind of covenant and treaty and nobility with the living God.

There is a choice to be made here: between resistance to God or living into God's invitation of nobility. When David was anointed king, God promised David that his children would live into that role of nobility. God said to David, "I will establish the throne of your son's kingdom forever. I will be a father to him and he will be a son to me." In the pattern of ancient peoples of God, God has invited kings to be in the presence of God as "royal people" – not to the exclusion of people, but to the invitation of the entire nation, and the nations around them. So in this psalm moment – the royal psalm of invitation and coronation – where the king is installed, the king is saying to God that "You have made me your son." And God is saying to the king: "you will be my son. You will be a member of the royal family."

That was not so the king could hold an exclusiveness to that role, but could invite the people of God into that role. And so Moses was able to share with the people a vision of the future – that they would become a holy nation and a magnificent priesthood. And Peter understands that in the New Testament, as a "royal priesthood." That the king's responsibility was not to hold all of the royalty to himself, but to invite the people of God and the nations around the world to come and participate in the royalty and nobility of God's calling.

In the movie "Alexander the Great," released not too long ago, it is evident throughout the movie that Alexander cannot get enough of the sense from his own father and mother that he is of royal blood. His father pretty much treats him as trash and rejects him. His mother manipulates and cajoles him. And his whole life – while he's conquering the world – he never is able to conquer his own sense of lostness in his soul. Royalty comes from the inside out. It is not something granted because of kingdoms and power and positions and military might. It is something that happens in the very depths of a human spirit, from the inner reality of one's being recognized by God and addressed by God.

God is our Father. God is our King. God is the Sovereign One who doesn't leave us alone, but God addresses us personally. You are here today to hear God speak to you personally. When you hear God's voice to you through the word, you know that you are called to be royalty – that you are given a noble life to live. When the Spirit confirms that and when you hear the word from God about that, you are invited to choose. Will you resist that, or will you invest in it?

Scripture is clear that those choices are made by people and some people struggle with them. That the initial response may be like the nations of the world: that they resist and fight. They want to break themselves apart from God's bonds, from God's control in their life. And when they do, God clearly says that chaos and fury and wrath are the result. When we do not live according to the nobility of God, we will do damage to ourselves, to our families, to our neighbors and to the nations in which we live.

We saw recently the case of the man who was so confused in his own soul and his own spirit – a life pattern of resistance and rebellion, in drugs...wanting to damage to his own family and himself – placing himself on the railroad tracks to do suicide. And even losing the power to take his own life, he jumps out of the SUV and runs away while the train collides with another train. That lack of nobility that haunts human beings who do not know the deep, resonant presence of God, does damage to hundreds of families. We are not just alone in our own pre-occupation with our inner sense of loss. If we do not work out our own nobility with God, we will do damage to others in the future.

God is saying that nations have gathered around leaders who resist God, and nations – whole nations – do damage to the world, bringing the wrath and fury of God upon people. The question for you and your family is: are you communicating to your children that they are of royal blood? That they are noble in the sight of God; that they are made in the very image of the eternal God of creation? And that they can live into the pattern of royal nobility, if they follow Jesus Christ?

Or are you teaching them by your modeling to resist, and rebel, and complain, and be angry with God? The sons and daughters of the king often resist, deny, mar our image... oppress those around us... hide from God... cover ourselves... obliterate the relationship of God... or exterminate the people around us... because we are so pre-occupied with our own rage.

God establishes a pattern of communication. God keeps talking to us and will not let us go. God keeps confronting us: Choose! Continue to choose: rage or nobility.

It is an ancient pattern we see in the beginning of Scripture – in Cain. God addresses Cain because he sees Cain as so angry that he has not dealt with his relationship with God. “Cain, why are you so angry?” If you do not deal with this anger, there are things lurking at your door that will bring disaster. And he kills Able.

We see in the sons of Jacob resentment and anger toward Joseph, who has a vision of nobility. They can't handle that and so they sell Joseph into slavery. We see in Moses, who grows up in royal households, an angry young man who has a divided sense of who he is; and he kills an Egyptian. He never really resolves the anger in his life because later on, in the wilderness, he hits the rock in anger toward the people. He lives in anger, because he has a struggling time believing that he can live into God's nobility.

We see Saul, who hates David. We see Saul, in the New Testament, who hates the church and Stephen; and has Stephen killed. And God says to Saul, “Why are you so angry? Why are you fighting with me so much? Why do you keep persecuting me?” Don't you see the nobility that I have before you?

Sometimes our children can not see the nobility that is given to them. I know a couple that adopted two young men as babies, from Thailand and Cambodia. For the oldest of the two, as he was growing up, they could see that their love and generosity to him was not taking effect. As people talked with him and gave counsel and therapy to him, they summarized his state by saying that he was probably so badly abused (pre-uterine and right after birth) that he may be ir-repairable: the very image of God snuffed out of a child before that child is even able to understand. They haven't given up on that boy. He's almost 30 years old; he's in jail and they're still praying for him. Sometimes it takes years before people hear the good news, and can absorb that and live into the nobility of God.

In the pattern of choosing between nobility and rage, we see in Acts 17, this built around the concept and the presence of the word of God. We see that the Thessalonians receive what Paul had to say with a certain amount of resistance. Angry people in their group developed a mob and resisted Paul – put him in prison. He had to leave town at night, one night. He went to Berea, where the people were open and receptive. And it says, according to Luke and Acts, that these people were of “high-mindedness, noble.” They were open to what God had to say to them. They did not resist. They did not live into rage and anger.

You have a choice today. Will you live into the invitation to be a part of God's nobility in Jesus Christ? Or will you live in resistance and rage? Will you live in brokenness? And will you live in destruction? There's a clear choice here. If you live into the nobility, you will be able to be in God's refuge, and court, and high places – not only today, but for eternity. It is clear, through the ministry of Jesus Christ, who came to show us that deep sense of nobility and give us that in the depths of our being – that we are not just called to be ‘servants’ of God here – but we are called to reign with Christ forever; to be inheritors of the very essence of the blue-bloodedness of God's royal line – as Peter says, “a royal priesthood,” “a holy nation.”

Are you today living into the nobility? Do you accept and receive Jesus Christ as Lord of your life? Or are you resisting? In resistance, you will do damage. In participation, you become an elegant part of the family of God and you will bring your children and your grandchildren there too.

Why do the nations so furiously rage? Because God is asking them to choose – live into the nobility of the Most Sovereign High... or live into your own destructive patterns of life. The question is put to us today in Jesus, who laid down his life that we might have a royal future. In Jesus Christ, we are sons and daughters of the Most High God of the universe. Amen.