

Horsley Evangelical Church (www.horsleyec.org.uk)

Minister Rev Ken McIntosh 20th September 2020

Psalm 45 The Royal Wedding

Psalm 45 is an example of a *Royal Psalm* which addresses the king of Israel. And he is addressed on his wedding day. The Psalm is unique because it praises a human king rather than the Lord. And yet when we understand that the Psalm is prophetic and points forward to the Lord Jesus Christ, it is in fact in praise of God, the Son of God, his glory and character.

The title describes it as another of *the sons of Korah*. A wedding song. Set to the tune "Lilies". And since *lilies* are often associated with love songs in the Bible it is appropriate, for here is a song about the king's love for his bride.

The main body of the Psalm is found in verses 2-15. In these verses, the *royal groom* is addressed in verses 2-9 and then the *royal bride* in verses 10-15. But before this we have an *introduction* and a *conclusion* which some describe as a *frame* to the main picture. The first and last verses 'set off' and enhance the main picture.

Originally the song was written for a royal descendant of David – but we are not sure which, although some think it may have been sung at each king of Israel's wedding. However, we are to understand it as *messianic*, pointing forward to the love Christ has for his Bride, the Church. And this application should never be far from our minds as we read and study this lovely Psalm.

The song is introduced in verse 1. **Read verse 1.** The writer is telling us how he is moved to write the wedding song. He talks about his *heart* being stirred or literally 'bubbled up' by the noble theme of praising and exhorting a king on his wedding day. He mentions his *tongue* which is the pen of a skilled, or it could also be, a rapid writer. And so in this introduction the writer is claiming to write under the inspiration of God. It is God who has stirred up his heart and God who will use his tongue to convey his message. The words are given to him readily and skilfully by God. And indeed we believe this Psalm to be inspired of God, just as we believe all Scripture to be *breathed out* by God. Therefore it is profitable for us to read.

Then verses 2-9 **address the Royal Groom**. And this address is a mixture of *praise* and *exhortation*. It certainly begins with high praise. **Read verse 2.** This king has the blessing of God upon his life. He is described as *the most excellent of men*. The Hebrew says he is 'doubly beautiful'. From whichever angle you look at him, he is beautiful. In appearance, he is both handsome and stunning. In character, he is also very attractive. Special mention is made of his words. God has given the king grace when it comes to speaking. He speaks with authority, clarity and godly wisdom.

And these words of high praise are fulfilled in Jesus Christ alone – no one else. And when he comes again, the Lord Jesus will be seen to be the most excellent of men. Both his appearance and his character will be (and are) beautiful.

Even on earth, our Lord's character was perfect. He was without sin, and this must have been a thing of beauty. And it's interesting that the New Testament specifically mentions Christ's words and speech. Jesus spoke as no one else ever spoke. His words were always full of grace. He had a special authority and wisdom from God and his speaking often astonished people.

Then, although we would have to say that the glory of our Saviour's physical appearance was *hidden* because of his earthly sufferings, the book of Revelation especially describes for us the glory and beauty of him who is the King of kings. The sight of the risen and ascended Christ is the most beautiful thing that eyes can ever behold. For God has blessed his Son for ever and has given him the name that is above every name. And therefore how wonderful for *us*, who know him, belong to him and are the object of his love for ever.

Then in verses 3-5 the Psalmist presumes *to exhort the king* on his wedding day – to be the king that God intended him to be. What does he mention? **Read verses 3-5**. This king is exhorted to rule well. He should rule with God's wisdom and justice. He should be brave and courageous in God's strength. He should defend the weak and protect his people, fighting against sin and falsehood. For he is God's king and therefore should conquer all evil. He should champion righteousness and truth. Yet he himself should display humility.

Some ask why all this is mentioned on the king's wedding day? Is not this advice more appropriate for the king's coronation? Perhaps, but it's appropriate for his wedding day too – because his wedding day marks a new beginning. He will, from this day, have his wife at his side. And she will influence him. But he must make sure that together they serve God.

If only king Ahab had listened to this advice on the day he married Jezebel. If only king Solomon had listened to his song when he was wed to the foreign wives who led him astray.

But Christ's Bride will not lead him astray. And these verses are again fulfilled only by the righteous rule of the Lord Jesus Christ, both now and for evermore. Isaiah famously says of his rule – **read Isaiah 9:7 and again 11:4, 5**. And yet we know that Christ's ultimate victory over sin was achieved in great humility, for it was on the cross that Christ defeated the evil one. And verse 4 of our Psalm today inspired the great hymn we often sing on Palm Sunday. "Ride on Ride on in majesty". The second verse says, "Ride on Ride on in majesty, in lowly pomp ride on to die: O Christ, Your triumphs now begin o'er captive death and conquered sin."

Then the Psalmist's exhortation turns to pure praise of the king in verse 6-9. **Read verses 6, 7**. Some are embarrassed at the plain meaning of verse 6 - which is that the king of Israel is described as 'God'. And yet he is not in the same sense that Egypt's Pharaohs were thought to be gods. Israel's king is only 'God' in the sense that he is God's king and rules as God's servant. The king of Israel ruled in God's place over the nations. Yet it does describe the closeness and specialness of the king's relationship with God. Just as the sceptre or symbol of God's rule is *justice*, so too is this king's rule.

Verse 7 of course sets the record straight. **Read verse 7**. The king is not actually God, but he rules for God and just as Jehovah's character is to love righteousness and hate wickedness, so too this king is praised on his wedding day to have a godly character. And because of this, he knows the joy of God .

The wedding day was a time of anointing. The king was anointed with fragrant oils, indeed both male and female guests would have smelled very nice on the day of the wedding. But the king, as well as smelling nice has an infinitely better anointing – the anointing of God's joy as his obedient servant.

This theme of anointing carries into verse 8. **Read verse 8**. The king not only looked fabulous, he smelled pretty fabulous too. His expensive wedding garments were all infused with expensive spices. Myrrh, aloes and cassia are all fragrant. Some of them were used in the temple worship to make the incense. And throughout the wedding day, the waft of sweet fragrance was the air is mingled with the sweet music coming from inside the ivory inlaid palace.

All of this of course speaks of the splendour and the gladness of the occasion for groom *and* bride, but also for their guests. **Read verse 9.** These guests included the daughters of kings, making the wedding an occasion of international importance. And at the king's right hand, the bride is adorned with the finest of gold – the gold of Ophir.

Once again, the Christian is quick to think of Christ. First because the writer to the Hebrews picks up verse 6 and the reference to the king of Israel being called 'God' and says this is literally true of the Lord Jesus Christ. **Read Hebrews 1:7-9.** 'Jesus is God's king. Jesus is God's Son and his position is infinitely higher than angels' say the writer to the Hebrews.

It's interesting too that the Gospel writers mention at least two of these aromatic spices in connection with the life of Jesus. Myrrh is given at his birth and aloes is supplied at his death. But the reference to joy reminds us that although our Lord knew much suffering throughout his life, he was a man anointed daily with the joy of the Father, as an obedient Son. And even during the dark hours on the cross, we are told that Christ scorned the shame of it all, thinking ahead to the joy that was set before him when he would be with his Father again.

And so the splendour and majesty of this royal wedding only points us forward to the true majesty, glory and splendour of Christ, the King of kings. And again this should make us glad that he is our Lord and Saviour and that we have the privilege of knowing him and being loved by him.

Then verses 10-15 **address the Royal Bride.** As with the royal groom, the Psalmist presumes to exhort the royal bride first before he praises her. What exhortation is she given? **Read verse 10 – 12.** The bride is addressed as 'daughter' because the Psalmist assumes the role of a wisdom teacher, and just as the young men in the Proverbs are addressed as 'son' by the teacher, so now this young bride is addressed as 'daughter'.

Some think the royal bride is foreign. That may be why she is exhorted to *forget your people*. But the main advice is that she should leave her former way of life and make her husband her priority. He is enthralled by her and her beauty. So she is advised by the Psalmist to honour her husband and submit to him, just as Sarah chose to submit to her husband, Abraham, and called him her 'Lord'.

And if she does this, she should not fear she will be disadvantaged or 'miss out'. God will see that she is rewarded and blessed in her service for God. The *daughter of Tyre* (12) is a reference to the city of Tyre, the fabulously wealthy city of billionaires. God will see to it that she is given gifts by its wealthy people and that its people of influence will seek her favour and counsel as queen.

And again we are quick to apply these words to ourselves as Christians, for we are being pointed forward next to our privileges as the Bride of Christ. The New Testament exhorts us to leave behind our former ways, our former life of sin and living for self - to follow the Lord Jesus. Serve him as Lord and honour him with your life. That is the way of wisdom. Do not fear that you will somehow miss out in life or be disadvantaged in any way. For the way of blessing and joy is always to put him first. Submit to Christ's leading and live for him as Master. 'Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain' (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Then the Psalmist moves from exhortation to the *praise* of the royal bride. **Read verses 13-15.** The bride is praised for her beauty and for the beauty of her wedding clothes. They are richly embroidered and interwoven with gold. And the teacher speaks here of her anticipation of the wedding day, not only the joyful ceremony with all her bridesmaids, but the joy of her future life with the king.

And as believers we know that God has and is preparing us for the great wedding day of the Lamb and his people. By his death on the cross the Lord Jesus has washed us clean – [read Ephesians 5:25-27](#). Then the New Testament speaks about the righteousness of Christ that has been given to us as a beautiful garment. Also, Revelation 19 speaks about the righteous acts of the saints which are given to them by the Lord in anticipation the great wedding day – [read Revelation 19:7, 8](#). How fortunate therefore we are as a people. How blessed of God to have such a hope and future.

Then finally after both royal groom and bride have been addressed, we have some **concluding remarks** in verses 16, 17. [Read verses 16, 17](#). These concluding remarks are addressed again to the royal groom. The Psalmist is wishing the king well. But just as he has exhorted the bride to leave her people and her father's house, so now he reminds the groom of his new outlook on life. He is to think of himself no longer as a son, but rather as a father who will lead his own sons to share in his reign and in his glory.

Then verse 17 reminds us of verse 1. The Lord will use this word to keep the memory of the king alive. For he is part of a dynasty, the dynasty of David that the Lord has promised to bless for ever. And through this line, God will bring his Messiah, whom the nations will praise.

So here is a *Royal Psalm*. To the casual reader it's perhaps interesting but really rather remote. It speaks of a royal wedding many years ago which has no relevance to my life today. And yet it is prophetic. And its relevant to us is that it points us forward to the wedding of Jesus Christ and his Church. And if you belong to Christ and his church, then it is of great relevance to you.

First it reminds you of the great love of God and Christ for the Church. This after all is the central message of the Church being described in the New Testament as *the Bride of Christ*. It tells us that we are dearly loved. It tells us that we are loved by God and loved by Christ and we are precious to him. The marriage between a man and women is the most intimate human relationship that God has given us. But it is given as a picture of the love of Christ for his people. Christ loved us so much that he gave himself on the cross for us. Through his sacrifice our sins are washed and because of his sinless perfection we are clothed in finery. And we belong to him. We are one with him. We are united to him. Not just in this world but for all eternity.

And just as the bride is told in this love song that she will be greatly blessed through her union with this king, so will we. Christ will share everything he has with us. We will reign with him and share his glory. This is about the amazing love of God and the amazing plan of God. But the best thing is that we shall know him. One day we shall know him and the full extent of his love for us. And this is what eternal life is all about - this is what heaven is all about. We will be with him. We will know his love. And we will be fully satisfied and very happy.

All this hasn't happened yet of course; the wedding day is still to take place. We do not yet know the fullness of his love nor do we know what God has in store for his children. But we have his word, his promises. And we have the engagement ring. The engagement ring being the Holy Spirit who is *the deposit guaranteeing what is to come*. Meanwhile we look forward and anticipate. We trust and obey. This Psalm is for us. It is a love song for us to think about. It is something for us to look forward to, to live for. The wedding supper of the Lamb and his Bride.