

Psalm 20

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[0 : 0 0] now to understand this psalm that we're looking at we need to realize how the times are different when it was to in old testament israel as to what it is today you see david the guy the writer of the psalm you see that in the little subscript at the top david was the the chosen king by god and he stood as a representative before god for the people his life was very much tied up with the lives of the israelites that he ruled over his people would follow him led by example in many ways that the nation of israel was dependent on the actions of their king their day-to-day future depended on how he acted and if you were to look through israel's history what what you notice is that when the king when the king served god things go well for israel but when the king doesn't when the kings behave wickedly that's things when things go downhill for the nation so so the life of the king is is really it's connected to that nation this psalm um it's written by king david but it's actually written for god's people to pray together it's written as a prayer for the people to pray together for the king praying for david together you'll you'll have been in churches we sometimes we sometimes do it where we say a prayer together sometimes that happens with the lord's prayer um and you might have been in churches where where that's done uh well this is a little bit like that this is a prayer that all the congregation god's people would say together with the king present as they all said it now god had previously made lots of promises to israel uh that they would be victorious in battle against their enemies this prayer which we're reading this morning it is a prayer before a battle takes place before a victory has been completed and they're getting ready for a battle and they're praying for their king who's going to go out and fight for them but the victory hasn't been won yet the battle hasn't even started yet in many ways we live in a similar situation with the the king with our king the lord jesus because jesus is victorious at the cross over death sin and all evil but it's not yet complete his kingdom is not yet here in its fullness he's not come back yet we await that big party that will happen when he does but at the minute we live at an in-between stage we have a king but the victory is not yet complete jesus kingdom is not here in its fullness and so as we look at what the people pray for king david it helps us to think about what we should pray so we're going to just look two sections really a prayer for the king and then confidence in the law so firstly uh prayer for the king you'll notice it actually comes in two halves the whole prayer that the prayer starts with the the israelites making requests making requests we're all familiar with people making requests it's not going to be long till the summer holidays are over the kids are back at school and what is one of the the first things that happens when the kids are back at school by september um you sit the adverts are out in in september for christmas that is what happens and um there's lots of requests from kids that will come the parents way um i don't know if you i don't know if you remember doing this or if you still do this uh remember writing a christmas list or a birthday list in september i always wanted to get a scale electrics uh turtles figures uh september is time is usually the time when christmas toys get released there's a chart for the most popular last year it was a gabby's dollhouse doll if you didn't

know and i'm sure there were lots of kids in last september pleading for a gabby's dollhouse doll feeling christmas would be a letdown if they didn't get a gabby's dollhouse doll i'm sure that's what some of the boys were after as well it can be a little bit like that can't it when we when we it can be a little bit like that sometimes in prayer uh because we sometimes pray for the things that we think we need or sometimes we pray we might pray out of response urgency in a crisis now it's normally more urgent than the kids christmas present uh but we pray because we're worried about and we pray frantically we think we know what we need and sometimes if we're not careful our prayers can become a little bit like that kind of like a christmas request list and then once that crisis is over we forget about it and move on to the next worry the next request now it's good to make requests to god and and in fact uh what we see that's what we see in sound 20 however this is requests not for

themselves but requests for their king you just look with me in verses one to three as they address david they're speaking to about they're speaking to him may the lord answer you when you're in distress may the name of the god of jeff could protect you may he send you help from the sanctuary and grant you support from zion may he remember all your sacrifices and burnt offerings this is a prayer to god god asking not for themselves but asking for their king asking that god would help their king in battle and they're praying knowing that victory is completely dependent on god it can only happen from him and so in the king's day of trouble when he's in distress they pray on behalf of their king whilst he's there stood at the front of them it's an encouraging prayer to hear just before he's about to go to war all god's people saying together may god help you may protect you may answer you to remove anybody so that nothing would prevent god from supporting their king all these offerings all his sacrifices all his worship would you remember it god would you accept and look at how our king has served you how he's led a consistent life would you remember that today help him in his battle remember he's worshipped you rightly this is your servant our king would you remember that lord god and send him help sometimes when we pray it might be an anxiety that drives us and we're encouraged to do that it's good to to be driven by our anxieties to bring them all to the lord this is not a prayer like that this is one of confidence and hope look with me in verse four and five may he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed we will shout for joy when you are victorious and we'll lift up our banners in the name of our god may the lord grant all your requests they're praying that the king's desires would align with god's that the longings of his heart would match up with god's it makes the world of difference to how we think about this prayer we want to pray for what god wants and notice the confidence we will we will shout for joy not if but when they expect that god will act and look forward to being able to sing about it god will be with our king our man on the battlefield they expect god to act and that he will win i wonder what that might mean for us does it does it mean that is it talking about praying for um we got have kings all over we not every country has a king does it mean that we should therefore pray for world leaders well it's a good thing to pray for world leaders we prayed for um potentially one this morning and and we had encourage us to pray for uh the new prime minister and uh our first minister john swinney but remember it's not a prayer for world this is a prayer for those chosen people jesus christ came in the family line of king david everything that david did points to him jesus is not just the king of israel his kingdom is much bigger god is not a tribal god because jesus is the reigning king of the whole world and we the church are his people and what this teaches us is that our prayers at times should center around the success of our king we don't pray for jesus to be victorious he defeated death at the cross but we pray that the name of jesus would be exalted and that his kingdom would continue to come that his victory would extend in our world today that his name would be made famous when we pray for people we know to become christians we're praying that more lips would praise our king we're praying that the kingdom would come and be victorious in people's heart that he would be worshipped and glorified more we live in that in-between time where jesus has beaten death but the kingdom is is not yet here in its fullness when we pray for our king we're praying that we would see his kingdom that it would rain in the wrong people's hearts that his name would be praised and exalted and like the psalmist that all his plans all his desires all his requests would succeed and that is what we want isn't it we want the desires of jesus own heart to come to fruition it is jesus getting the victory is that the things that we pray for is that the things that we pray for in the rest of the psalm the prayer shifts it changes here from asking prayers requesting prayers to confident praying confidence in the lord they're more like statements of confidence in someone now i i remember uh when i was younger um and i was learning to drive um you don't ask me how many lessons it took me to learn to drive it's actually quite embarrassing um but when you're learning to write drive rightly so no one has any confidence in you and with good reason i'm i'm pretty sure some of my dad's hair went a little uh grayer uh quicker after or he lost a bit more after he took me out a few times in his uh little reno i i even remember i don't i'm even remember asking dad why are you clutching at the door don't worry i've got this i know what i'm doing um and i think when my own kids learn to drive i'll begin to understand why he had white knuckles uh i didn't share the same confidence in my driving ability because you see confidence in someone it is based on who they are isn't it it's based on what they've done or what they can do it's based on you might say credentials um my dad had every right not to trust in my driving skills i didn't have the credentials the license the license still said provisional i didn't have the credentials for him to have confidence in me it is not like that in this song the israelites can confidently pray and trust the lord because they know that he has the credentials he has the credentials of almighty god

which means that they can trust them and it is in the rest of the psalm that god's people remind themselves of the lord what he does and and remind david perhaps of the god that they pray to that the prayer shows that they have confidence in his credentials look with me in verse six now i know that the lord saves his anointed he answers him from his holy heaven with the saving power of his right hand now i know they say this is not a request

but a confident statement and in fact the whole prayer becomes is based upon this confidence it becomes almost like a war cry doesn't it now i know that the lord saves his anointed he answers him from his holy heaven with the saving power of his right hand there's not a shadow of a doubt here this is god's king the anointed king and we know that god's with him and that means that he's with us that means he's with us he will win and we will win they know that they know that the requests that we saw earlier from verses one to five they know that they will be answered our lord god will save our king he will hear his prayers and answer him victory depends on god saving his king and they're unwavering in their trust this trust gives them such clarity on their situation that they can even compare themselves with their enemies verse seven and eight some trust in chariots and some in horses but we trust in the name of the lord our god they're brought to their knees but we rise up and stand firm their enemies rely on the high-tech military equipment of the day chariots and horses but we trust they say we trust in the lord our god they're effectively saying we don't care how much how much how much they have they could have 10 000 horses and chariots but we don't give them monkeys israel was a tiny nation they didn't have much compared to their enemies that surrounded them they were minnows but it's flipped on its head when they take into account the most important factor israel have the lord god on their side who will save their king who will save them david stands as their representative and they're with him what difference is chariots and horses going to make the result of the battle is only going to go one way verse eight they're brought to their knees and fall but we rise and stand firm doesn't matter doesn't matter who can stand against the lord god and he's with he was with david then he was with his people then and he's with his king today he is with his people we are his people we don't trust in chariots or horses or military power we trust in the name of the lord our god the kingdom of god doesn't need military power or the wisdom of the world or anything else to advance we don't use the tactics the world uses we don't use force or manipulation or intimidation sometimes it can seem like we the church are like that little nation of israel like minnows compared with the opposition that we face small resources we look a little bit weak we look at the world's attitudes towards jesus and it can seem like we're going backwards is the gospel really doing anything our church is so small even just us this morning we we might we might look at it and think there's bigger meat lots more people meeting this morning to do other stuff we have nothing compared to others or maybe even to other religions or world views but then we come to this psalm and we come to what it reflects that we trust in the name of the lord our god and it reminds us that this is what this is the the way of the kingdom you see jesus was not born into a rich family was he he didn't need the money of the kings of the time of herod he didn't roll with the religious leaders by mega church standards his following was pretty pathetic 12 men and a few women is that it and it appeared to shrink shrink even further even when he

hung dying on a cross his followers ran away he didn't come with chariots and horses he didn't come to save the world by force by manipulation but by taking our sin and suffering and dying on a cross of the world this is our king the suffering king this is our king the servant in the eyes of the world death on a cross looks like defeat it makes us look small and weak but we trust in the name of the lord our god victory has been one jesus is alive he is risen he stands firm the lord protects his anointed and he's building his church and so psalm 20 as we begin to wrap things up two things prayer for the king that comes from confidence in the lord the israelites prayed confidently for their king trusting in the lord their god we need to remember to pray for our king king jesus that his kingdom would come and that his name would be exalted we don't pray for the king to be saved but that he will save his children we don't pray that he would be victorious in that sense because he already has been but we pray that his kingdom would come and we'd see that final victory where all sin and all evil would be totally vanquished we want the name of jesus to be famous and for his kingdom to come to see him return we live in that in between time yes he is the lord and king but we wait we pray we long for him to come back our royal family might not be involved in our day-to-day life but king jesus is to the rest of the world it looks cheap it looks sweet but jesus said i'll build my church and he's doing it he's doing it jesus has the credentials he's almighty god we can have confidence in our prayers in the lord knowing that all his plans will succeed and that like the singers

of this the souls and the singers of this sound means we have reasons to sing to to be joyful and thankful for what god is doing and what he is doing let's go almighty god we do praise you and thank you for our king we thank you that jesus is the one who who is victorious that he has been victorious at the cross that all sin death and evil has been beaten and destroyed and we thank you that one day we'll see the fulfillment of that and we pray that in that in between time we pray for your kingdom to come lord jesus we pray that it would come every day we pray that it would come in our hearts increasingly as we're made more like you we pray that it would come um in our community and we pray that it would come in our in our nation and in the world lord we we long to see your kingdom come we pray that we would see more that you would be victorious over people and that you would reign and rule lord jesus we thank you that we can have confidence in you that we don't trust in other things we don't try to do things by strange tactics but we we come and and we follow the pattern that you set that in weakness that in weakness that we can come and model you and we we thank you that you use us in our weakness that you're our strength and we trust in the name of the lord our god amen