Sermon Notes

Speaker: Patrick Mead

4/6/25

The Secret Garden
Psalms 113 and 114

1. Did you look at Psalm 119 last week and imagine it being prayed by Jesus himself? If you did not, please do so this week. It is important to realize that Jesus is in the psalms and that these prayers are also his prayers, not just because he said and sang them in his community, but because, in his phrasing, “they speak of me.”

2. The “B’rit Hadashah” or the New Testament is filled to overflowing with the psalms, though you might not know that unless you know where to look…and unless you really know the psalms. Remember that cultural references mean nothing if they don’t mean anything to the reader or listener (Monty Python, Nashville in Tanzania).

3. As mentioned last week, Jesus quoted the psalms while enduring crucifixion. We also mentioned that, when the Bible says Jesus and his disciples sang a hymn, they were almost certainly singing the psalms. They most likely sang the Hallel, Psalms 113-118. These were traditionally sung at Passover so, in Matthew 26:30, that would have been what Jesus sang as he went out to be betrayed and killed. Think about that. Then read them a few times in his voice.

4. In Acts 4:23-26, when Peter and John were released from prison, their people gathered around them and sang from Psalm 2 and Psalm 146. When Paul and Silas were singing hymns in prison, they were almost certainly singing psalms. The Corinthians sang psalms (1 Cor. 14:26) and Paul tells the church in Ephesus to avoid being filled with alcohol but, rather, filled with the Spirit and the evidence of that Spirit filling them would be speaking in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in their hearts towards God.

5. This makes sense when we remember that almost all of the early followers of Jesus were Jews. They would have grown up hearing, singing and, those who could, reading the psalms.

6. Chad Bird, in his excellent book, “The Christ Key,” does some of the math for us to show us how saturated the NT is with the Psalms. While individual estimates vary, there are about 196 citations of the Psalms in the NT. In the comprehensive Nestle-Aland edition of the Greek NT, which lists all citations or allusions to the Hebrew Scriptures in the NT, all but 22 psalms are accounted for. In other
words, 85% of the psalms are mentioned, cited, or alluded to in the NT. Psalm 110 has 33 quotations or allusions making it the most quoted OT passage in the NT.

7. At every significant event in the life of Jesus, the psalms are quoted; at his conception, birth, the coming the of the wise men, his baptism, all the way through to Palm Sunday, his death, and his resurrection. Remember what Jesus said in Luke 24:44 on the day he was resurrected: “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”

8. Let’s take a few examples to convince ourselves of our treatise today and motivate us to pray these psalms to prepare our hearts for the celebration of the resurrection of our Lord and King. Psalm 2 is one of the more famous of the Messianic Psalms. Jesus is the Lord’s Anointed (Messiah). He is also called King and Son. He is the one against whom the nations rage but they are his and he reigns as the begotten Son of God, ruling to the ends of the earth.

9. The NT quotes, alludes, or uses the language of Psalm 2 about 17x. When Peter and John are hauled before the Sanhedrin and charged to no longer preach in the name of Jesus, they reply in the words of this psalm (Acts 4:24-26). Luke mentions in the next verse that, yes, the nations had gathered to resist Jesus but they would fail. (Acts 4:27-31)

10. Psalm 8 is next. You might miss it at first as this seems to be a meditation on creation, but there is much more here. The Name of God, mentioned in verse 1, is our clue. In the Bible, the Name of God is often distinguished from God Himself. God’s Name dwells with Israel (Deut. 12:11). His Name is in the temple (1 Kings 8:16). In Psalm 124, the psalmist says “our help is in the Name of the Lord.”

11. So far, so good. Now, look at John 12:23 where Jesus says the “hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.” Then, in verse 28, he says “Father, glorify your Name.” We could go on for about another hour here to make sure you get the connection but, for now, I will just state plainly that “the Son of Man” IS the Name of God. We could translate Psalm 8:1 to say “O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is that One who is your Name in all the earth.”

12. On the first Palm Sunday, the chief priests and scribes were furious with Jesus when the children called him the “Son of David.” Jesus rebutted them by quoting Psalm 8:2. The writer of Hebrews says that Jesus is the one being referred to in Psalm 2. (Hebrews 2:5-8). And he has brought us into this story as his brothers and sisters (Hebrews 2:11).

13. Psalm 88 is a dark psalm. It does not resolve into praise. It begins and ends in the dark. (quick survey of chapter) It is not the only dark psalm but it is here that we see the humanity and pain of our Lord on display. He speaks of being tossed aside into the pit of death, bearing the wrath of God. His companions shun him. He has become a thing of horror. He asks God why he is forsaken, why has God hidden His face from him? Friends and neighbors shun him and everyone he knows fades into darkness. No wonder Jesus went to this psalm on the cross, using these words and concepts to give voice to his personal anguish and sense of desertion.

14. Psalm 41 could be read as straight from the mouth of Jesus. The psalmist is under attack, at least verbally, and people wish him dead and forgotten. (vv.9-12 and Philippians 2:5-11).

15. We could go further and look at other psalms but I hope we’ve made our point. To prepare our minds and hearts for the King, we need to read his prayers, think his thoughts, and join him on his journey. He reminds us of this in the Great Commission and every time he says, “Follow me.”