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# The Church in Prayer

## Victory Life Sherman / Online

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Sunday, August 30, 2020 — Psalm 110 - The King who Reigns

### Introduction

Faith is not manipulative, nor is faith transactional. Faith is primarily covenant relationship and cooperative obedience. It's building a relationship with God built on trust in His character and His word, and obedient responses to His instructions. Prayer is one of the primary ways that we nurture our relationship with a God we are in covenant with, and one of the primary ways we learn cooperative obedience.

The primary purpose of prayer is not to get God to do what you think He should do. The primary purpose of prayer is relationship, and in that relationship we are transformed. Prayer must be primarily about being *with* God, not primarily about asking (or especially demanding) something *from* God. It is within the context of this relationship that our trust is built and our character transformed that we learn how to pray rightly and live rightly while enacting His will in cooperative obedience.

### What is the center?

What is our life centered on? What constitutes the center of our lives?

What many Christians say is the center of their lives is something spiritual; popularly the answer would be Jesus, since that is usually the safe answer to spiritual questions. However, if we examined our lives and took objective data on asked a non-biased observer what is at the center of our lives, what would they say?

For most Americans, religious and non-religious alike, "self" constitutes the center of our lives. We are very ego-centric in the modern world. Sometimes that looks like radical individualism, where our personal lives get centered around our wants, our needs, our desires, our dreams and desires are about elevating ourselves and basing our lives on what makes us happy. However, there are many who adopt a radical tribalism, where our personal lives are nothing more than a small part of a group identity, centered around what we think is best for "me and my tribe." Both are variations of a "self-centered" life.

And neither is working.

Psalm 110 brings this into sharp focus. It is the most popular Psalm in the New Testament, quoted seven or 8 times and alluded to around fifteen times. The

Apostles understood the life and ministry of Jesus through meditating and understanding Psalm 110. They also understood their own identity and work through praying this psalm. Psalm 110 directs us in the kind of prayer that “uncenters the self.” It rescues us from the self-centeredness that we are all susceptible to and re-centers on the being and action of God. It gives us the solid ground necessary to actually do something about what’s wrong with the world, and what’s wrong with us.

## Psalm 110

### **Psalm 110:1-7 (ESV)**

The LORD says to my Lord:

“Sit at my right hand,  
until I make your enemies your footstool.”

The LORD sends forth from Zion  
your mighty scepter.  
Rule in the midst of your enemies!  
Your people will offer themselves freely  
on the day of your power,  
in holy garments;  
from the womb of the morning,  
the dew of your youth will be yours.  
The LORD has sworn  
and will not change his mind,  
“You are a priest forever  
after the order of Melchizedek.”

The Lord is at your right hand;  
he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath.  
He will execute judgment among the nations,  
filling them with corpses;  
he will shatter chiefs  
over the wide earth.  
He will drink from the brook by the way;  
therefore he will lift up his head.

## Re-centering in Prayer

In prayer and in Bible reading, we are mostly approaching them as consumers. It is how we have been formed for 50 years as Americans. We approach the Bible, prayer, sermons as consumers looking to meet an immediate felt need or desire. We want to feel good about ourselves, get encouragement through the struggles, hope for our future. There is nothing necessarily wrong with those things. But where are we centered? If we are centered in “self,” then we will not allow prayer, scripture, or sermons to form us into Christlikeness; but will only hear what makes us feel good.

In prayer, we are invited to pray with different questions: What is God saying? What is God doing? And not just in the context of self, *for* me or *to* me, but “What is God saying in Christ? What is God doing in the Body of Christ, the Church?”

Psalm 110 is framed around two oracles of direct address from God (v. 1 and v. 4). This framework—“the Lord says...the Lord has sworn”—anchors the two stanzas of Psalm 110 (v. 1-3 and v. 4-7) into two precisely balanced parts. Each stanza, spoken in Hebrew, has exactly seventy-four syllables.<sup>1</sup>

Out of the middle of the first century violence, tyranny, and religions a group of people nurtured a hunger for hearing God, and hearing Him on His terms. They cultivated an insatiable appetite for the Word of God. Psalm 110 became their favorite prayer that “centered their attention on the *word* of God and involved their lives in the *work* of God.”

### **Psalm 110:1-3 (ESV)**

The LORD says to my Lord:

“Sit at my right hand,  
until I make your enemies your footstool.”

The LORD sends forth from Zion  
your mighty scepter.  
Rule in the midst of your enemies!  
Your people will offer themselves freely  
on the day of your power,  
in holy garments;  
from the womb of the morning,  
the dew of your youth will be yours.

The seminal activity that stems from God speaking and acting is establishing the rule of the Messiah, prophesying the fulfilling the covenant He made to David:

**2 Samuel 7:12-16 (ESV)** When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.”

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<sup>1</sup> Mitchell Dahood, “The Psalms,” (Doubleday, 1975), vol. 3, pg. 113

The way that the Messiah gathers His people is drawing them, not drafting or coercing them.

### **Psalm 93:5 (ESV)**

Your decrees are very trustworthy;  
holiness befits your house,  
O LORD, forevermore.

It's God's word that puts God's rule into effect in this world. The word of God stands up in opposition to the violence and chaos of the world. God's people in cooperative obedience to His word lives out the trustworthiness and surety of His rule that outlasts the violence and chaos the enemy tries to ensue upon our hearts, minds, and lives, or the violence and chaos the forces of darkness ensue upon our country or world. Living out this obedience to His Word brings transformation into our lives that results in "holiness," which adorns the "house" with beauty.

### We Need A Priest

To those who offer themselves freely to the King who rules authorized by God and lives out obedience with strength and energy, those very lives are what enact God's rule in the world. But often what begins with a pure heart and pure motives, soon goes from solving the problems in the world to making the problems worse.

We know things are messed up in the world. Everything is politicized, and our political engagement is as divisive as ever. We want things to be better, but all we see is hate and bigotry and blaming. We recognize there are many ills in the world, but are burned out on the vitriol and name-calling. There are many people trying to do what is right, but many are deceived, and too few are effective for good. What kind of hope do we have?

A vote in one election may turn the tide (in either direction), but it will not solve the problem. Why do the people who commit themselves to doing good end up behaving so badly? Not just politicians and journalists; activists and preachers are just as guilty. Our best efforts sometimes worsen the problem.

It's because the problem with the world, the problem with "them," is the same problem with us and it is within us. We drift, without intending to, toward self centeredness. We don't often realize, especially since "they" are more so than we are, and we may even spiritualize it, pasting all sorts of Bible verses to excuse it, but there is a strong gravitational pull in all of us toward self-centeredness. What can we do about it?

We can pray. Prayer is the central and essential act the Church must engage in to remedy such an issue.

"Psalm 110 established its eminence in the early Christian community by centering the self in the God who speaks. They knew that they were in a messed-up world and

that something had to be done about it. They also knew that their good works and good intentions were flawed in such a way that they only made it worse. And they knew that this did not disqualify them from the work: they had been drawn into what God was doing in Christ to establish his will “on earth as it is in heaven.” ~ Eugene Peterson<sup>2</sup>

What begins in a desire and pursuit of justice, usually ends with greater injustice. It’s because of two main things: First, true justice is an extension of who God is and therefore requires Him to enact it. Second, because of this, justice in this world in the midst of fallen humanity, cannot stand on its own two feet, it is built on something: righteousness. Righteousness and justice must go together or both get spoiled or perverted.

**Psalm 89:14 (ESV)** Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; steadfast love and faithfulness go before you.

**Psalm 97:1-2 (ESV)** The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad! Clouds and thick darkness are all around him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.

We cannot bring about justice in the world without God and His character permeating our character and perspective. We need to *be made right* with God before we can *make things right* in the world. We need a priest to bring us back to God.

**Psalm 110:4 (ESV)**

The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind,  
“You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.”

## Jesus

Because this is the most quoted and referred to set of verses in the New Testament from the entire Old Testament, it takes much of the New Testament to understand how the Apostles worked out these ideas into their thinking, praying, and living. Psalm 110 became the primary way the Apostles’ understood the person and purpose of Jesus, and we ignore it or downplay to our own hurt.

Jesus refers to Psalm 110:1 when questioned if he is in fact the Messiah:

**Luke 22:67-70 (ESV)** “If you are the Christ, tell us.” But he said to them, “If I tell you, you will not believe, and if I ask you, you will not answer. But from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God.” So they all said, “Are you the Son of God, then?” And he said to them, “You say that I am.”

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<sup>2</sup> Quoted from Eugene Peterson’s book, “Where Your Treasure Is: Psalms that Summon You from Self to Community,” page 41.

The Gospel writers script this scene in order to show us that His crucifixion was His enthronement and His subsequent resurrection was His vindication in being the Daniel 7 “Son of Man” who receives the Kingdom from the Ancient of Days.

**Daniel 7:13-14 (ESV)** I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

Peter utilizes Psalm 110 to make sense of who Jesus is and His authority as the Christ (the Messiah) and the King whom God has appointed to be ruler of the world:

**Acts 2:22-36 (ESV)** “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. For David says concerning him, “I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.” Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, “The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.” Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

Jesus’ rule would extend “from Zion” through His Spirit-filled, Spirit-empowered witnesses who testify of His Kingdom:

**Acts 1:6-8 (ESV)** So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive

power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Jesus’ witnesses, who submit to His rule and obey His word, freely offer themselves continually to His work:

**Romans 12:1 (ESV)** I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Jesus’ witnesses live such radically different lives that it threatens the powers that be and ends up “turning the world upside down”:

**Acts 17:1-8 (ESV)** Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ.” And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women. But the Jews were jealous, and taking some wicked men of the rabble, they formed a mob, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out to the crowd. And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, shouting, “These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also, and Jason has received them, and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus.” And the people and the city authorities were disturbed when they heard these things.

Jesus’ work will continue in subduing all enemies under His authority, not by coercion, but through Spirit-empowered obedience until the end:

**1 Corinthians 15:21-26 (ESV)** For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

Jesus does this by being the great High Priest who reconciles people to God:

**Hebrews 5:5-10 (ESV)** So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”; as he says also in another place, “You are a priest forever, after the order of

Melchizedek.” In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, **he became the source of eternal salvation** to all who obey him, being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

As the Priest King, Jesus is the One with the authority to be the final judge over all of humanity:

**Hebrews 4:12-16 (ESV)** For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of **him to whom we must give account**. Since then we have **a great high priest** who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

**1 Peter 4:3-5 (ESV)** For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; but **they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead**.

**Acts 10:38-43 (ESV)** how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that **he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead**. To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

## Conclusion

As Jesus’ witnesses, we are imploring everyone to “be reconciled to God,” submitting to His Kingdom and His rule.

**2 Corinthians 5:19-21 (ESV)** that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and **entrusting to us the message of**

**reconciliation.** Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

## Verse by Verse Notes

### **Psalm 110:1 (ESV)**

The LORD says to my Lord:

“Sit at my right hand,  
until I make your enemies your footstool.”

- “Right hand”: Daniel 7:9-22
- YHWH as King appoints a human King to be the absolute ruler who enacts His judgment on earth — their kingship is one
- Genesis 1, God speaks and creates a universe; Ps 110 God speaks and announces the Messiah to come
- Cited: Matthew 22:44, Mark 12:36, Luke 20:42, Acts 2:34-35, Hebrews 1:13
- See also: Matthew 26:64; Mark 14:62; Luke 22:69; 1 Corinthians 15:25-26; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3, 8:1, 10:12, 12:2

### **Psalm 110:2 (ESV)**

The LORD sends forth from Zion

your mighty scepter.  
Rule in the midst of your enemies!

- From Zion - outward to the rest of the world, in the midst of enemies: Acts 1:8
- Rule “in the midst” — the presence of enemies does not mean he doesn’t rule
- Psalm 45:6; Psalm 72:8; Daniel 7:13-14

### **Psalm 110:3 (ESV)**

Your people will offer themselves freely

on the day of your power,  
in holy garments;

from the womb of the morning,  
the dew of your youth will be yours.

- “womb of morning” - “Help when morning dawns” Ps. 46:5
- Revelation 12:10-11
- Judges 5:2; Nehemiah 11:2
- Revelation 19:14; 1 Chronicles 16:29
- The king is obeyed *willingly* by the people and endowed with strength and stamina (*the dew of your youth*) which emanate from *the splendor of holiness*.

### **Psalm 110:4 (ESV)**

The LORD has sworn

and will not change his mind,

“You are a priest forever

after the order of Melchizedek.”

- Divine oath - King-priest combining
- The victorious king also brings us toward God, righteousness
- Genesis 14:18-20, Hebrews 5:5-10, 6:19-7:18
- Cited: Hebrews 5:6, 7:17, 21
- Psalm 132:11-18, Zechariah 6:12-13

### **Psalm 110:5 (ESV)**

The Lord is at your right hand;  
he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath.

- This King is the absolute ruler
- Psalm 16:8-10; Romans 2:5;

**Psalm 2:1-12 (ESV)** Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying, “Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.”

He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, “As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.”

I will tell of the decree: The Lord said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”

Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

### **Psalm 110:6 (ESV)**

He will execute judgment among the nations,  
filling them with corpses;  
he will shatter chiefs  
over the wide earth.

- “execute judgment” - it is the God appointed King who will judge
- 1 Peter 4:3-5; 2 Timothy 4:1-2; Acts 10:38-43
- Isaiah 2:4, 11:1-5; Joel 3:12; Micah 4:3
- Ezekiel 39:17-20; Revelation 19:11-21

**Psalm 110:7 (ESV)**

He will drink from the brook by the way;  
therefore he will lift up his head.

- God will defend the king and the people so that life-giving water will not be cut off from Jerusalem. (Psalm 46:4 - the river that makes God's city glad)
- Judges 7:5-6; Psalm 3:3, 24:7-10, 27:5-6

## Psalm 110 in other Translations

### **Psalm 110:1-7 (NKJV)**

The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool." The Lord shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies! Your people shall be volunteers In the day of Your power; In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, You have the dew of Your youth.

The Lord has sworn And will not relent, "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek." The Lord is at Your right hand; He shall execute kings in the day of His wrath. He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill the places with dead bodies, He shall execute the heads of many countries. He shall drink of the brook by the wayside; Therefore He shall lift up the head.

### **Psalm 110:1-7 (TLV)**

Adonai declares to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for Your feet." Adonai will extend your mighty rod from Zion: "Rule in the midst of your enemies." Your people will be a freewill offering in a day of your power. In holy splendors, from dawn's womb, yours is the dew of your youth.

Adonai has sworn, and will not change His mind: "You are a Kohen forever according to the order of Melechizedek." My Lord is at your right hand. He will shatter kings in the day of His wrath. He will judge among the nations, heaping up corpses. He will crush heads over the entire land. He will drink from a stream along the way —so His head will be exalted.

### **Psalm 110:1-7 (MSG)**

The word of God to my Lord: "Sit alongside me here on my throne until I make your enemies a stool for your feet." You were forged a strong scepter by God of Zion; now rule, though surrounded by enemies! Your people will freely join you, resplendent in holy armor on the great day of your conquest, Join you at the fresh break of day, join you with all the vigor of youth.

God gave his word and he won't take it back: you're the permanent priest, the Melchizedek priest. The Lord stands true at your side, crushing kings in his terrible wrath, Bringing judgment on the nations, handing out convictions wholesale, crushing opposition across the wide earth. The King-Maker put his King on the throne; the True King rules with head held high!