

## Psalms of the Son

### III - A Pleasant Theme - Psalm 45

*My heart overflows with a pleasant theme*, the Psalm says, and then it speaks of the king, majestic in his might, and his love for his bride; the classical fairy tale theme, if you will, except that in the classical fairy tale the hero will usually be a *prince* rather than a king, which is probably to do with the perception that there is more of a sense of *promise* to being a *future* king and having a long reign ahead of you.

It used to be that the classical fairy tale theme would be considered a pleasant theme, Prince Charming risking his life to deliver a damsel in distress, and the two of them living together in love afterwards, happily ever after, or at least until the end of their days. Most of us who are old enough still think of this as a pleasant theme, I think, and even an inspirational imagery, perhaps, of our own lives and marriages, even though our happiness is not a fairy tale one, but rather a *real* one, not without its challenges, but well worth the while nonetheless, and again: real.

In current culture, though, the classical fairy tale theme is no longer considered a pleasant one; the idea that any woman could ever find fulfilment in being loved by man, and loving him, is condemned as oppressive and evil. A such tale cannot be tolerated, let alone told. In Disney remakes rendering classical fairy tales, for example, story lines are redacted beyond recognition to fit the political fashion of the day. To most people my age and older, this just seems sad, but it really is not that, *just* sad, for cancel culture, as this trend is commonly called, is not only a culture that has lost its sense of beauty, but also a culture caught up in idiotic rebellion against reality itself.

At any rate, the Psalm speaks of a king, majestic in his might. Scholars of the Psalms who know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God, and to not know the power of God *is* to not *really* know the Scriptures, will see the Psalm as nothing other than a song for sucking up to the current king, perhaps on the occasion of his wedding; when the Letter to the Hebrews applies the Psalm to our Lord Jesus, they will consider it a *commandeering* of the Psalm, as foreign to its original intent as a modern Disney film to a fairy tale.

The faith, though, which not only is *familiar* with the Scriptures, but also knows the power of God, will see it, that what God always had in mind with the Psalm was to point to the Son, our Saviour, and His salvation.

Well, the Psalm already says it, as it says of the King: *Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever*. This could not be said of David, nor of Solomon, nor of any other earthly King, and so it must be true that, as the Letter to the Hebrews says it, it is to the Son He says: *"Your throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Your Kingdom."* The King in the Psalm is He whom God Himself calls *God*, the Son of God, who is God Himself from eternity, equal in all things to the Father, submitting to His will willingly only, for love, and not at all out of necessity or compulsion, and seeking to fulfil His will in all things.

*You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness*, as the Psalm says it; *therefore God, your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness beyond your companions*

The Son of God had Himself born into our kind to live for us the life we as His creatures owe it to God to live, and fail to live, in full and complete love, and obedience, and submission to His will. And He has. *You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness*.

More than that, the Holy One of God, Himself without sin or shortcoming, had Himself baptised into the sin of sinners to take it upon Himself and take it away from us sinners, to bear it for us, and His own divine judgement against it. He took upon Himself His own hatred against all evil, all ungodliness and impurity that is in our lives, and in our hearts and minds. And this He did to suffer for us, in our stead and on our behalf, its punishment and penalty, that we might stand righteous and right before His judgement, all guilt and debt dealt with and done away with.

Of this is it that the Psalm has God the Father speak, as He says: *In Your majesty ride out victoriously for the cause of Truth and meekness and righteousness*. Meekly would the Son suffer for the salvation of sinners, to win for us sinners full and complete righteousness before His judgement, so that we shall not suffer for ever in His wrath, but rather live and be with Him in the fullness of His glory. This is the Truth of God, too good to be true, but true nonetheless: God is that good! In His heart, God the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit resolved from eternity to save sinners from His own holiness and hatred of evil, at the most terrible cost to Himself, by having the Son suffer *for the cause of Truth and meekness and righteousness*!

And through the testimony of His faithful Church of how His salvation has been brought to completion, the Son promises and pronounces His salvation upon all sinners. Again, as the Psalm says it: *Grace is poured upon Your lips*.

And therefore, as the Psalm also says, *God has blessed You for ever*. Because He has brought the salvation of sinners to completion, as the holy Apostle Paul writes it, *God has highly exalted Him and bestowed upon Him the name which is above all names*. Yes, for nothing is more precious to God than the salvation of sinners, for, again, so good is God, so great His love for us. And therefore, the greatest name He knows to bestow even upon Him who is Himself God from eternity is that of *Saviour*. His Kingdom is a Kingdom of *salvation*, His throne the throne of *grace*, and those whom He has won for His Kingdom shall rejoice in His praise for all eternity. Says the Psalm: *I will cause Your name to be remembered in all generations; therefore nations will praise You for ever and ever*. And: *In place of Your fathers shall be Your sons; You will make them princes in all the earth*. Those the Son of God has had born anew, in His Baptism, as beloved children of God, shall reign with Him in greater glory than did David or Solomon or any of His earthly fathers; we shall be with Him and share with Him in the fullness of all the glory that is His, and was from eternity. All that is His, He gives to His Christians and His Church, who is His Bride, and His beloved, whom He gave all to win, to give Himself to her, and all that is His. As the holy Apostle Paul writes it: *Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present her to Himself as glorious, without any spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and blameless*. And this He does in the worship of His Church, present His Christians to Himself, and to the Father, bright and beautiful in Him, adorned with His own righteousness, that is: His goodness and innocence; and we present ourselves to Him, and to the Father, what He has promised, and what He has done for us, and what He has given to us, and what He has made us to before Him, for this is part of what it means that we do what He commanded us to do *in my remembrance*, when we have Him give Himself to us and make us one with Him by giving His own body and blood to us, for real, with bread and wine.

The Psalm foresees a yet more glorious day, though, when He shall come in glory to take His Church to Himself in His heavenly home: *All glorious is the princess in her chamber, as we hear it, with robes interwoven with gold. In many-coloured robes she is led to the King with her virgin companions following behind her. With joy and gladness they are led along as they enter the palace of the King*.

The way the Psalm presents this might seem somewhat strange to us, or would, if we noticed, which I suspect some of us might not have.

The imagery the Psalm uses here does not quite hold together logically, by our modern Western standards, which is to do with the Psalm being neither modern nor Western. We have what is called a *mixed metaphor*. If we were to ask who is who in the Psalm, or more specifically, who we are, we are not only the sons who shall take the place of the fathers, we are also the bridesmaids, as well as the bride, that is: her *virgin companions*.

And this means that the love Christ has for His Church is His love for you. You are His Church, the Bride as well as one of the bridesmaids. All that He gives to His Church, He gives to you; and, conversely, your relationship with Him is not a private and personal one, in the sense that it is not between you and Him only; His relationship with you is His relationship with His Church, which is where He meets you and lives with You and gives Himself to you, in His Word and worship.

And so it is about you, also, rather than about all other Christians, when the Psalm says: *Hear, O daughter, and consider, and incline your ear: forget your people and your father's house, and the King will desire your beauty. Since He is your Lord, bow to Him.* For as the holy Apostle Paul also writes it, *Christ is the Head of the Church, His body, and is Himself her Saviour, and so, the Church submits to Christ.* She belongs to Him, because He has paid the price for her to be His own, as He has for you, also. To Him you belong; to honour and obey Him goes before all other obligations you may have in life, just as the faith must come before all other affections; says our Lord Jesus: *He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.* And when the Apostle writes that *the Church submits to Christ*, it is obviously implied that those who will not, are not His Church!

As His Church, however, we can take heart and rejoice, even when we fail, that the King desires the beauty of His Bride, the beauty He Himself bestows upon her, out of the love which caused Him to give Himself up for her to *sanctify and cleanse her and present her to Himself as holy and blameless.*

It is to this His love He calls us to submit, by which we are His own. The tale of the King's love for His Bride is a pleasant theme, indeed, even though, for the time being, we can barely begin to imagine just how pleasant it shall prove, when He finally appears.

Blessed is He that comes, in the name of the Lord. Amen.