

# The inaccessible pinnacle?

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 01 May 2016

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[ 0 : 00 ] 23 and 24. And so we come to study Psalm 24 today.

The context of the psalm, as is the case in many of the psalms, is not crystal clear. The likelihood is that the context is detailed for us in 1 Chronicles 13.

Where the Ark of the Lord was being brought back by King David to Jerusalem. The Ark of the Lord was that place where God made himself known under the Old Covenant.

It's where God's presence was most profoundly felt. And so that Ark was being brought back to Jerusalem. And there were songs and there were lyres and there was celebration as it was being transported.

And that's the likely context of where the psalm was penned and how it was sung. We'll just read the psalm in its entirety from verse 1.

[ 1 : 09 ] This is God's Word. The earth is the Lord's and everything in it. The world and all who live in it. For he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters.

Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? He has clean hands and a pure heart. Who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false.

He will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication, righteousness literally, from God his Saviour. Such is the generation of those who seek him.

Who seek your face, O God of Jacob. Lift up your heads, O you gates. He lifted up your ancient doors that the King of Glory make him in.

Who is this King of Glory? The Lord, strong and mighty. The Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O you gates.

[ 2 : 16 ] Lift them up, you ancient doors that the King of Glory make him in. Who is he, this King of Glory? The Lord almighty. He is the King of Glory.

Amen. And may God bless that reading of his word. Neil Cameron is now going to come and lead us in prayer. In God. Let us pray.

Can you be Lord? Hi, I am your. I am your. Every Pisces is also been Lord God. Shall we seek your soul within the King of Glory?

Be should be, is there? They are just the way. Come in. You are able to keep me. Moving him and this is only having a spiritual level.

One for the sake of prayer. shith shows up one more whPER with many people it's Is to submit a message for your people.

[ 4 : 25 ] This is to do with your friend and the dishwasher.

in fact I would love to he , when I was growing up, that I was hungry and preacher I was hungry, but I know this very kind.

For the world to go on that and to accomplish, where we receive a present The Oh snap Yay leader before the sun shall be wologetic of most common gates important

If you'velimed everyday- ah, you're a good cook It's a good fish than it is.án Don't lettravel You're both He's women You're even the one who's when we play That's the fait Veil Fina Khanna Donc Swin Coach Is World furnished for taking care of your Ni'ligh Clash there's a biggerbrush Anything Jesus believed, a unsbered message and showed us that the church traveled and visit his family and check his family the Savior

They say they may belong armed people, but to be in a commodity, we even try to live with the son of one class, because it can be seen when they're here and it's stuck in a world path to in one room and I am more likely to die.

[ 8 : 38 ] So the answer is to speak in the lead line, for views of all misher Allah etcetera, the truth should always becare.

The lions are farms in different hatch■.

There are gnitties, verybeing of God■■■ that the two people are rather thanlax,PLE watching them their remains in a family.

Hornets haven't shown you by the accent. you Amen.

We sing again to God's praise from Psalm 119.

[10:30] Psalm 119 and from verses 189 to 191 as I mark in the English. Thy word forever is, O Lord, in heaven settled fast, and to all generations thy faithfulness doth last.

The earth thy hast established, and it abides by thee, as they lay stand as thy ordainst for all thy servants. These two verses in Gaelic.

And we remain seated to sing. God's praise. God's praise.

the yeah anyway the Bend his Creator with a deep breath ■■■■■ Indians!

Pilate and conceived in the votaries to the flood. Thank you.

[12:45] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. If you could turn back in your Bibles to Psalm 24, please.

And just as we come back to the Word, let's again pray. Lord God, we thank you for your Word. We acknowledge that we have sung with it.

[14:44] It's steadfast. It remains sure generation to generation. Your Word is unchanging. And heaven and earth will pass away, but your Word will not pass away.

We pray that you would give us understanding. And apart from your Spirit, we can't understand and we cannot apply and hear and be changed by the Word.

We can't see ourselves and we can't see Jesus. And so we pray that you would send the Holy Spirit, Father, that we would have a teacher. And that we would understand.

And while we pray for ourselves in this room here, we pray for the children in their different classes.

We ask that you would be with their teachers. And that they would be able to simply and clearly teach the children about Jesus and his love for them.

So hear our prayers and help us, we pray. And we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Amen. I think it was last year now, you'll remember the headlines that were hitting the news in the newspapers.

[15:57] There was the Volkswagen emissions scandal. Various cars, newer cars were reported to have not been performing in the way that they should have performed and the way that they were promised to be performing.

And so what happened? Well, these cars were recalled. They weren't performing right. They were damaging the environment, we were told. And so the manufacturer specified the cars that were substandard.

And there was a manufacturer, there was a maker's recall. Last Christmas, one of the girls received a present. And it was a Kindle, one of these electronic book things.

And she played with it for a good while and still does. But we got an email a couple of months ago now telling us that there had been testing done on the device.

And the charger that was being used to charge up the device was found to be dangerous. And so what happened? Well, again, there was a maker's recall.

[17:01] The substandard one was sent away and something that was up to standard was sent back. And the first point I want to note in guiding us in terms of our thoughts through this psalm is that we can note that there is a maker's recall in the psalm.

There's the maker's recall. The second point is we see that there are master's requirements in terms of our entry. And the third point is we come to the climax of the psalm.

We see a majestic redeemer. So that's the structure for the psalm. Maker's recall. The master's requirements for entry into his presence. And then the majestic redeemer becomes into focus.

So first of all, there's the maker's recall. And we see that in verses 1 and 2 of the psalm. The earth is the Lord's and anything in it, the world and all who live in it.

For he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters. So what do we learn here in these two succinct, loaded verses of this psalm?

[18:12] What do we learn? Well, we learn here that the earth is not ours. We learn here right from the beginning that we don't hold title to this earth.

Or indeed anything that's in it. The earth is the Lord's and everything in it. So everything that we might think about and claim to possess, everything that we live in, everything that we sleep in, everything that we work with day to day with our hands, everything that we might relax in or with, everything that we put in the bank, everything that we store away in safe places, it's not ours. It's his. One commentator on the Weirstry says, this psalm reminds us that we are stewards and not owners.

God owns everything. He doesn't just own the cattle on a thousand hills. He owns the cars in a thousand garages. That's the perspective.

That's the correction to our thinking. And it very much is our thinking, mine included. That's our fallen nature. It's mine. You don't have to teach that.

[ 19 : 37 ] The girls can be in a room that's absolutely awash with Sylvania families or action figures of whatever kind. And you hear the cry, the blood-curdling cries in one corner of the room.

It's mine! One little toy they're grasping. And yet everything in this world is not mine.

It's not yours. It's his. And if that truth was universally realized, how transformative that would be in this world.

So many of the quarrels that we hear of, whether it's quarrels between crofters or quarrels between countries, it all boils down to that.

It's mine. Whether it's a strip of land, you know, that thin, that offense is on, or an animal, or the natural resources that a country is about to drill down to try and acquire.

[ 20 : 40 ] So many of the wars that we read about, they're over natural resources, they're over money, they're all driven by a desire and a greed, a compulsion to own.

And yet, in light of this sound, we can own nothing in the ultimate sense. We may have our man-made systems that allow us to hold a bit of paper that says we have title, but we can ultimately own nothing because he, the Lord, owns everything.

So what we have, he allows us to handle for a while. It's his. The earth is the Lord's and everything in it.

And so, when we think about the world that we live in, the mess that we are making in terms of the resources of this world and the inequality and the battles to own this and that, yes, they're damaging to us as stewards of things in this world, but ultimately, all these battles and all the mess that comes out of these battles, they're an offense against God.

Because he is the creator. He is the sustainer of all that we have. And not just all that we have, but also all that we are.

[ 22 : 17 ] It's the other thing. There's not a soul in this world, now, today, or in times past, or in times to come, if history is allowed to continue for a period, there is not a soul that will walk these shores, or any shores, that does not belong to God.

Even those who are most vehemently against him. Think about the most vocal atheists that you know. Think about the violent terrorists that we're seeing on our news streams day by day.

Those who are so full of hate against Christ and his people. Think about dictator tyrants. They may not sign up to this, they may not believe this, but in the correct, truthful sense, they are his.

They may shake their fist at that, but they are his. Do we see that? Do we have a big enough view of God?

One commentator, Gail Ralph David, said this, David simply wants to keep you from punifying Yahweh, the Lord.

[ 23 : 45 ] From thinking that he is simply the divine mascot of some Middle Eastern Israelite gentile. No. The earth, the world, the whole shooting match is his.

So what does that mean for you and for me? It means that you and I are not alone. Your life is not your life.

You and I are not alone. You and I belong to God. You and I were made by God. And that was no accident.

Before the foundations of the world, we were looking at this in Ephesians 1, he determined he would make you. In the womb, Psalmist tells us in Psalm 139, he knew you.

In the same psalm, we are told that he has numbered your days and mine. And you know, when we put that into our thinking, that gives every human being such worth and such dignity and such purpose.

[ 24 : 56 ] You are not an accident. You and I are not some insignificant byproduct of a chemical reaction, a big bang that happened somewhere at some time.

You and I were deliberately, purposefully made by God, for God. And we thrive and we find life when we're in relationship with him.

And yet, we break down and the world that we live in breaks down. We become confused. We become frustrated. We become fractious.

We decay. We malfunction when we drop out of relationship with him. And that is the story of your life and mine. the story of this world. God made it.

He made us. It was perfect. Sin came in. Genesis 3. Sin drove us out of relationship with God and now, because of our sinful, fallen nature that's been passed down that Adamic path, we are dysfunction.

[ 26 : 05 ] And yet, the God who made us, the God that we may have turned our backs on, the God who sees the rebellion that's in our hearts, the God that this world shakes its fist at and defies and rejects and spits at and mocks and scourges and kills on a cross, he's recalling us.

Just as Volkswagen recalled that batch of dysfunctional cars, our God, our maker, he looks in love at the sorry state that we are in and he recalls us.

These opening two verses of this psalm and the whole psalm in fact the whole Bible is essentially a book that is a divine recall.

God is revealing himself to us, he is speaking to us in order that we will hear and we will come back to him. So there's the good news right from the beginning of the psalm.

The God of all creation, he loves you. if you're hearing, he's speaking to you. He wants you to know him.

[ 27 : 39 ] You are his creation. He wants you to live close with him and find that abundant life that is only found in that intimacy of relationship with him.

He's calling you. But there's a problem and that takes us to our second point, the master's requirements. That's the second section of the psalm.

There's the maker's recall but now there's the master's requirements, master's access requirements we could say. What kind of God is it that is recalling us?

Well, he is the God who is holy. The whole of scripture makes very clear to us that God is a God who is holy. He cannot look upon sin.

And so you and I can't just rush on in to his presence. We might be in an airport, for example, and we're sitting having our cup of coffee and we've maybe misjudged the time, we've lost sense of the time and then over the tannoy there's this call, well, passengers, McLeod or McDonnell or whoever, please head at speed to gate number 25.

[ 28 : 57 ] When you hear that and there's this call, then you drop your coffee and you charge, you run, you rush up the gangway or up the gate to try and get access, but we can't rush into the presence of God.

Even if we hear his call, we can't just charge on into his presence because he's perfect and we are anything but perfect. And so we have a problem here.

There's a roadblock. It seems almost cruel when we think about it. God recalls us and then he sets the entry level into his presence so high that we're disqualified from being able to proceed.

the master's entry requirements show that to be the case. We're called, we take a step and then we're stuck. Listen to the master's entry requirements.

Verse 3. Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? In other words, in other language, in new covenant language, who can draw near, who can enjoy communion, who can come close to God?

[ 30 : 15 ] And then there's the answer in verse 4, following, he who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false, he will receive blessing from the Lord, and vindication from God his saviour.

Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, O God of Jacob. So let's just think for a moment through the master's entry requirements.

And let's think about our lives and how they measure up to God's requirements. What are we called to have? Well, firstly we're called to have clean hands, verse 4. And hands refers just simply to what we do.

So, to have clean hands is to have a life that's free from any sense of wrongdoing. To have clean hands is to have a blameless life.

To have a clean hands is to have a life that is free from any charges of wrong or inconsistency or hypocrisy. That's requirement number one.

[ 31 : 25 ] I wonder if we were to ask for a show of hands. Who has clean hands? I can't imagine there would be many, if any. Can you come, girls?

people? And yet, when we think of it, there are maybe one or two examples of people that come into our minds.

Their life seems to be so exemplary that you look at them and you think their hands are clean. One example of the book is Daniel, who we studied last year. Remember Daniel, he was in high political position and his co-workers and his colleagues hated it.

They wanted to take him down. And so in went the dirt diggers and they pored over his political career. They checked through the records. They looked for any kind of dirt that they could use to discredit him.

But no matter how deep they dug, they could find nothing. His hands seem to be clean. And so the person who may come into God's holy place needs to have such a life, they need to have clean hands.

[ 32 : 41 ] But that's just the beginning of it. The second requirement is a bit more searching. Secondly, we're to have a pure heart, verse 4. And this I believe is where we all fall.

If our hearts are exposed, then we're condemned. People might be able to look back over our life and our career and these aspects of how we've behaved on the outside and see that our lives may look very clean.

But if they could see what's going on inside, it's a different story. We're condemned. Jesus teaches that in the Sermon on the Mount.

Remember in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5, Jesus says to the tried and paraphrasing, you've heard it said, don't murder. Don't commit adultery.

We can imagine some people putting their hands up and saying, yeah, we have never murdered anyone. I've never committed adultery. And then Jesus goes on and says, but anger, that's heart murder.

[ 33 : 49 ] And looking lustfully at somebody else's husband or wife, that's heart adultery. And that's sin. And that attracts judgment too.

And that's where we all fall. None of us here can tick off requirement number two. Our hearts may be clean-ish, perhaps, but our hearts are not.

Jeremiah 17 and verse 9 says, the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Who can know it? And as we continue down the list of entry requirements, the master's requirements, it's a sorry tale.

Think back to your driving test. I won't ask for a show of hands, but if you didn't pass your driving test on the first time, then maybe you've got a memory of five minutes into the driving test exam. You've done something. You've done something and you know it's an error and you know it's a failure. And you've caught yourself doing it and you've seen the guy taking the note.

[ 35 : 05 ] And so you know no matter how well I drive for the next 20 minutes, I've failed already. And yet you have to carry on driving. And I kind of feel a bit like that, carry on down this list.

I've failed already. And yet continuing down the list, there's just more guilt that stacks up. We're to have clean hands, we're to have a pure heart.

Thirdly, we're to have no idols. Verse 4, the person who can ascend the hill, come to God's holy place and stand there, is to have an idol-free life.

Now, we might be saying, well, I have no graven images on my mantelpiece, I have no religious artifacts and idols, but we all have idols. Maybe not graven images, but idols can live and breathe. Idols can be other people. If it's more important for you and I to please and find approval of somebody else before God, then they've got into the position of an idol.

[ 36 : 12 ] some people, it's their jobs to become so all-consuming, they have nothing left to give to God, absolutely spent, everything that they are is poured into the career, the career can become an idol when it's that kind of scenario.

Sometimes it's leisure, sport, the time that we pour into that and the enthusiasm that we have for things that are essentially good things turn sour.

Good things become God things when God is pushed down the list of our priorities and these things are always sitting right at the top. I have idols.

They're like ducks in a bath. when the kids are playing with ducks in a bath, wee babies and the bubbles are there and the ducks are on the surface and the wee guy will push down the ducks and they'll disappear for a second and they pop back up.

It's not like idols in our lives. You see them, you hate them, they're damaging, you push them down in God's strength and then you find it popping back up. And yet, the master's requirements are no idols.

[ 37 : 42 ] One commentator says there can be no divided affections. One's devotion must be to Yahweh, the Lord, alone. And then finally, in terms of the requirements, there's to be no lads who does not, verse 4, swear by what's false.

The New Living Translation makes it more plain. He never tells lies. Is there anyone here who's never told a lie?

Never used a half-truth? Never employed a wee bit of flattery to gain advantage and favour.

That's the requirement. Clean hands, pure heart, no idols, undivided, absolute devotion to God, no lies, consistent, absolute, pure integrity and speech.

These are the type of people says God through this psalm. These are the ones who will find blessing. These are the ones who will be vindicated. These are the ones who will seek and find God.

[ 39 : 03 ] These are the entry requirements. So how did you do? Did you pass?

I certainly didn't. The truth is we all fail. None of us pass. unlike the sliding scales of our day, God's entry requirements don't change.

Think about university entry. The standard is set. You get your offer. Maybe you have got to get three A's. You get one A and two B's.

You didn't make them. But you're hoping and you're praying in the clearing exercise for the university. Look at how many people they've got in and see if there's any spare spaces. They might phone up and say you didn't make the grade but you can come in anyway.

That's not the way God works. Might be the way the university works but it's not the way God works. We either meet his perfect, sinless, unchanging requirements or we don't.

[ 40 : 17 ] And the problem is we don't. And so at this point in the psalm there's a tension. There's the call to come into God's presence.

There's the maker's recall. And yet it seems that entry into God's presence and the acquisition of blessing and salvation that's promised within the psalm or offered within the psalm it seems inaccessible.

It's like one of the Monroe's. it's called I believe the inaccessible pinnacle. I've seen pictures of it only and to me it looks absolutely totally and utterly inaccessible.

I think to me with my fitness and my frame it probably is inaccessible. But I know theoretically it's not. And I could speak to a couple of people in the congregation even today and they would tell me it's not because they've been on it.

And as we continue in this psalm we're just given a hint in verse 6 that the blessing that we crave and the salvation that we need and the presence of God that we thirst for it's not beyond reach because this holy God who recalls us who is he?

[ 41 : 41 ] Well verse 6 tells us that he is the God of Jacob. Now here's where we think through our biblical knowledge. Do you remember Jacob?

You can read about him in Genesis 25 through to 50. The saga, the tale of Jacob's life. We have no time to explore it but let's just apply the criterion.

Did he have clean hands? Far from it. Did he have a pure heart? Absolutely not. Was he idol free? I don't believe so. Was he one who never told lies?

Well he certainly wasn't one who never told lies and used deceit to gain advantage and yet he came to know God and he sought blessing from and he received blessing from God even though his history and his spiritual CV was far from exemplary.

He came to receive the blessing of God so how can sinners like Jacob? How can sinners like me?

How can sinners who have filthy hands and worse hearts how can we come to know God?

[ 42 : 55 ] How can we be blessed? How can we be saved? Well thirdly and finally we need a majestic redeemer. We need someone to do for us what we can't do.

it's the building question of the psalm how can there be salvation we're asking? Who can usher us into God's presence?

Who can enable us to stand in his holy place? Who can make the impossible possible? And that question is answered in this resounding chorus of verse 7 and following the question is going out will there be a hero?

Will there be a saviour? Will there be a king? And then in the climax of the psalm it's a praise the Lord yes lift up your heads O you gates be lifted up you ancient doors that the king of glory may come in.

Who is the king of glory? The Lord strong and mighty the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads O gates lift them up you ancient doors that the king of glory may come in.

[ 44 : 13 ] Who is he this king of glory? The Lord almighty. He is the king of glory. So who is coming into focus here?

Jesus. It's this is a sound that is propelling us yet again forward to see the one who could do for us what we could never do for ourselves.

And as the chorus resounds it's Christ that we see. He is the Lord. He is the savior. He is the king. he is the only one who can take us into the presence of God. He is the only one who is able to take us into heaven. He is the only one verse 5 who is able to give us this vindication this righteousness from God.

God. He is the God man. And in his deity and his godliness he is perfect.

[ 45 : 31 ] As we heard so warmly last Sunday morning Christ is perfect. He is sinless. He has clean hands.

He is purest of hearts and the gospels show us that in full color in his deity.

He lived that sinless blameless pure life that you and I can't live. And yet in his humanity he was able to stand in the place of the sinner for us.

as our substitute. He was able to take our sin. He was able to take Jacob's sin.

And the sin of all his people upon his shoulders. Peter tells us that he bore them on the tree. He made atonement. He hung there for us. And but above his head with that cruel irony the king of the Jews peace.

[ 46 : 45 ] And yet he was more than that. He was, he is, the majestic king of kings who redeemed us with his blood.

The sin that we could not defeat, he went to war with. the devil, the enemy of our soul. He engaged him in battle.

And because he is the Lord, strong and mighty in battle, he overcame. and because he did, because he perfectly met the master's requirements, we can respond to this maker's recall and we can find forgiveness.

We can find salvation. We can find blessing. We can find access. into the presence of God.

Today, if we will put our faith in him, we find a taste of that blessing in time. And then we find perfection for eternity.

[ 48 : 14 ] The majestic redeemer is Jesus. will you put your faith in him? And will you profess your faith in him?

Let's pray. pray. Amen. Amen. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for the journey that you take us on in this psalm.

We thank you that in this psalm we are reminded that you are the God who is sovereign and majestic and our creator, sustainer, everything, hosed together by the word that you give and yet we thank you that you're the God who calls us as individuals to come to know you.

We thank you that in this song we see our sin, we see how four times over we are condemned. We see that we are utterly unable to help ourselves and save ourselves.

We see that the door is locked and yet we thank you that there was one who came, Father you sent your son and we thank you that there was no other good enough to pay the price for sin.

[ 49 : 40 ] But he alone unlocked the door of heaven and he has left us in as we put our faith in it.

So enable us we pray to put our faith in Christ day by day and enable us we pray each day that you give us to take the opportunities to profess that our faith is in Jesus.

And we pray these things for his sake. Amen. We sing to conclude.

We have brave presenters. They've opted to go for this one. Psalm 24 and verses 7 to 10. Ye gates lift up your heads on high ye doors that last for day ye lift it up so that the king of glory enter me.

But who of glory is the king? The mighty Lord is this. Even that same Lord the great and might and strong and baffled is. we stand. Peace. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[ 51 : 54 ] He gets lift up your heads, ye doors, doors that do last foray.

He lifted up the soul, the King of glory, enter me.

But who is he that is the King of glory? Who is this?

The Lord of all sand and mercy, the King of glory is.

The Lord of all sand and mercy, the King of glory is.

[ 53 : 03 ] Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah.

Hallelujah, hallelujah, amen, amen, amen.

Amen. And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit heal us all, both now and forevermore. Amen.

Amen.