5-3-20, The Holy Way

Sermon on Psalm 93

1. Introduction
2. This is the first of a series of Psalms speaking about God as King
3. In this Psalm, there is a celebration of God’s mastery and sovereignty, first over the elements of nature, and second over the Temple.
4. Although it is brief, only five verses, this Psalm is powerful in its language and its message.
5. Prayer
6. The text
7. (v. 1 & 2) The Lord is King!
8. (v. 1b) He is robed in majesty [God is robed in all that which God has created]
9. (v. 1c & 1d) The Lord is robed, he is girded with strength. [This is another of those couplets we’ve talked about, saying the same thing twice for emphasis.]
10. (v. 1e) He has established the world; it shall never be moved. [Humans live in turmoil, sometimes more than others. God’s presence is unshakeable and unmovable.]
11. (v. 2) Your throne is established from of old; you are from everlasting.
12. (v. 3) The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their roaring. [Those of you who have lived or stayed near the ocean know that sound of power. Those of you who were here in Tucson in October of 1983 remember the flooding on the Rillito and the Santa Cruz. You remember seeing buildings and bridges torn to pieces by the force of the water. For ancient people, including the Psalmist, water was both lifegiving and a source of terror when there was too much of it.]
13. (v. 4) More majestic [and powerful] than the thunders of mighty waters, more majestic than the waves of the sea, majestic on high is the Lord!
14. (v. 5) Your decrees [or covenants] are very sure; holiness befits your house [God’s holiness is the inner beauty of the Temple, and our only possible response is to seek to be holy also.], O Lord, forevermore.
15. So, what?

This passage has a kind of trajectory to it. It flows from God as King, through God as Creator and God as Master over all, to God’s decrees and covenants and the holiness which befits the house of God. I want to focus in on the idea of decree and covenant, and particularly the word *hesed*, which does not occur in this Psalm, but is included in God’s covenants.

As I’ve told you before, *hesed* refers to the love which God has for us. It is a love which God commits to, a love to which God covenants. And God keeps those covenants, even when we don’t. Before you ere even born, God covenanted to love. God has always loved you. God loves you today. And God’s covenant to love you extends throughout all eternity.

It was God’s *hesed* which led to God choosing and creating a people to be God’s own. It was God’s *hesed* which led to Israel’s being forgiven again and again and again when they decided to supplement God’s care by putting up idols. It was God’s *hesed* which led the people out of exile in Babylon to return to Jerusalem.

And, in the fullness of time, it was God’s *hesed* which led God to be born among us, to take on human flesh, to make known the kingdom of God. It was God’s *hesed* which gave sight to the blind and mobility to those who were disabled and health to those being tormented by demons. It was God’s *hesed* which led Jesus to the cross, where he atoned for all my sin and all your sin. It was God’s *hesed* which raised Jesus from death to life and left the tomb empty.

Now, as we find ourselves in the season of Eastertide, it’s reasonable for us to ask ourselves what God’s *hesed* looks like in our own lives. See, friends, if God has covenanted to love us forever, we need to see how that love impacts and informs everything we do, every day of our lives.

One of the ways this happens is in our worship lives. We gather, even if we have to do it from our own homes, and we praise God. We glorify God and we reach out in prayer and we sing to God’s glory and we hear the Word proclaimed.

But our worship of God doesn’t end there. God’s unending love for us drives us to provide food for those who are hungry. We don’t ask ourselves whether they deserve help, because God didn’t ask whether we deserve God’s love. And that’s good news for us, because if God’s love was dependent upon our deserving it, we would all be lost and hopeless. We love and serve, because God first loved us.

Because God loved us first, we don’t have the luxury of saying that children in poverty are someone else’s problem. The children of this community, and we could think particularly about the children at Altar Valley Middle School, are our problem and our concern. They are our children and we need to care for them. Why? Because God first loved us, we must love others.

And I could go on and on. Whom must we love? Those who are on the margins. Those whom society has given up on. Those who struggle with mental illness. Those who struggle with addiction. Those who are the victims of unjust systems, including systemic racism. All these are the ones whom God loves, and because of God’s love for us, we love them too.

Easter is a time of renewal, a time of new life. May each one of us be transformed by our encounter with the risen Jesus. May that transformation be a source of blessing for the world. May it be so. Amen