



## Sermon Transcript August 6, 2017

### Psalms: Prayers of Faith and Hope The Lord Reigns Over Waters Psalm 93

This message from the Bible was addressed originally to the people of Wethersfield Evangelical Free Church on August 6, 2017 at 511 Maple Street, Wethersfield, CT, 06109 by Daniel D. Warriner. This is a transcription that bears the strength and weaknesses of oral delivery. It is not meant to be a polished essay. An audio copy of the sermon on CD is available by request at (860) 563-8286. An audio version of this sermon may also be found on the church website at [www.wethefc.com](http://www.wethefc.com).

**Sermon Text**  
**Psalm 93**

<sup>1</sup>The LORD reigns; he is robed in majesty; the LORD is robed; he has put on strength as his belt.

Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved.

<sup>2</sup>Your throne is established from of old; you are from everlasting.

<sup>3</sup>The floods have lifted up, O LORD, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their roaring.

<sup>4</sup>Mightier than the thunders of many waters, mightier than the waves of the sea, the LORD on high is mighty!

<sup>5</sup>Your decrees are very trustworthy; holiness befits your house, O LORD, forevermore.

## **Introduction**

Our sermon text today is Psalm 93. This places us again in Book Four of the Psalms. Psalm 103 from last week and Psalm 93 both describe why it is right to worship our great God. And the explanations given in this psalm highlights different facets as to why the Lord is worthy of our worship. Psalm 93 begins with the phrase, “The Lord Reigns!” The reign of God as the matchless King is the central theme of this Psalm, it is a major theme of many psalms within Book Four, and it is one of the foremost themes in the entire Bible.

## **The Lord Reigns: King Over Creation**

Psalm 93 begins with an important portrayal of God robed in the majesty of a King and also belted with the strength as an all-powerful Creator, creating and establishing the world. God as the creator of heaven and earth is no new concept. Psalm 93 describes God as the ultimate creator and originator of all things. The very first phrase in Genesis 1:1 tells us, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” And the New Testament undoubtedly identifies Jesus as the same essence as the Father, homoousious, in creating all things by his hands and for his own glory. Colossians 1:16 says “...by [Jesus] all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things were created through him and for him.” The early summary of the Faith, the Apostle’s Creed, states, “I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.” So, we see over and over that God is king over creation because he made it and caused it to exist. We have a creator, we know our creator, and we *are known* by our creator. You can’t have a thorough proclamation of the Gospel message without laying the foundation that God has established the world and that He is the creator of all things. And it is an important and doctrinal distinction to make. It separates Christianity from other religions. It is a persistent declaration made by the Biblical writers and so it must be an important distinction for us as well.

There’s an interesting detail about Psalm 93. In some of the Greek manuscripts there is an intro before the Psalm 93 as to when it was to be read. It was to be read on the day before the Sabbath. And because of this, it became known as a “Friday Psalm” to be sung weekly. Being rehearsed weekly, this Psalm was given a high place in the celebration of God as our creator. Perhaps we too should pull this celebration into our regular prayer and worship. Pastor Scott has entitled this series, Psalms: Prayers of Faith and Hope, and it’s a good reminder that the truths presented through the Psalms can and should make their way into our prayer lives! In reflecting on God as our creator, we can praise

Him and thank Him for all that He's established: the complex and beautiful planet we live on – we can study it and learn about it! We can create like him! We can use all that he has created as good stewards, we can appreciate the grandeur of the trees and mountains and sunsets, the good gifts He's given us through His creation. Matter matters because of who made it! Ultimately, these *created things* drive us back to the *Creator*, reminding us that He established His world in beauty and immovableness because He reigns over all in majesty and strength.

C.S. Lewis made a great insight about this when he said, "To say that God created Nature, while it brings God and Nature into relation, also separates them. What makes and what is made must be two, not one. Thus the doctrine of Creation...empties Nature of divinity." I can say I experience God in nature, but I cannot say I worship nature. I can experience the beauty of a sunset as a good gift from God and be reminded of God's beautiful creative work, and reflect on him "robed in majesty." I can enjoy all that God has established on this Earth, as I answer to the one who made it all and reigns over it in majestic authority.

### **The Lord Reigns: His Throne**

Verse 3 goes on to say that in addition to God establishing this immovable world, He has also established His everlasting throne. In preparing for today, I was contemplating this King reigning from his Throne in Heaven. I have spent a lot of time in the book of Revelation over the past year, and the language of this psalm acted like a window, and through that window I could see the King on the throne described in the book of Revelation. The language of the throne in heaven is robust. In Revelation the word throne is mentioned something like 35 times throughout the 22 chapters of Revelation. Throughout the book, John very intentionally leads you to God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit who sits on the throne in heaven. At the end of chapter 4, we are seated before this heavenly throne and there are elders and creatures praising God, calling out endlessly, "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created." (Revelation 4:11). This isn't a king who is pacing about nervously ready to spring into action at the slightest sign that things are going awry or because he doesn't know what's going to happen next - No, this King is *sitting!* He's resting, he's calm because it's all finished and under control. His decrees are very trustworthy, because he has seen the end of his story and he is victorious. He's not in a rush. What he says goes! Holiness befits his house, because he is going to make it so! He shall never be moved. There is a King who sits in heaven, and the Lord on high is mighty! And it is this majestic and sacred presence that

Jesus died to bring us into. Because of the blood of Christ, we are now accepted into the hallowed presence of God, who sits on the throne in heaven. We are invited to approach this throne with boldness, confidence, and assurance because we have been redeemed by Jesus.

When my son was younger, he used to run with heavy feet through the house. Anywhere that you were, you could hear him when he ran! As I would be getting ready for work, brushing my teeth or styling my hair, I would stand at the bathroom sink. The sink is within range of the door. As he would race with his little feet pounding through the house and burst into the bathroom to tell me something, I would inevitably get hit by the bathroom door. He wouldn't think twice about coming in, because he is my son and he is welcome into my presence – even if I am brushing my teeth. It is his privilege to be there because he is my son. Eventually I learned to anticipate the sound of his approaching footsteps and step back when I heard those little feet padding their way down the hall to the bathroom!

God is building a family of faith. He has worked through time to draw us to himself and form us as his people, cover by his blood, filled with his Spirit so that we can approach him and bear his holy presence. So it should be our joy, as his children, to burst into this presence with God through prayer, approach his throne of grace with boldness (Hebrews 4:16), and find confidence through our faith in him (Ephesians 3:12). We are never going to catch God so busy brushing his teeth that he won't hear our prayers. He's never going to be too busy styling his hair that he won't welcome us into His presence.

I encourage you to reflect on the holy throne of God above. Let it shape your view of God and in turn let it shape your prayers. Dietrich Bonhoeffer has this tiny little book on the Psalms. He suggests that the major themes from all the Psalms align within The Lord's Prayer. The Lord's Prayer begins with the adoration of God's reign as king and prays for the advancement of this kingdom when it says: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. (Matthew 6:9-10)." So if you are struggling to pray, praise, and adore God on his throne – you could start with the Lord's Prayer!

Not only are we encouraged to approach that throne of grace here and now through prayer, but at the end of your life you will see it in all its brilliance and might and majesty. So, as we pray and live our earthly lives now, running through the halls of this world with heavy feet, may we be mindful that there is an even greater coming reality for us as sons and daughters of the King. One day we will burst through the doors into the

heavenly presence of God, our father. It will be this majestic throne of righteousness and grace that we approach with boldness because of Jesus Christ our Lord. So, go to work tomorrow in light of this throne. Before you go to work tomorrow, enjoy a day of rest in light of this sovereign throne! Go to your community group, knowing that together you are celebrating this throne. Love your spouse - love them in light of this throne. Love your children, who are a sacred privilege from God given to our care for a time, that they may also become heirs of the Kingdom with us. Pray daily with the knowledge that your prayers are bringing you bursting into God's throne room and that He is pleased to find you there. Holiness befits your house, Lord, because you make it so.

### **The Lord Reigns: Over the Waters**

This morning I've been sharing about our God, who reigns over all things and sits on an everlasting throne. But there is part of this Psalm I've not addressed yet: the waters! Without understanding the Psalm's portrayal of God, I don't think you can truly understand the meaning of the floods before you understand the throne. How they function in this psalm is subservient to whom they address. They roar against the one who is mighty and powerful. The floods have risen, they have lifted up their voice and their waves have thundered. They roar against the throne of the one who is the mighty and powerful King. Yet that throne stands firm. That throne is from of old. That throne is everlasting. Nothing can be thrown at it to move it! The Lord on high is mightier!

There is a strong parallelism of the wording of Psalm 93 to 1 Chronicles 16. So for this reason, it has been associated with David or it was inspired from David's words. For instance, 1 Chronicles 16:25 -27 say, "For great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens. Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and joy are in his dwelling place." Verses 30-31 continue with "Tremble before him, all the earth! The world is firmly established; it cannot be moved. Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let them say among the nations, 'The Lord reigns!'"

At about the time this Psalm was written, the Israelites had a few specific neighbors - the Canaanites and the Babylonians. And these neighbors had many deities that they served. The Canaanites had Ba'al and the Babylonians had Marduk. Ba'al was known for being a type of creator-god with the power of storms and Marduk was known for his power over a sea dragon. Both of these idols were believed to have "super powers" of the sea. I imagine they had something like the Water-Type powers of Pokemon Go. So, in a very real sense, the psalmist may be telling the story of the true God who reigns over the idols

of the neighboring countries. So it's a very specific historic statement over their neighbors. These fake gods may send their floods, or they may threaten us, intimidate us saying their gods are going to do us harm, they may rage against the Throne, but our God is mightier! Through a polemic (a strongly written statement or defense) the psalm is reminding us that God is the one who truly sustains us from danger and harm. He is the one who can truly deliver. Our trustworthy and secure anchor in the storm.

And since I was already reminded of Revelation earlier in this sermon, let's keep that going. In Revelation 13, where does the evil beast come from? The sea! But the sea is not evil in and of itself, lest I offend anyone who likes to swim or fish or sail. It seems like the sea can serve as a literary device. It can be a symbol of the source of evil, or fear, or chaos, an active force against God's plan. So, the seas lifted up and roared their mightiest roar – yet the Lord on high is mighty! “Mightier than the thunders of many waters, mightier than the waves of the sea, the LORD on high is mighty!” There is nothing to fear because any evil or chaos is powerless against the Lord who reigns. The God who created the waters will not be overthrown by them.

Do you see that cross on the wall? That is a symbol that was designed by the Romans to make people afraid of their wrath. You were supposed to be afraid of that when you looked upon it and thought of the punishment the Romans offered. But when Jesus embraced death on that cross, his death eliminated the power of death to harm us. Instead, that cross enabled Jesus to have the name above all other names. That cross allowed Jesus to take his rightful seat on the throne in heaven. That symbol was meant to hurt you, but instead it has now become the symbol to look upon and remember the one who is mightier. The God who has put to death all evil through that cross will not be overthrown. The promise from the king of Heaven is that nothing – not your sin, not your suffering, not loss, not pain, not obscurity, not dementia, not cancer, not depression, not illness, not even death can bring lasting harm to you, not any longer. That's what we should see when we look upon that cross. There is a King in heaven who has promised us this! So we respond, “Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.” And this King is the one who holds us! This is the one who promises us that his love will restore all things in due time. And this is why, in Revelation 21, the new family that God has built lives together in heaven at the end of history. And there's something funny about this place - it has no seas! God will have put away all evil, all the effects of sin and death will be reversed and restored. There will be no rival idols to draw our focus from the one true God. There will not be even the possibility of any more evil. Death has been eliminated. The Lord reigns.

When we wrestle with suffering or evil, it can be difficult to trust that God is all powerful, and good, and loving. If you've ever taken a philosophy 101 class, you know this argument. Or if you ever watched Lex Luthor's speech in *Batman Vs. Superman Dawn of Justice*, you know this theological issue. It's called Theodicy. Using Lex Luthor's words, I'll restate it, if God is all-powerful, he cannot be all good (since evil exists). And if he is all good, then he cannot be all-powerful (since evil exists). It sounds clever at first, but these arguments hold to something called a false dichotomy. They say God can only be either one -good or powerful and the only secure thing is evil and suffering. And if you have never taken philosophy or you don't appreciate superhero movies, I think you know this argument because it's such a common response of the heart. God, where are you while I struggle? Where are you when I hurt?

Frankly, this argument doesn't have a biblical view of God. This reasoning crumbles in the face of nearly all the psalms. God is good! God is loving! God is all powerful! And, yes, evil still exists - for now! The psalms never back down from the clear truth that we serve an all powerful, all good, and all loving God. But they also never let go of acknowledging the honest and gut wrenching truth of how difficult life can be. John Calvin said that the psalter acts like a mirror to us in that they express every conceivable emotion, he called the psalms an anatomy of the soul. And our prayers should reflect this openness before a good and powerful God. He can take it, and it's right to pray these psalms as prayers back to him. That's why we can agree with Martin Luther (not Lex Luthor) who said we need the juice, the strength, the passion, and the fire that we find in the Psalter! The psalms express both the mountain top liveliness and the deep and painful emotions.

So burst into his presence even and especially in the midst of the floods of our lives. Cry out to the One who is mightier in praising his steadfastness and seeking his consolation. Share the deep hurts of life and with your community group and with trusted brothers and sisters. And don't give an easy answer too quickly, but instead invest in them by listening deeply and then - together - bring your pain and suffering to God! Trust him to work in the midst of the storms and raging waters.

From the book, [Don't Sing Songs to a Heavy Heart](#), I read while I was Stephen Minister I remember it saying, "Rather than minimizing or denying the hurt, Christians are most like Christ when they enter into the pain of those who are suffering...to help (and to) hear the burden." To this I say hold onto the One who is mightier than the thundering of the many waters that threaten to drown you.

Don't unbalance the equation of suffering.

Don't let suffering trick you into thinking God has abandoned the throne.

God is sovereign even in the midst of our lives. He's the one who made us and allowed us to step into His presence even with the hard and messy things of life. At no point does he leave the throne and abdicate responsibility to us to fix our lives or to make ultimate sense of our lives or even generate our own holiness. Our lives function as means to bring this King the glory. As we develop a high view of God, we can anchor our suffering in a place of trust that he is truly sovereign. He is completely in control from the throne in heaven no matter how uncontrolled my life may seem. No matter how my life is tossed to and fro in the midst of the thundering waters, He is mightier than the waves!

### **Conclusion**

We serve a God who reigns! He is King. He is all powerful and full of strength. He made all things and his world is unmovable! He sits on the throne and is mightier than the fiercest waters and storms. We can find peace because his decrees are trustworthy. We are his people, we are a family, we are his sons and daughters. Let us allow our lives to be shaped by this psalm. Whether we memorize Psalm 93, or pull the truths into your prayer life and set a weekly reminder to pray the psalm or a segment of it. The outworking of this will be that we experience and embody more confidence as we trust in God even from within difficult circumstances.

Go forth this week trusting that The LORD reigns; he is robed in majesty; the LORD is robed; he has put on strength as his belt. The world he established, it shall never be moved. Your throne is established from of old; you are from everlasting. The LORD on high is mighty! Mightier than the thunders of many waters, mightier than the waves of the sea, your decrees are very trustworthy; You, O LORD, reign, forevermore! Amen!

Allen Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms: Volume 3 (90-150)* (Michigan: Kregel Publications

C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (New York: Harvest Book, 1958), 80.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible* (Augsburg Fortress, 1970).

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Additional Resources Not Referenced Directly:

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(Pennsylvania: Tyndale House Publishers, 2010) Chapter 4 and 5.

Meredith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue* (Kansas: Two Age Press, 2000) 27, 33.

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