

**Text: Psalm 2**

**Theme: Praying our intimidation**

**Sermon delivered by Dele Agbelusi on 15/03/2009 at 5.00pm.**

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Have you ever wondered why God does not intervene in world affairs and do something about the increasing violence and immorality? Do you get hot under the collar as you witness world leaders thumb their nose at God and His Word? Would you be surprised to know that the Bible says that God sits in Heaven and laughs at those who are rebelling against them? Is it because He does not care? Not at all? Why then does He laugh?

We learned from Psalm 2 that all the nations of the world, including our own, are in rebellion against God, and have been since the beginning of history. In Gen. 1:28, God instructed humanity to replenish the earth. But in Gen 11:4 they wanted to build a city that towers to heaven to ensure that they remained in one place. So, God scattered them (Gen. 11:8). Because of the continual rebellion of humanity, it is easy to get the impression that God is not in control, But Psalm 2 further reveals that God is completely in control and that in fact He sits in Heaven and laughs at the world leaders who try to flaunt His will.

The Psalmist seems genuinely mystified. The nations have no *reason* to rage against God, and they have no *benefit* in raging against Him. Their opposition against God is nothing but a **vain thing**.

Since the time of Babel, men continue to band themselves together against God. They feel that two or more men united against God have a better chance than one man set against God. They oppose both the LORD and His Anointed. Anointed speaks of the Christ, the Anointed One. Since Jesus is the perfect representation of the Father (John 10:30, 14:9) if you oppose God the Father, you oppose Jesus. If you oppose Jesus, you oppose God the Father.

v.3. **Let us break their chains they say:** Those who oppose the LORD and His Anointed think of God as One who enslaves whereas it is for freedom that he called us. "To a graceless neck the yoke of Christ is intolerable, but to the saved sinner it is easy and light . . . We may judge ourselves by this, do we love that yoke, or do we wish to cast it from us?" (Spurgeon)

### **(Verses 4-6) The LORD's laugh from heaven**

The One enthroned in heaven laughs: God isn't afraid or confused or depressed about the opposition of man. God laughs at it.

He sits as the Great King on a glorious throne. He isn't pacing back and forth in the throne room of heaven, wondering what He should do next. God **sits** in perfect peace and assurance. He occupies the throne of heaven with authority over all creation. What does heaven have to fear from earth?

"God does not tremble. He does not hide behind a vast celestial rampart, counting the enemy and calculating whether or not he has sufficient force to counter this new challenge to his kingdom. He does not even rise from where he is sitting. He simply 'laughs' at these great imbeciles." (Boice)

"This derisive laughter of God is the comfort of all those who love righteousness. It is the laughter of the might of holiness; it is the laughter of the strength of love. God does not exult over the sufferings of sinning me. He does hold in derision all the proud boastings and violence of such as seek to prevent His accomplishment of His will." (Morgan)

References to this psalm are found in a number of different places in the New Testament. One of the most important is in a prayer of the apostles in Acts 4:23-31. In Acts 4, Peter and John were arrested and questioned by the religious authorities for teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. After their release they met with the other disciples to discuss their situation and they began to pray saying:

Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and everything in them, it is you who said by the Holy Spirit through our ancestor David, your servant: 'Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples imagine vain things? The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers have gathered together against the Lord and against his Messiah.'

For in this city, in fact, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.

And now, Lord, look at their threats, and grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus."

As the disciples prayed that Psalm they recalled that God's reign and dominion had been established on earth through the coming of the Lord's anointed one, Jesus Christ. And, they were given strength to carry on their mission in the face of great persecution and opposition.

In the face of plots and threats from earthly powers and authorities, the reminder of God's sovereign work through Christ and his followers, gave the church the strength, courage, and boldness it needed to carry on God's mission in the world.

In the Epilogue to his new book Lewis Smedes tells us about Siauliai, a village in Lithuania. Just outside the village is the Hill of Crosses: a cemetery commemorating a host of loved ones and so a hill so thick with crosses you can hardly see the ground because of them. When the Russians came in 1940, the Soviet Army made sure to mow down those crosses the way a farmer mows a wheat field. They then passed a law against any further cross-planting as an offence against the atheist state.

But the Lithuanian villagers paid the law no mind and kept sneaking back in the night to replace the crosses the Russians took. For over 40 years a tug-of-war between the

Soviets and the villagers continued until finally, by 1988, the Soviet Empire had enough other problems to occupy its fevered brain and so they left the Hill of Crosses in peace. And then the Soviet Empire died.

Now those crosses have new meaning for the people of Siauliai. Now the people gather there to remember not only their loved ones but the wonderful way by which the cross of Jesus beat back the hammer and sickle emblazoned on those Russian bulldozers. For them, the Hill of Crosses has become a Hill of Hope--hope in God's Anointed One who alone will emerge the Victor in and through and over history's every conflict. Or as Psalm 2 puts it in conclusion, "Blessed are all who take refuge in him." Indeed. Amen.

God laughs in heaven, but He also acts. He doesn't remain inactive. Before He acts against defiant man, He first *speaks* to them. This shows the great mercy of God. Love and mercy compel God to **speak** a word of warning before He acts.

God's decree to the nations: This is twofold. The decree of the Son and the decree to the nations about the Son

### **1. (vv7-9) The decree of the Son.**

The passage indicates that this is the LORD's Anointed Himself speaking. He said to me: "You are my Son." The LORD's Anointed recalls what God the Father spoke to Him, identifying Him as the Son of the Father and emphasizing His standing as **begotten** of the Father.

The writer to the Hebrews quotes this passage in Hebrews 1:5 as evidence of the deity of Jesus and superiority to all angels. While angels are sometimes called the *sons of God* in a generic sense (Job 1:6), the Father never said "**My Son**" to any angel in a specific sense. That is reserved for God the Son, the Second Person of the Trinity.

Jesus was not created; rather He created everything that was created (Colossians 1:16-17).

V8. The LORD's Anointed holds the nations as His inheritance. He will rule over all nations and all judgment is committed to Him (John 5:22). See also Rev. 11:15: "The seventh angel sounded his trumpet and there were loud voices in heaven, which said 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ and he will reign for ever and ever.

V9 **You will rule them with an iron scepter.** The LORD's Anointed has such power over the nations that they are like clay pots that he can shatter with a blow from a **rod of iron**. This shows why it is so foolish for the nations to defy the LORD and His Anointed. There is no *reason* and no *benefit* to their defiant opposition.

You see in this Psalm, the nations are guilty of a horrific crime. They are trying to dethrone God, they are trying to take him out of the picture. Now why is this so serious? Well let's consider the following questions. Who made the World? Who knows for a fact the way the world is meant to work, the way lives are meant to be lived? Who knows how to make the universe run smoothly, who knows the meaning of life, who

knows how to bring total satisfaction to every human being? Who has the right to rule over us? God. But it seems that humanity doesn't want this. They don't want God, they don't want his King, they want to get rid of him. But they can't.

## 2. (vv10-12) The decree to the nations about the Son.

Fortunately, verse 9 does not have to be the end, there is a "therefore" look down at verses 10-12. "Therefore, you kings, be wise, be warned you rulers of the earth, serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all those who take refuge in him."

**Be wise, O kings:** After the words of warning from the LORD's Anointed, the Psalmist counsels the **kings** of the earth to give up their foolish defiance of the LORD. The Psalmist calls the kings of the earth to surrender to God, giving Him proper reverence. In this submitted, surrendered place they can **rejoice** - yet with appropriate **trembling**. **Kiss the Son:** This primarily has in mind the kiss of submission, where a dignitary receives the humble kiss of an inferior. It also hints at the *affection* God wants in relationship to Him. God wants us to recognize our proper place before Him, but to also **rejoice** in Him and be affectionate in our relationship.

If the **kings** and **judges** of the earth are commanded to humble themselves before the LORD's Anointed, recognizing His total superiority, then what of the rest of us? Speaking to the **kings** and **judges** therefore includes all of humanity.

**Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him:** Those who defy God are *broken*, but those who depend on Him are *blessed*. The Psalmist leaves the choice with everyone: Broken or Blessed?

It seems that there two choices. Either you can be a rebel and be smashed to pieces, or you can submit to God and his King and receive blessing. You see really this psalm is a warning to those who stand against God. They are heading towards a terrible judgement, but it doesn't have to be that way. If they serve the Lord, if they take refuge in the Son, in the Christ, in the Anointed One, then there is mercy and blessing.

When Jesus Christ died on the Cross more was taking place than merely the humiliating death of some extreme religious teacher. As we have seen this was the death of God's King God's ultimate King, God's Son. When Jesus died upon that Cross he took upon himself all of our guilt, all of our rebellion; all that made us stand guilty before God and deserving of punishment. And what's more when Jesus died on that Cross he took the punishment that that all of that guilt and rebellion deserved.

Now if we will only take refuge in what he has done. If we will only trust in him to save us from the judgement we deserve. If we will only stop serving ourselves and turn around and serve the Lord, Then we will be blessed. Let me ask you have you done that; have you taken refuge in the Son?