

Easter: The Risen King is the True Son!

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[0 : 0 0] Father, we pray again that by your Spirit, you would be at work so that as we look at Psalm 72 together, we recognize that it is your word and we pray, Lord, that it will cause us to worship the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords who is exalted above all the earth and all the heavens and that indeed you will bring even those who might not know you to turn to you this morning.

We pray all this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. So again, if you've got your Bibles in front of you, I would encourage you to turn to Psalm 72 and I will read it.

Endow the King with your justice, O God, the Royal Son with your righteousness. May He judge your people in righteousness, your afflicted ones with justice.

May the mountains bring prosperity to the people, the hills, the fruit of righteousness. May He defend the afflicted among the people and save the children of the needy.

May He crush the oppressor. May He endure as long as the sun, as long as the moon through all generations. May He be like rain, falling on a moan field, like showers watering the earth.

[1 : 3 2] In His days, may the righteous flourish and prosperity abound till the moon is no more. May He rule from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth.

May the desert tribes bow before Him and His enemies lick the dust. May the kings of Tarshish and of distant shores bring tribute to Him.

May the kings of Sheba and Seba present Him with gifts. May all kings bow down to Him and all nations serve Him. For He will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help.

He will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death. He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in His sight.

Long may He live. May gold from Sheba be given to Him. May people ever pray for Him and bless Him all day long.

[2 : 3 9] May corn abound throughout the land. On the tops of the hills may it sway. May the crops flourish like Lebanon and thrive like the grass of the field.

May His name endure forever. May it continue as long as the sun. Then all nations will be blessed through Him and they will call Him blessed.

Praise be to the Lord God, the God of Israel, who alone does marvelous deeds. Praise be to His glorious name forever. May the whole earth be filled with His glory.

Amen and Amen. This concludes the prayers of David, son of Jesse. We all long for a good king.

We all know the value of a good leader. In Malaysia, we probably don't think of the Yang Di Petuan Agong much in our daily lives. But we certainly do appreciate it when we hear in the news that he has stopped his official car to check on accident victims while on the way to the Istana, or that he treated members of the media to KFC while they were covering the Sheraton Move crisis.

- [4 : 01] We're happy to hear that because in our minds that affirms we have a good king. And that's what we want. After all, leaders are important.
- We know very well that without good leadership, people can lose their way, go astray, find themselves ebbing away. And so we desire our leaders to be people who are committed to what is right, to uphold what is good.
- We want them to be dependable, reliable, sensible, responsible, even honourable. And that is especially true in times of crisis.
- When we feel vulnerable, we want someone who makes good decisions, someone who will protect us, who will inspire in us real hope.
- For that's how hope works. Hope is not dependent on an idea, but on the person. Hope is not dependent on a concept, but on the character.
- [5 : 07] Let me illustrate. I think most of us are familiar now with Datuk Noor Hisham Abdullah, the Director General of the Health Ministry, who has been rightly praised for his leadership.
- He's calm, he's competent, he's compassionate, he's patient. And so when he says things like, we haven't yet won the war, but we haven't lost the war.
- Or he says, we will get through this, well, we have hope. We listen to him. Because we trust him. Hope is dependent not on the idea, but on the person.
- Now, imagine if it was someone else at the helm. Someone who is not calm or competent, but who just sits around and drinks Ayesuam. He might very well say the same words as Datuk Noor Hisham.
- But you might not feel any sense of hope at all. Why? Because hope is not dependent on the idea, but on the person.
- [6 : 11] And so if the person is the wrong person, he doesn't inspire any confidence, no matter what he says. True hope doesn't depend on the idea of hope, but on the person in whom we hope in.
- And it's no surprise that many of us pray for a good leader, a good king. And the psalm we're looking at today, Psalm 72, is essentially a prayer.
- It's a prayer for a good king, a good leader. And at first glance, it appears to be a prayer by King Solomon, since that's what the inscription says, right before verse 1, of Solomon.
- And certainly that's possible, that Solomon could be praying for himself or for his children. But it could also be a prayer for King Solomon.
- And so to say the psalm is of Solomon is to say the psalm is about King Solomon rather than by him. And that's certainly possible too, because look down at verse 20 and notice that this psalm concludes by mentioning that these are the conclusion of David's prayers.
- [7 : 33] David, the son of Jesse, the father of Solomon, and also the composer of many of the psalms in books 1 and 2 of the psalms, which is basically Psalm 1 all the way to Psalm 72.
- And what you might not realize is that Psalm 72 is the final psalm of book 2 of the psalms. And so verse 20 is David signing off.
- And I think it's a little likelier that this is David's handiwork, not Solomon's. Now what does this have to do with Easter, some of you are asking.
- Well, I hope it will become clear in the next five minutes as I unpack the biblical context of this psalm. For this prayer David prays is not a random prayer.
- This is a prayer based on the promises of God made first to David's ancestor, Abraham, and then to King David himself.
- [8 : 39] God had told Abraham centuries ago before King David lived that through his children he would call forth and form a nation.

And he had a special purpose for this nation. This nation would bring blessing to the other nations and become a light to the world.

It's a promise repeated time and time again in the book of Genesis. Let me just quote Genesis 22 verses 17 to 18 as an example.

I will surely bless you, God says to Abraham, and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore.

Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies and through your offspring all nations will be blessed. God looks at the world laboring under the curse of sin and he says, I will bring blessing again through this nation Israel.

[9 : 48] And more specifically, God goes on to say, I will do it through this nation's king. For later on, through the prophet Nathan, he speaks to King David and tells him, when your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you and I will establish his kingdom.

He is the one who will build a house for my name and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. And that brings hope to David.

You see, David knows very well that he is not the king who can bring true blessing to this world. He knows the qualities of a good king. He names them in Psalm 15.

The one whose walk is blameless, who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from their hearts, whose tongue utters no slander, who does no wrong to a neighbour and casts no slurs on others.

And at times, David was this mortal, righteous king. But many other times, he was not. He confesses as much in many of his psalms.

[11 : 09] Here's Psalm 40, verse 12, for instance. For troubles without number surround me. My sins have overtaken me and I cannot see.

Or here's Psalm 51, verse 4. Against you, you only, God, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.

But now, David is expressing his longing that his son, Solomon, be that king. He's expressing his longing that Solomon will be the king who brings blessing to this world.

He pens this psalm as a prayer, but he's hoping that this psalm will also be a prophecy. Read this psalm and we hear about justice, righteousness, prosperity, flourishing, blessing, glory, the best king ever and the best kingdom ever.

And David is praying that his son will fulfill these words and bring this reality into being. And as we read through this psalm, Solomon certainly does seem to fit the bill in some ways.

[12 : 28] Verse 3, may the mountains bring prosperity to his people and there certainly was prosperity in Solomon's time. If you were to read about his era, you'll find there's fine gold, the best horses, the finest spices.

After all, verse 15, may gold from Sheba be given him was certainly true in his lifetime. He showed right judgment, right wisdom, verse 2, and in so doing he saved the needy from death, verse 13.

If you're not familiar with Solomon's biography, have a look at 1 king's tree later on and see how he wisely adjudicated between two prostitutes and a baby.

But we know he falls short too. His kingdom was prosperous for a time, but not forever. He displayed wisdom, but also foolishness.

It wasn't through him that the nations could receive true blessing. No, this psalm is indeed a prayer and a prophecy, but it's not Solomon who will fulfill it.

[13 : 41] We have to wait for the one greater than Solomon to come. And it is in the context of these promises, it is in the context of these desires, it is in the context of such anticipation that Jesus comes.

And this is the essence of the Christian message. Jesus is this promised king who brings these blessings. to be the Lord. The angel tells Mary, the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever.

His kingdom will never end. And by his death and resurrection and ascension, he has begun to reign.

And he will one day finally return to establish his reign forever. And God now calls on people everywhere, not just the people of Israel, to enter into the blessings of his kingdom by responding to the message of Good Friday and Easter.

We are to respond by trusting in Jesus, the king who is forsaken, but the king who is now risen from the dead.

[15 : 07] But why should we trust in this king? What is so great about this risen king? Well, this is where Psalm 72 speaks to us today.

We know, in a way David didn't know, that Psalm 72 is a portrait of King Jesus. David prayed with hope, but we now see with hope.

For what do we see? We see a good king, a good leader, a king who inspires confidence, and a king who makes us realize we can get through these times.

For remember, hope is not dependent on an idea, but on a person. And this morning, I want us to come away, seeing as clearly as we possibly can, the risen king we worship this Easter, through the lens of Psalm 72.

I want us to see this person, so that we can rejoice that our hope is dependent on the best king in this entire universe.

[16 : 20] What do we see about our risen king? Four qualities. Firstly, our risen king is the righteous king.

Our risen king is the righteous king. David begins verse 1 with a prayer that this king be just and righteous. Endow this king with your justice, O God, the royal son with your righteousness.

Now he prays for a king that knows what is right and does what is right. You know, this is the prayer of many today, isn't it? Even secular people. We desire leaders who will give people their deal, whether that be punishment or protection, care or correction.

We desire leaders who will take up the right causes and ensure that relationships between people in society are made right. But notice especially what the psalmist asks for.

He doesn't just ask for the king to be just and righteous. He asks for the king to be endowed with God's justice and God's righteousness.

[17 : 36] You see, most people want their kings to be righteous and just. But what many people disagree on is what exactly is right and just.

Just think of how difficult it is to judge whether to continue on with the MCO or to lift the MCO or to modify the MCO in a way that does justice to every segment of society and every aspect of our common human life.

And so David asks boldly for a king who can lead based on the standards and judgments of God, who can look at a complex and a complicated situation and still do the right thing.

Wouldn't that be amazing to have such a king? Wouldn't it be amazing, verse 2, for a king to judge your people in righteousness, your afflicted ones with justice?

Wouldn't it be amazing to see disputes resolved with wrongs being made right and grievances addressed in a way that shows impartiality and prudence and that is made in such a way that we could never say God wasn't honoured or that either party was cheated?

[19 : 01] And where there is such righteousness, the fruit of righteousness abounds, verse 3. May the mountains bring prosperity to the people, the hills, the fruit of righteousness.

Where there is righteousness, prosperity will follow. Actually, that word prosperity is the Hebrew word shalom and it could so easily also be translated wholeness or harmony.

And I wonder if that's more the intended sense here. For clearly, the overall well-being of a society is given a huge boost when the king is ruling in just and righteous ways.

And I suppose where such relational harmony and wholeness exists, productivity will definitely increase and so maybe there will be a resulting overflow of abundance as well.

And certainly this kingdom is one where we would all rush to seek citizenship in, isn't it? Verse 4. The afflicted are defended.

[20 : 08] The children of the needy are saved. The oppressed are champion. The oppressors are crushed. The overlooked are not forgotten. The voiceless are not disregarded.

It sounds almost too good to be true, isn't it? But this is the kingdom of King Jesus. This is the kingdom that is going to come in full because Jesus is risen.

That's what I want us to realize today. This is the kingdom we get to live in. Why? Because Jesus has already been revealed to be this righteous king.

Even his enemies could not prove him guilty of sin. The chief priest attempted to put up false witnesses against him and find incriminating statements by him, but they could not find any.

Pontius Pilate himself could not find any basis for a charge against him. And think of the way he made fair judgments. He gave to Caesar what is Caesar and give to God what is God, he said, when his opponents tried to trap him with a question about taxes.

[21 : 29] Give what you owe, he said. And the resurrection vindicates his righteousness. Romans 4 verse 25 tells us that he was raised to life for our justification.

In other words, the resurrection is the proof, the verdict that Jesus is righteous. He really is the righteous king.

He shouldn't have to suffer death. He can beat death. And that makes Easter good news indeed. Some people have expressed their hope that post-COVID-19 they would see Malaysia change for the better, to see a more just and righteous and caring society.

And that's certainly something I wish to see as well. But if you're a Christian, know this, you already have citizenship in the kingdom of Christ, the righteous king who reign over a completely righteous society.

That's your future. Thank you. Secondly, our risen king is the eternal king. Our risen king is the eternal king.

[22 : 50] Now here's an interesting question. If we took a poll today, I wonder, who would you say was the best king or human leader ever? I imagine we'll get a diversity of answers.

Perhaps someone would say Franklin Roosevelt for the way he led America during the Great Depression and World War II. Perhaps someone would say Lee Guan Yu for the way he transformed tiny Singapore.

Perhaps someone would say Pope Francis because he seems like a nice religious guy. Perhaps someone would say Gandhi for the way he campaigned for Indian independence. But there is one thing that unites all those answers whichever name you submit.

And it's this. At one point or another, their reign ended. They were at the top for a while and then they were no more.

And it's especially when we think that the king is good and righteous that we dread that, don't we? If the person in charge is a good guy, then we want him to reign on and on and on.

[24 : 04] Isn't it why sometimes when someone good is due to retire? We sometimes sign petitions to ask to extend the retirement age or something like that.

We want him or her if possible to verse 5 endure as long as the sun, as long as the moon through all generations or at least through my generation.

And we get especially anxious if we know a good king is about to step down but we don't know who is going to take over. We don't know if the new king is going to be good or not.

We're concerned if the good times will last. And so no wonder the psalmist prays that this king and his kingdom would last. He prays for the fruit of righteousness to be ongoing, to endure that this state of shalom will not one day cease.

But here is the good news of Easter. Everyone could see that the ministry of Jesus was a good thing. He brought healing to the sick.

[25 : 14] He liberated those possessed by demons. He bestowed dignity on women and the desperate. Wherever he went, he brought refreshing.

If David was alive during the days of Jesus, he would have indeed declared that Jesus was like rain falling on a moon field, like showers watering the earth.

Jesus was like the fountain of life poured out on barren land. But then Jesus announced to his disciples that he was going to his hour of glory to return to the Father.

And his disciples became frantic. what's going to happen? Especially when Jesus is telling us that in this world you will have trouble.

Oh my goodness, what is happening now that he's crucified on a tomb? And he's buried, crucified on the cross, sorry, and he's buried in a tomb. Easter tells us the king doesn't stay dead.

[26 : 25] His reign is not ended. Rather, it has just begun. Everyone else's tomb, Lee Kuan Yew, Gandhi, Roosevelt, tells of endings.

But Jesus' tomb speaks of new beginnings. For his tomb is empty. The king is risen, and so his reign is eternal.

The righteous can flourish, verse 7. Prosperity can continue to abound, verse 7 again. The death of a good king can and has stopped many flourishing human kingdoms in its tracks.

But the kingdom of God cannot be stopped even by death. As Jesus himself said, his kingdom is like a mustard seed, which looks small and insignificant, but one day it will eventually grow to be the largest of all plants.

And we are like David in the sense that we are still awaiting this kingdom's final realisation. It's here already in mustard seed form, but it hasn't fully bloomed.

[27 : 38] But because Jesus has risen from the dead, we can say with full confidence, may he endure as long as the Son.

And one day we can say with the angel, in Revelation 11 verse 15, that the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign forever and ever.

The risen king is the eternal king. Thirdly, our risen king is the global king.

Our risen king is the global king. That's implied in the verse from Revelation I just quoted, isn't it? The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord.

Look at verse 8. May he rule from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. May the desert tribes bow before him and his enemies lick the dust.

[28 : 46] Jesus has no rivals because he is the king of kings. All nations, near or far, ally or adversary, will acknowledge that.

In verse 10, the kings of Sheba and Seba from the east will present him gifts, and all kings will bow down to him, verse 11, and all nations serve him.

And indeed, Matthew's gospel records that for us, don't they? As the three wise men from the east come and pay tribute to the birth of this new king, they are showing that Psalm 72 is beginning to be fulfilled, that even the nations, the Gentiles have come to pay him tribute.

These wise men are not Israelites. these men have no concern, perhaps even no knowledge of Psalm 72, but they come, and through this little episode, God is announcing to the world that his blessing isn't just for Israel only.

It has never only been just for Israel. It's for the whole world. And just as COVID-19 has currently spread its tentacles to every single nation on this earth.

[30 : 15] And so the reign of Jesus, the kingdom of God, the blessings that he brings, will be made known to every single nation and every single people group on earth.

The last I heard, two tiny African countries, Lesotho and the Comoros, have yet to report a single COVID-19 case. But rest assured, there will be people from Lesotho and the Comoros in God's kingdom.

As we heard in our first Bible reading this morning from Matthew 28, at the end, after Jesus has risen, he says, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Our risen king is the global king. And don't forget, the global king is the righteous eternal king.

You see, when we hear of people declaring that they have worldwide ambitions, that they want to take over the whole world, we get nervous, don't we? Because usually such people are evil tyrants who only want to enrich themselves at the expense of others.

[31 : 31] But not this king. Remember, this global king is like rain falling on a moan field. This global king is the one who defends the afflicted and makes the righteous flourish.

In Ephesians 1, 9-10, we're told that God's purpose for the world is to ultimately bring all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

But how so? Is it by military conquest? Is it by transmitting harmful droplets and spreading fear like COVID-19? No, Ephesians 1 tells us it is by redemption through his blood.

It is by forgiveness of sins. It is by the seal of the Holy Spirit. The global king is the king who died and rose again to pour out spiritual blessing after spiritual blessing on you.

The king who leads you and has authority over you is the king who gave his life for you. And so here's the good news of Easter.

[32 : 38] The risen king is the global king. And that means he is for you wherever you are. He's not just interested in a select few.

It's not like he's just the king of Malaya and therefore he only cares about the people of Malaya. It's not like he's the king of Sarawak and therefore he only cares for the people of Sarawak. No, he cares for the whole world.

And wherever COVID-19 is, there he is too. Some have noticed that the coronavirus is called such because the virus has spikes that make it look like a crown.

And I think corona is the Latin word for crown. And right now it controls the world. But even this coronavirus will one day cede its crown to King Jesus.

For fourthly, our risen king is the glorious king. Our risen king is the glorious king. That's how verse 19 describes him. Praise be to his glorious name forever.

[33 : 47] May the whole earth be filled with his glory. But the glory of this king is not the glory of earthly riches or luxurious palaces or the friendship of other kings and princes.

Look at verses 12 to 14. For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help. He will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death.

He will rescue them from oppression and violence for precious is their blood in his sight. His is the glory found in kindness, in gentleness, in tenderness.

He looks at us and sees needy people, afflicted people, weak people. I think that aptly describes humanity in the coronavirus age, doesn't it?

Even powerful presidents, eminent scientists, and famous celebrities are being brought low and humbled right now. As the Christian counselor Jeremy Pierre observed in an article recently, we are all children now.

[35 : 02] We cannot control our lives. We've made a mess of things. We're all in need of help. We're all children now.

And perhaps you've realized by now that the fundamental message of Christianity is not about human potential. It's about human inability.

But King Jesus looks at us and he doesn't laugh at us. Rather, he takes pity on us. It is not the healthy who need the doctor, but the sick.

And Jesus has come not to call the righteous, but sinners. Precious is our blood in his sight. God. And so he shows us the kind of king he will be.

A deliverer, a saviour, a rescuer. All throughout this morning, I've been saying that Jesus is the kind of king who will bring blessing. That comes through most clearly in Psalm 72 in verse 17.

[36 : 11] Then all nations will be blessed through him and they will call him blessed, a reference back to the promises of Abraham. But why do we need blessing? And how does Jesus bring blessing?

Let me give you the short answer in about 90 seconds. God originally made human beings kings of this earth. The first human beings, Adam and Eve, were crowned with glory and honour and asked to rule over the earth with great care under God.

They were meant to bring blessing to the world as they cultivated and filled it with God's glory, to use the language of verse 19. But human beings wanted to wear their own crowns.

They wanted their own glory. They wanted to honour themselves without God. And as a result, they brought curse instead on themselves and on the world.

And that is represented by thorns in the ground in Genesis 3. And ever since then, the world has suffered from thorns. The thorns of war, the thorns of illness, the thorns of coronaviruses, the curse as a result of humanity's sin.

[37 : 28] But God told humanity via Abraham, I will reverse the curse, I will bring blessing. And Jesus is the king who brings that blessing, but how does he do it?

He wears the crown of thorns. He became a curse for us. That was his glory. Precious is our blood in his sight.

And so he sheds his own blood. And that's how he is deliverer, saviour, rescuer. And with Easter, that becomes clear in hindsight.

Jesus, the crucified king, is now risen. And so Jesus completes his act of salvation. He becomes the glorious king who brings this Psalm 72 blessing.

And so with David, we can cry out, verse 15, long may he live. May gold from Sheba be given to him. May people ever pray for him and bless him all day long.

[38 : 34] May corn abound throughout the land, on the tops of the hills, may it sway. May the crops flourish like Lebanon and thrive like the grass of the field. May his name endure forever.

May it continue as long as the sun. And so here's the good news of Easter. David cries these words out as a prayer and prophecy.

We can cry them out as praise. Verse 18, praise be to the Lord God, the God of Israel, who alone does marvelous deeds.

Blessed be God the Father of Jesus Christ. For the king we worship is a glorious king and his glory is like no other.

When we want glory, we typically act in a way that is selfish, that makes it all about us and no one else. But God's glory results in selfless action.

[39 : 40] His glory consists in giving. In the person of Jesus Christ, he has given us himself. Our risen king did not come to take things from us, but come to pour himself out to us, for us, and our rules over us.

That's why we praise him. That's why we have hope. You see, it's easy to come to Easter and think that what we need to hear about today is the idea of resurrection.

We think what we need to hear from the preacher is something like this, times are tough, but this is not the end. Easter tells us that there is light at the end of the tunnel, so hold on to hope we can get through this.

Now, my friends, there is obviously truth in that, but it is not quite what we most need. Remember, hope is not dependent on the idea, but on the person.

And so what we need today is not so much to hear the idea of resurrection, but to know the person, the risen Christ. What we need is not so much oh, we'll get through this, we'll rise again, but what we need to hear is a great and glorious and righteous king, holds your future securely in his hands, whether or not you get through this in the way you want to.

[41 : 14] And so do you know him? Some of you listening in today will say that you believe in God. You might even identify yourself as a Christian, but you don't know Jesus.

You know some basic facts about him, but you don't know him in this way. You don't know the king who defends the afflicted and saves the needy from death by taking your place.

And you certainly don't know this king who rules over every territory here on earth and in heaven, whose kingdom is already present in seed form. Instead, you've been putting your hope in other things, in human knowledge, or the financial markets, or in your children, and they've been exposed as empty.

Well, today, what about putting your hope here in Jesus? Because when you know the risen king, it changes your life right here and now.

It changes the way you see things. You know, look around now, and what do we see? Exhaustion, frustration, limitations.

[42 : 28] We see slumping and worn out bodies. We feel the mental fatigue and emotional weariness. We are needy and afflicted. And if we are all alone in this world, left to fix this COVID-19 mess or other mess on our own, we will feel crushed.

But if Jesus has risen, and he is this kind of risen king, well, the words of 2 Corinthians 4 verse 18 take on new meaning, don't they?

so we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but what is unseen. Since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

You know, COVID-19 is here to stay. It might cause havoc, perhaps even for a couple more years. But it is temporary because there will be a day when Jesus is enthroned for all to see.

If Jesus hadn't risen, then we could say that Psalm 72 is just wish fulfilment. It's escape from reality. But because Jesus has risen, Psalm 72 is reality.

[43 : 54] We really can look forward to this kind of kingdom, to the day when King Jesus will finally reign without dispute, bringing complete righteousness and justice and shalom.

And so that means we can live knowing both the power of Christ's resurrection and participate in his sufferings at one and the same time, as Paul puts it in Philippians 3.

For our hope is in a person who both suffered and resurrected. The theologian Kelly Capic puts it this way, the Christian life is shaped like a cross and liberated like an empty tomb.

We never downplay the sufferings currently brought on us by COVID-19 or any sufferings you might have endured even before COVID-19.

But we look on them from a unique vantage point. We know that one day, all creation will be liberated from bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

[45 : 15] The war will be won. And that frees us from self-pity as well. Though our circumstances might be difficult, though the what-if questions keep knocking on in our minds, although the temptation to retreat into ourselves is ever-present, setting our hearts and minds on the risen king helps us develop a different pattern.

Because our lives are now hidden and secured with Christ, so now we can speak words of grace to others. We can comfort the mourning.

We can seek the good of our wounded neighbours. We all long for a good king.

But Christianity tells us we have one. He is alive, and so hope is alive.

Christ is risen. Hallelujah. He is risen indeed. Indeed. Let us pray.

[46 : 38] Let me just give you again 10-20 seconds to digest what you have heard before I lead us in prayer. Heavenly Father, thank you that Jesus is indeed risen.

Thank you that you have indeed endowed him with your justice, that he is perfectly righteous, that he will judge all peoples in righteousness and all afflicted ones with justice.

We thank you that in his kingdom there is prosperity, there is shalom, because there is the fruits of righteousness. We thank you that in his kingdom the oppressor will no longer be present, but indeed you will be like rain falling on a mound field, you will be like showers watering the earth forever and ever more.

We thank you that you will rule from sea to sea, from the river to the ends of the earth, and indeed that your reign is eternal, that it will endure as long as the sun, as long as the moon, even beyond that, through all generations.

We know that the kings and the nations will all bow before you and serve you. Father, thank you that you deliver the needy and the afflicted, you take pity on the weak and needy, and that through Jesus' death and resurrection, you indeed save the needy from death.

[48 : 15] Thank you, Lord, that you count us and our blood precious in your sight. And so, Father, we just pray, Lord, today that our eyes indeed will be fixed on this risen king.

Help us to set our hearts and minds not on things below, but on things above. Help us to know that we have every spiritual blessing, even in the midst of a global pandemic, because Jesus has risen.

And will you fill our lips with praise for your name, that praise be to your glorious name forever. And may we fill the whole earth by declaring your glory as we go out there to tell the gospel of the risen Christ.

I pray that even right now there might be some people listening in live or maybe later on who would be moved by your Holy Spirit to turn to the risen Jesus and put their hope in him.

All this we pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.