

Annual Meeting Sunday

February 2-3, 2019

Title: King of Glory!

[Slide 1]

Text: Psalm 24

Whose world, anyway?

A lonely universe:

Modern humans are the loneliest people ever to live on Planet Earth. We are the first generations of human beings to ever understand just *how big* the Universe actually is. And with that discovery came a disconcerting question: Are we *alone* in this vast Universe?

Ancient peoples looked up the night sky and saw it populated with gods and goddesses. Heaven was right there looking back at them. But no longer. Ever since modern societies divorced the material world from the spiritual realm, the Universe has been a lonely place to live.

[Slide 2]

So lonely, in fact, that we have invested our greatest technologies and vast sums of money to see if we couldn't find a neighbor out there. In 1977 NASA launched two probes to study the outer planets of our solar system: Voyager 1 and Voyager 2. Both spacecraft had a gold phonograph record attached to its outer side. This Golden Record contains sounds and images selected to show the diversity of life on Planet Earth. There was even a greeting from then-president Jimmy Carter:

"This is a present from a small, distant world, a token of our sounds, our science, our images, our music, our thoughts and our feelings. We are attempting to survive our time so we may live into yours."

Voyager 1 is now 12 billion miles from home, and has long since left our Sun and solar system behind. It has given us glorious glimpses of distant worlds. But it has not been able to ask the deeper question: Are we *alone* in this vast Universe?

The Creator's Handiwork:

The Universe was never meant to be such a lonely place. It only becomes lonely when we fail to see it for what it actually is: God's Creation. Seeing the world this way allows us to see what telescopes and space probes could never find: We discover that the Universe is pulsing with the Presence of the Great God who called it into being and who sustains it every day.

David put it this way:

[Slide 3]

Psalm 24:1-2 NIV

- ¹ *The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it;*
² *for he founded it on the seas
and established it on the waters.*

God, and God alone, conquered the forces of Chaos and destruction to create the world in which we live. He founded the world. He keeps it on course. As Paul reminds us:

[Slide 4]

Colossians 1:15-17 NIV

- ¹⁵ *The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.*
¹⁶ *For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*

Whose world, anyway?

And so we have a choice: we can be lonely, or we can be citizens of God's World. It all depends on how you look at the world around us. A telescope will never reveal the Creator to you. To find Him you must see through the eyes of the heart and the soul. And when you do that, you discover that you need never be alone in God's great world. It all belongs to Him, and He fills every nook and cranny of it!

Heaven's Invitation

A meeting of Heaven and Earth:

It has always been God's purpose to bring Heaven and Earth together. Heaven, He says, is His Throne; Earth is His footstool. The two are meant to go together.

Separate them and Earth suddenly becomes a lonely planet, cut off from its very source of Life. Put them together, and we discover that not only are we *not alone*, but we are here for a very special purpose. We were created to be the meeting-place of Heaven and Earth.

Who is invited?

After affirming that the earth belongs to its Creator, David then poses a question:

[Slide 5]

Psalm 24:3 NIV

³ *Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD?
Who may stand in his holy place?*

God has issued an invitation. He has offered to bring us into His Presence. We no longer need to face an empty, neighbor-less Universe. To "ascend the mountain of the LORD" meant to go to the place where God has chosen to dwell here on Earth. No need to send a probe to try and make contact with Him. He is already here. And the place where He dwells is the place where Heaven meets Earth.

David answers the question by saying:

[Slide 6]

Psalm 24:4 NIV

⁴ *The one who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not trust in an idol
or swear by a false god.*

Finding God requires that we acknowledge Him alone as God – no substitutes. It means that our actions and our inner attitudes are aligned to Him and His moral order. In other words, it means acknowledging that "The Earth is the LORD's," not ours. He is God, not us.

Heaven's Invitation:

God is the One who sent the Messenger, not us. He sent Jesus as His Voyager 1 to bring us the Good News that we're not alone in this Universe. God is on our side. God is seeking us out. He is present to forgive and restore us. He promises to conquer both Sin and Death:

As David puts it:

[Slide 7]

Psalm 24:5-6 NIV

⁵ *They will receive blessing from the LORD
and vindication from God their Savior.*

⁶ *Such is the generation of those who seek him,
who seek your face, God of Jacob.*

Our mission as a church is to be a place where a lost and lonely world hears the invitation to come to Him. Our worship is meant to be used by the Holy Spirit to bring Heaven and Earth side by side. The Good News of Jesus alone makes it possible for us to come with clean hands and a pure heart.

King of Glory!

Gatekeepers:

The temples and sanctuaries of David's time were physical structures with gates and doors. At the doors stood gatekeepers who protected the holy premises to assure that God would be welcome:

To them David gives a ringing command:

[Slide 8]

Psalm 24:7 NIV

⁷ *Lift up your heads, you gates;
be lifted up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.*

“Open the gates! Swing wide the doors! Make way for the King of Glory!”

The King is already here. It is time for Heaven and Earth to come together. God has invited us into His Presence. Now we must invite Him into ours!

King of Glory:

David asked the question: “Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD?” Now he asks an even bigger question: “Who is this King of Glory?”

[Slide 9]

Psalms 24:8-10 NIV

⁸ *Who is this King of glory?*

*The LORD strong and mighty,
the LORD mighty in battle.*

⁹ *Lift up your heads, you gates;*

*lift them up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.*

¹⁰ *Who is he, this King of glory?*

*The LORD Almighty—
he is the King of glory.*

The King of Glory is the great God who made the world. He comes and fights our battles for us. He is the LORD Almighty. When we know Him we know we will never be alone in His world.

We have spent a year renovating a special space: the space where we worship this great King of Glory. We’ve installed new everything – from carpet and pews to the latest technology for sound and video. But it will all be for nothing if we fail to lift up the gates and swing wide the doors so the King of Glory may come in. Our sanctuary will be like a lonely little spacecraft drifting along in empty space with a message no one will ever see.

The real renovation starts now. It starts inside you. It starts when you ask God to create in you a clean heart. It starts when you make Him alone the Lord of your life. It starts when you seek His face. It starts when you hear the call to raise the gates and swing wide the doors so the King of Glory may come in.

A lost and lonely world needs to be able to know it is not alone. The King of Glory is here. Let's make 2019 a year in which Franklin County discovers we're not alone. God is with us!