

UnMasking

It is a high privilege to be entrusted with this morning's message by Pastor Andy Hawkins.

Does God wear a mask?

Psalm 101

1 "***I will*** sing of your love and justice; to you, Lord, ***I will*** sing praise.

2 ***I will*** be careful to lead a blameless life— *when will you come to me?*

I will conduct the affairs of my house with a blameless heart.

3 ***I will*** not look with approval on anything that is vile.

I hate what faithless people do; ***I will*** have no part in it.

4 The perverse of heart shall be far from me; ***I will*** have nothing to do with what is evil.

5 Whoever slanders their neighbor in secret, ***I will*** put to silence; whoever has haughty eyes and a proud heart, ***I will*** not tolerate.

6 My eyes will be on the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me; the one whose walk is blameless will minister to me.

7 No one who practices deceit will dwell in my house; no one who speaks falsely will stand in my presence.

8 Every morning ***I will*** put to silence all the wicked in the land; ***I will*** cut off every evildoer from the city of the Lord."

Psalms 101:1-8 NIV

This psalm begins as a song to the Lord. David relates so closely to God that he sees no difference between the way he lives and the way God is. But a cursory examination of this passage seems to indicate King David is telling God about how he judges others based upon his own integrity and character. He seems to be assuring God that his heart is good and true. Look at the 'I Wills' and personal pronouns.

But there is one part of the psalm which catches me off guard. It is verse 2.

When he says, "***I will be careful to lead a blameless life— when will you come to me?***"

My first thought was - naturally this must be a prayer of David for God to help him. David wants to give careful attention to his conduct.

The very same verb translated, 'behave' is used in **I Samuel 18:14-15**. He was already living a blameless life!

"In everything he did he had great success, because the Lord was with him. When Saul saw how successful he was, he was afraid of him." (II Samuel 18:15-16)

Long before David became king he was already living a blameless life! So when David writes, “when will you come to me?” it doesn’t quite ring true that the King was asking for divine intervention. So what was the reason for this question? And, why is it placed here in verse 2?

It is as though King David intended to write a psalm praising God’s love and justice but he had this question. It was a question he couldn’t shake.

Then one day I was reading H. C. Leupold on the Psalms and discovered a connection between this psalm, 101, and II Samuel 6:1-11.

Leupold writes:

“Oh when will you come to me?, This statement says, in effect, that David uttered this when he almost despaired of ever having the ark of the Lord come to Jerusalem. It was the very symbol of God’s presence among his people. For he exclaimed after the Uzzah incident, which had so shocked the whole nation: how can the ark of the Lord ever come to me? To David the presence of the ark and the presence of the Lord were synonymous.”

So I went back to [II Samuel 6:1-9](#)

“David again brought together **all the able young men of Israel—thirty thousand**. He and all his men went to Baalah in Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the Name, the name of the Lord Almighty, who is enthroned between the cherubim on the ark. They set the ark of God on a new cart and brought it from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. ***Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab***, were guiding the new cart with the ark of God on it, and Ahio was walking in front of it. David and all Israel were celebrating with all their might before the Lord, with castanets, harps, lyres, timbrels, sistrums and cymbals. **When they came to the threshing floor of Nakon, Uzzah reached out and took hold of the ark of God, because the oxen stumbled. The Lord’s *anger* burned against Uzzah *because of his irreverent act*; therefore God struck him down, and he died there beside the ark of God. Then David was *angry* because the Lord’s wrath had broken out against Uzzah, and to this day that place is called Perez Uzzah. *David was afraid* of the Lord that day and said, “**How can the ark of the Lord ever come to me?”**”**

David was angry at God! And, David was afraid of God!
How could a good God do that to his nephew? (Uzzah’s father, Abinadab, was one of David’s older brothers).

Our questions tell so much about us. Here we have two questions which are quite alike:

“**When will the ark of the Lord come to me?**”

“**When will you come to me?**” They are one and the same!

Something was transpiring within David. It can also happens with us.

Similar situations come to us, times when we can’t understand what God is doing or allowing. When we don’t understand God, he still surely understands us. These training times are allowed by God to help us see windows into our own hearts. Our words, our actions, even our self talk declares what is within us.

Now we come to the big question nearly everyone has thought of at one time or another but may not have been brave enough to have actually state.

IF YOU ARE THE LOVING, ALL KNOWING, ALL POWERFUL GOD:

Why did you let that happen? Why did you take Uzzah, my nephew's life right there in front of my entire family? Right there with 30,000 of our best young men watching? Don't you know what you did to your own reputation (not to mention mine)?

Or you may ask:

Why did my father die so early?

Why did my wife get cancer? Why did the corporation go under? Why did the people turn against me? Why did my parents split up ruining our happy life?

Why did Alzheimer's strike our home? Why was my wife taken so early? Why did my brother die in the armed services? Why was my job eliminated?

The questions are endless! Your mind and heart will fill in your circumstance.

For me, I remember when the thought hit me about lifelong excema.

Maybe God isn't as powerful as I thought! Maybe He doesn't care as much as I've been told! Maybe He doesn't know about me! Maybe there isn't even a God?

The very questions have the scent of brimstone about them as the enemy taunts us.

With loving family and the help of our faithful God most of us are able to work through those painful questions but NOT EVERYONE!

Like King David in Psalm 101, we do not know our own hearts! We may think we do but we really don't.

Jesus taught much on the subject of the human heart:

Mark 7 Jesus sermon on the heart takes over 20 verses. I will only read a few. 7:15, 21-23

"Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them."

"For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from within and defile a person."

This message of Jesus is recorded almost verbatim in Matthew 15:1-20 making it emphatic!

The passage makes it evident that it is **not what happens to us** that causes our defilement. It is **not what comes into us** that causes us trouble. And it is **not what we eat** that is our problem. It is **how my heart, mind and conscience responds to what enters my life** that is the problem.

When painful events attach to some darkness in our human heart then what happens may be very soul-disturbing.

King David had an amazing record living blamelessly before people. But something was exposed by this event with Uzzah which revealed a root of self-will and pride in David. God was bringing David to Himself the easiest way we would come JUST LIKE HE DOES

US! So often that path is one which could have been revealed and remedied no other way.

By an irreverent event (using a new way to move the Ark of the Covenant) David chose his own way of doing things over God's way. It may seem a small subtlety but not to God. It was David's self-will taking action! *David wanted to do things David's way!*

Rather than allowing the priests of God to assign Levites to carry the Ark untouched on their shoulders by using poles and staves, he called for a new oxcart!

David, himself, was to blame but we have no record of him confessing his sin, humbling his heart or making restitution. The name of that location was not changed from *Perez Uzzah!* It served not only as a marker for Uzzah's death but for David's pride?

Do you have any markers for your pride?

I do. I have one on my chin which resulted when I refused to get out of the way of my older brother who was riding his bike toward me. I have others in my mind. And still others in my heart!

Within the next 10 years **King David** would sleep with another man's wife and then arrange the death of her husband. In so doing he **broke every "I Will" of Psalm 101**. He was not the person he so wanted to be and thought he was!

You see, the human heart is not nearly as good as we think it is!

Jeremiah put it this way, "the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can understand it? I, the Lord, search the heart and examine the mind" **17:9-10**.

My dear friends, we ALL have a Heart Problem and the cure is found in that same chapter of Jeremiah(17).

"But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him.

They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green.

It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit."

Jeremiah 17:7-8

If you would have asked David that morning when he was ready to move the ark, "King David, do you trust God?"

He would have said, "Oh, YES, I trust God with all my heart!"

But David did not know his heart any better than we know our own hearts!

The Body of Christ is being tried in America. God is sifting us in order to expose idols of our hearts. Do we secretly worship at the altar of a false god? Many of us have been exposed! We are now publicly endorsing political positions. What place has politics of any stripe in the life of a person whose only goal is to be one with Jesus?

The Savior and Scriptures have spoken to this matter! Obey the laws of government to the degree it is possible. Pay your taxes. Pray for your leaders and for peace.

Instead we, the body of Christ, are building walls against other members of our body-even those we are called to love. We don't speak! We seethe with anger! We judge! We act as we mistakenly think God acts!

STOP!

Our only true enemy stands by mocking us while we tear each other apart! The unity for which Christ fervently prayed is shredded with the anger of our own lips! Oh!

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not to your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he shall direct your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes but fear the Lord and depart from evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones."
Proverbs 3:5-8

Let's look again at Psalm 101. Pending on the version:

"I will" about 10-11 times

"I, me, my" about 10-11 times.

God allows each one of us to come to the place where we must confront God's truth about our hearts! We must face what we do not understand about God! Then come to grips with a deeper reality that we will agree with Him about our heart **anyway!**

David was allowed to be led by his own foolish heart into deeply troubling circumstances by the providence of God!

Why? God does not want us to **just** look good! **Just** behave perfectly! He does not want our voice to **just** sound pleasing! To **just** write well! To **just** think clearly! To **just** lead with strength!

What God wants us to be is: One with Him!! So, HE must operate and expose our hearts by the light of His Spirit, taking Truth like a scalpel to our sinful natures and cleansing us! Then only will we be Spirit-empowered people!

God's judgment of David's action was not harsh. To think so would betray our mistaken concept of sin and our misunderstanding of God's ways.

There are many today who think God is hiding from them, or at least wearing a mask. God does not wear masks like we wear masks! It is true that He "dwells in unapproachable light" but he has sent His Son into the world to show us who He truly is! God is not hidden behind a mask to mislead or deceive us. That is not our God!

We wear masks over our hearts! We hide ourselves. We want to appear a certain way before others...we even believe - wrongly, that God sees us as we see ourselves!

Sometimes we are too free to assume that He will be just like us... when the Bible is there to show us that He is so entirely different, than us!

When God allows things to be written into our story which we never would have allowed, we come to a crisis and often a cross-roads....**Will we continue to follow this one who ends up not being like we thought?... Or will we try to remake him in our image?...Or will we receive him on his own mystifying terms....and receive grace to trust him, when we cannot understand him.**

At the heart of our differences with God is our own self will! David was dealing with self!
Everyone who believes must!

In John 16:23 we read,
“In that day you will ask Me nothing.”

When is “that day”? When the ascended Lord is allowed to makes us one with the Father. “In that day” we will be one with the Father and Jesus just as He prayed in **John 17:22-23**. Jesus said, “In that day you will ask Me nothing.” Until we begin allowing the resurrection life of Jesus is fully exhibited in us, we have questions about many things. Then after a while we find that all our questions are gone— we don’t seem to have any. He wants us to move to the point of total reliance on the resurrection life of Jesus, which brings us into complete oneness with God. Are we living with that goal in our lives? If not, why aren’t we?

“In that day” there may be any number of things still hidden to our understanding, but they will not come between us and God. “In that day you will ask Me nothing” — All your questions will be gone - ***not necessarily answered*** - but gone! “In that day you will ask Me nothing.”

Is your life about you? Or is your life about being one with Jesus, one with the Father and then caring for others?

How is your heart?

Are there walls between you and God? Or are you one with Him? Are there walls between you and others? Or are you one with them in spirit?

Are you withholding your trust from Him? from those you love?

Are you able to express your love to Him? To those you love?

Is there anyone with whom you are not reconciled? Anyone?

We cannot be reconciled to God apart from being reconciled to others!

Allow the Spirit of God to unmask and study your heart and take you to a place where your goal is oneness with Jesus and the Father! Then even your questions will dissolve into trust!

Oh, Surgeon of the souls of your people, unmask our hearts and operate while we wait and worship. Amen