

Throne to Drone?

- Imagine the story:
 - a queen is tired of her life of opulence and comfort and status
 - one night her fairy godmother shows up and grants her deepest wish and poof she goes from being a queen to being a maid who washes floors and scrubs toilets twelve hours a day
 - *think it would sell?*
- *We're not really into riches to rags stories, are we?*
 - which is what makes this psalm so counter-cultural

Where to look

- A guy signed up for a stint in the army and after he got in found out that he didn't like the life, but was committed for several years
 - so what he does is he starts going around and grabbing every piece of paper he can find, picking it up and looking at it and going "This isn't it" and throwing it down
 - continues doing this until a general comes walking by and the guy went up and grabbed the piece of paper out of the general's hand and said "This isn't it."
 - commanding officers call in a psychiatrist
 - the psychiatrist met with him and said "Son, you've got a big problem. Tell me just what is this strange habit you've developed, what are you looking for?"
 - the guy says "Well I don't know, I just know that I haven't found it yet" and with that the man goes to the psychiatrist's desk grabbing every piece of paper and saying "This isn't it, this isn't it"
 - the psychiatrist decides he has a serious problem and writes a **discharge** and hands it to him
 - the guy looks at it, smiles and says "THIS is it!"
- Where we look to find God? Where do we look to find a right concept of God and to find a right concept of our self image in relation to God?
 - one current answer is, "look within" - realise your potential, be all you can be...
 - the only problem with this, of course, is that as we peel back the layers of our personalities we eventually come to the point of realising there is nothing at the centre of our lives...?
- In verse one of our text, the psalmist reminds you and me where we are to look:
 - *I lift up my eyes to you (v.1)*
 - we are to look outside of ourselves for God and who He really is
 - v.1 reminds us that God is separate from and distinct from His creation
 - God is not something or someone that innately dwells within us to make us feel good like some kind of spiritual immune system
 - no, God is outside of us and the good news of verse one is that God is enthroned, enthroned over all heaven and earth as the sovereign, omnipotent Lord and ruler of the entire universe
 - that's where to look to find God.

Who am I?

- Once we've had a little bit of a glimpse of God in v.1, dare we glimpse at what v.2 says about who we are in relation to God?
 - *As the eyes of slaves look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maid look to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the LORD our God, till he shows us his mercy. (v.2)*
 - how politically incorrect!
 - that doesn't really connect with us does it?
 - do you get up in the morning and think "I have been created by God primarily to be a servant, God has made me primarily to be his servant"?
 - I suspect for most of us, squeezed by a culture that says "get to the top - be the best", we don't think of ourselves as slaves

- We all, at some point, need to find out who we really are and what role we are to play in life
 - as followers of Jesus Christ we are to order our lives under the Word of God, and here in this Psalm we are confronted by God with the role he wants us to play: that of a servant
 - but unlike a tyrannical mistress or master who lords it over the servant, we see in verse two that **what we should expect from the hand of God is nothing but mercy**
 - it's God's sheer mercy that you and I are even alive
 - it is sheer mercy that you and I have the privilege of being a servant
 - this servant-hood business is all about grace
- Back in the Psalmist's time a master didn't have to say anything to his slave or his servant:
 - he could literally just snap his fingers or make another hand motion because the servant was always nearby and always had his gaze fixed on the hand of the master
 - do we wake up every morning thinking I wonder what God's hand is going to be doing today, what things he is going to ask me to do in terms of his bidding?
 - probably not, but that's because we have been much more conditioned by the culture around us than we have by the Word of God
 - a culture that screams at us that our self-image comes from climbing that ladder, achieving success, getting to the top and accumulating a lot of stuff and status - that's what defines who you are and God says no it isn't, not at all

Contempt!

- The Psalmist's culture was no more in love with this servant talk than our culture today
 - look at vs.3-4
 - *the Psalmist says of himself and his friends (3) **Have mercy on us, O LORD, have mercy on us, for we have endured much contempt. (4) We have endured much ridicule from the proud, much contempt from the arrogant.***
- Do you know what contempt means?
 - it means to despise, as if we've spat in someone's face...
 - and that is pretty much the way the culture looked at the faithful
 - **"The proud, those self-made men and women those who have made it to the top, they look on this idea of being a servant as crazy and ridiculous. The arrogant, those who confuse themselves with being God, they don't like this talk of servant-hood because that means that they would have to take a demotion from the place in the universe that they have for themselves right now. This is nuts! The business of life is to become upwardly mobile not move downward. This is ridiculous isn't it?"**
- Yes, unless you are a follower of Jesus Christ who models for you and me what it means to be a servant.
- To be a follower of Christ means to be in touch with reality:
 - **reality number one is that God is God and we are not**
 - **reality number two is that God has called you and me to partner with him as his servants as he changes the world!**
- What a privilege to be a part of the enterprise of God
 - being a servant has nothing to do with how much money you have or what your job title is or has anything to do with refusing a promotion at work - **"Oh no, I am a servant of Christ and I can't be promoted"**
- Being a servant of the Lord God Almighty has nothing necessarily to do with how much you have or what your title is or what your status is in the world's eyes, it's all about attitude:
 - **"Lord I am your servant, my gaze is fixed on your hand and I will live as you direct me."**

- so you have guys like Millard Fuller - 25 years ago a millionaire Alabama lawyer whose life was falling apart and whose marriage was on the rocks
- in God's providence Millard hooks up with an old Baptist preacher named Clarence Jordan who founded a Christian commune outside of Americus, Georgia called Koinonia Farms and searching and looking for some purpose Millard Fuller goes and lives there and sits under Clarence Jordan's teaching, comes to Christ...
- in time his marriage is restored and he gives away all of his millions of dollars because he hears Christ's call to be a servant and instead he founds Habitat for Humanity, a provider of homes for people all over the world - homes for people who are poor and in need
- and Millard Fuller would say "I was never happy when I had the millions of dollars and no Jesus, but now that I know Christ, I can live on this subsistence salary and do pro bono law work and I am as happy as a clam."

- What if you and I got out of bed every morning and thought in those terms:
 - I'm a servant and I'm going to serve whoever the Lord brings in my pathway or whatever I find myself doing today I'm going to look at how I can serve in order to exalt the name of Christ.
 - what do you think would happen?

- I heard a story of church in Texas in the early 1980's:
 - they'd out-grown their building, so bought some land and built new
 - large, gorgeous facilities, sanctuary, small rooms...
 - there was just one thing that jarred - as you came from the entrance area into the brand spanking new sanctuary there was a sign - a tacky sign...
 - it said, "Servant's entrance"
 - *is that how we think?*