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Praising the Lord for His Enduring Strength; Psalm 21  
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Introduction - When we read through the psalms, we really have to read with 3 perspectives in mind in order to glean the full richness of this book.

- (1) As we read each individual psalm, we want to take into account the historical background and context, especially if the psalm gives us this insight in the heading. (read the heading for Psalm 21 and then Psalm 18) When we take the psalm, by itself, David, the man after God's own heart, the sweet psalmist of Israel, becomes an example for us to follow in various situations. David has given us songs to sing, prayers to pray, in all of life's joys and struggles. When we apply these songs by faith to our own lives, they enable us and teach us how to approach God, how to praise God, how to rely on God throughout the ups and downs of life.
- (2) As we read the psalms, we must keep in mind that the book of Psalm is composed of songs rather than chapters. There is a flow, an overall message, that the book as a whole is conveying. Each song is placed strategically, not chronologically, so that the book itself, all of the songs together, has an overall theme. For example, Psalm 20 is a prayer that concludes in v9 "O Lord, save the king! May He answer us when we call." Psalm 21 is a praise report because God has answered that prayer.
- (3) As we read the psalms compositionally, we must read them Christologically, for Christ is the main subject. There are two themes in Psalm - the Word of God and the Messiah. The Word of God is so rich and full and life-giving because in the Word of God, the Messiah, Christ, is revealed to us. David knows that he is writing not just about himself as king, but when he writes about his situations, he always peers into the future and writes about the Coming Eternal King. That is why the last half of Psalm 21 sings of how the strength of the Lord will grant victory to the king over his enemies and Psalm 22 foreshadows the cross of Christ, where Christ will fight His greater battle and achieve His greatest victory.

Let's take those 3 perspectives and apply them to Psalm 21. (1) As we read this psalm historically, David is an example to us of how we are to praise God when He answers our prayer and delivers us and how God's

faithfulness to us in any situation gives us greater assurance and faith in Him for every trial that lies ahead. (2) Compositionally we are to read this psalm as praising God for answering the prayer of Psalm 20 – saving the King and thereby the King’s people. (3) Christologically, we are to read this psalm praising God that His strength in our salvation was wrought by Christ.

#### I. The Lord’s Strength Saves the Believer (vv1-7)

A) v1 - The strength of the Lord is displayed to the greatest degree in the salvation of His people, which gives rise to the greatest degree of praise from His people. That’s how all of this comes together for the glory of God and the joy of His people. He is mighty to save sinners, and He does save sinners, and when He saves sinners by His strength, they praise Him for it! Yes - we are to worship God because He is worthy of it. But we don’t begrudgingly worship God. God does not have to twist our arms for us to worship Him. We gladly worship Him because He is mighty to save!

B) v2 - The desire of David’s heart was for God to save him. Historically, that meant deliverance from earthly foes, but we know David means more than that here. We need eternal salvation much more than earthly salvation. When God saves us from earthly trials and earthly foes, that is meant to bolster our faith, to assure us, that He can save us and will save us eternally!!

C) vv3 - 5 When God saves, He doesn’t do so with minimal grace, He does so with abundant grace! He doesn’t just welcome the prodigal son home, He prepares a feast!

1. v3a - God does not meet us with deserved condemnation, but in Christ He meets us with rich celebration.

2. v3b - David is referring to the honor of being made a king, but he is also referring to the honor of being made a son, a son of God, that in Christ we are said to receive a crown, the crown of life.

3. v4a - Life is ours, salvation is ours, just for the asking! What we could never accomplish, God is mighty to accomplish and willing to give.

4. v4b - but not just any life - eternal, everlasting life

5. v5 - David’s kingship was great because the glory of it belonged to God. The glory of David was beyond David. And that’s exactly the way it is for us in Christ. God saves us and God uses our salvation to magnify His Son. 1 John 3:2 tells us when Christ appears “we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” The Bible says we are not just rescued sinners but have been made joint-heirs with Christ! One of the things that makes the grace of salvation so amazing is that God gives it in abundant measure! He

doesn't just save, He saves beyond our ability to comprehend. And that's the point of v6

D) Salvation is never minimum; it is always maximum! It ends not just with rescue from Hell but with the blissful joy of His presence!

E) v7 -We can thoroughly trust God because He is strong enough to thoroughly save. He will not only rescue; He will keep. The steadfast love of God is the reason David knows he will not be moved. Because His love is not going anywhere neither are we if we are in Christ!

## II. The Lord's Strength Overcomes His Enemies (vv8-12)

A) The Bible says it is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God. The problem is that if we do not have a healthy regard for the biblical portrayal of God's just, righteous wrath, we will not grasp the fullness and depth of His grace! If you want to know grace in its fullness, you must know justice in its fullness. 5 summary statements.

B) The strength of the Lord is a comfort to everyone who flees to Christ but it is a terror to all who flee from Christ.

C) To the degree that the Lord's strength produces joy in the believer, it will enact just punishment for the unbeliever.

D) Just as the strength of the Lord shows itself in abundant grace to the believer, so will it show itself as an absolute, final conquest of evil.

E) The strength of the Lord is mighty to save, and it is mighty to conquer.

F) God will be glorified for His strength - for both its display of abundant grace to save and its just, finality to evil.

G) Two Implications.

1. Present grace builds confidence, assurance, and faith in promised future grace! If God delivered today, He will deliver tomorrow. If God's strength proved strong enough for this trial, it will prove strong enough for every trial. If God defeated this enemy, He will defeat every enemy.

a. Our last enemy is death. The battleground is the graveyard. We march against an unrelenting, uncompromising foe. Every sin we commit is a weakness in our force and a strength in his. With all the ingenuity humanity can muster, we cannot prevail against the final enemy of death. In light of our rebellion against God, we are deserving of death's fatal bite. But thanks be to God, in Christ Jesus our Lord and Risen Savior, death has lost its sting and the grave has been defeated!

2. The just wrath of God compels us to evangelism and missions. It's not the only motivator, but it is near the top of the list. Unbelievers, no matter their religious or anti-religious persuasion, simply do not believe in

the just wrath of God. They are unbelievers. They don't believe anything rightly, anything biblically, anything by faith, especially that God is holy and will enact just punishment against those who rage against Him and deny His Son. But truth does not depend upon whether or not we believe it.

a. That's why Jesus said "Love your enemies" "Do good to those who hate you" "Pray for those who mistreat you" Why? Because whether or not they realize it, whether or not they believe it, they stand under the just wrath of Almighty God. And when the day of battle comes, there will be no mistaking whatsoever who the victor will be.

b. You see that's why Christians pray for and love their enemies and share the Gospel with them. That's why we pray for and love and share the Gospel with everyone we know who is apart from Christ. Because we used to be under God's wrath as well and we found refuge in Christ, and in Christ we found God as Father not as Judge and we are compelled by God's wrath to magnify God's grace in Christ! Even when it becomes very costly.

### III. The Lord is to be Praised for His Enduring Strength (v13)

A) He is mighty to save, and He is mighty to conquer. And for His power - we will sing! You will know the vast, enduring strength of the Lord one way or the other! I compel you today, run to Christ and know the strength of the Lord in His power to save.