

Praising God for His Deliverances, Part I

Call to Worship: Psalm 48:1-3

1st Scripture: 2 Samuel 21:15-22

2nd Scripture: 2 Samuel 22:1-4

Hymn #81- *A Mighty Fortress*

Hymn #89- *Come Thou, Almighty King*

Hymn #24 (Supp)- *Victory in Jesus!*

Introduction:

As the author ushers us forward toward the end of David's reign and life, we have seen how he has brought us to ponder a few additional, significant and relevant events, surrounding the life of David. And last time, we saw how the Lord had given David and Israel great victories over the Philistines and their champion giants, during various battles, leading to the end of David's reign. And while David's physical strength has begun to decline significantly, the God, in whom David has trusted, has continued to faithfully prosper David's kingdom, against his enemies, and that, in spite of David's own sins and shortcomings. Contrary to this, however, the Philistines, who always trusted in their physical giants, found themselves defeated and destroyed, over and over again.

Well, this morning, we move into a very lengthy Psalm of praise, written by David, who sought to acknowledge and praise God, for all of the deliverances, granted David, against his fierce and powerful enemies. And the words of this Psalm of praise are virtually identical to the words of Psalm 18, less a few, very minor differences. Over the next several weeks, with the exception of next Sunday ("Resurrection Sunday"), we will seek to work through the content of this Psalm. This morning, we will look at the first four verses, which contain the general purpose of the Psalm, as well as the opening statement, which leads into the meat of the Psalm.

I. The General Purpose (vs. 1)

Again, the general purpose of the song is given in verse 1, "Then David spoke to the Lord the words of this song, on the day when the Lord had delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul."

Here then, we have, as it were, David's contemplation of praise, as he looks back and reflects upon the very specific ways, in which God has delivered him from the hands of all of his

enemies and Saul. And the emphasis given here, brethren, is driven by what has just been expressed at the end of chapter 22, where the author documents four battles, in which, God had delivered David and Israel out of the hands of the Philistines, and their champion giants. The signature of God's deliverance; the God, upon whom, David had cast all of his trust, is written everywhere, throughout the life of David. And David would have us share in his exulting in God, as it were, so that we too, might cast our confidence, entirely upon this very same God, and not upon the giants or champions of the flesh, who were incapable of delivering the pagan Philistines.

In our consideration of the life of David, brethren, have we not marveled over the clear and profound ways, in which, divine providence has met him, during every time of desperation and need? Many times, David was at the end of his rope, seemingly clinging to a thread, clearly without hope from the standpoint of the world, only to be delivered in the most profound and glorious of ways! Being continually in the cross hairs of Saul, the king of Israel, the Philistines, the Amalekites and many others, with the odds, always stacked significantly against him, David yet, found deliverance and prevailed, all in fulfillment of a divine promise, given to him, when he was but a child, caring for sheep.

And so, looking back now, in reflection upon the sovereign hand of God, always upon him, David, under the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit, speaks the words of this Psalm.

II. The Opening Statement

And so, as David often does, he begins his song of praise with an opening statement, which will find its support (its evidence) throughout the rest of the Psalm, leading to a conclusive summary, which reiterates the main thrust of this opening statement.

In breaking down our short text, you'll find David referring to his God in various descriptive and illustrious terms, specifically in verses 2 & 3. Notice:

The Lord is my ROCK and my FORTRESS and my DELIVERER; the GOD OF MY STRENGTH, in whom I will trust; my SHIELD and the HORN OF MY SALVATION, my STRONGHOLD and my REFUGE; my SAVIOR, You save me from violence.

In two verses, David refers to God in eight descriptive ways: as his Rock, Fortress, Deliverer, the God of his strength, his Shield, Horn of salvation, Stronghold and Refuge. Now, when you consider all of these terms, you find that they are all defensive and protective in nature, which of course, would be in keeping, with a Psalm of "praise to God for His deliverances." And all in all, David is fervently proclaiming before God (and us, for that matter), visible descriptions of the way in which his invisible God actually helps him. God is as a Rock, which, by means of its solid clefts, shields David from all harm. God is a Fortress or a Garrison, which surrounds David with protection from all sides. He is a Deliverer, who rescues David from the threats and oppression of all of David's enemies. He is David's strength, enabling him to bear up under every load of weight, which would be laid upon him. He is David's Shield, at close proximity, protecting him from every weapon, which is wielded against him. He is David's horn of salvation, the very power of the Rhinoceros, which drives all of its enemies away. He is David's Stronghold; that high, well protected and advantageous fort, providing him with the upper hand. And He is David's Refuge, the place within which, David can always find rest, enclosure, peace and comfort.

In all of these very descriptive, overlapping and yet, multi-faceted ways, God is David's Protector and Deliverer. And for this reason, David can trust God, at all times, even though He is invisible to the naked eye, and his enemies are very visible, wielding all kinds of threats, which would tempt David to grow fearful and to seek refuge in what is visible, himself. Notice, sandwiched in the middle of these two verses, David adds, "in whom I will trust." God is Rock, Fortress, Deliverer, Strength, IN HIM WILL I TRUST, my shield, horn of salvation, stronghold and refuge. And so, what is David's point? Indeed, the very heart of this entire Psalm of praise, is that David can live obediently and faithfully before God, not allowing any form of opposition to move him, because he is fully confident that God will protect him, even more than the visible descriptions he has given by these eight terms. He is using visible illustrations (which he will continue to do in this Psalm) merely to convey the certain reality of God's very real and certain protection of His people. God is a very present help in times of trouble.

And notice, how he sums up the matter at the end of verse 3, "My Savior, You save me from violence." Because God is all of those things (illustrated) and more, He is my Savior, who

saves me from all violence. David can look back at his track record, from the time he was very young, to the time that Saul was hunting him down, to the times when he had faced all kinds of heathen nations in battle, to the times that he had faced giants even; often times, outnumbered and in the place of the underdog, and he can see, very clearly that God has shielded, protected, strengthened and delivered him.

And for this reason, David ends his opening statement with these words, in verse 4, "I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from my enemies."

God's faithfulness compels David to continually trust Him, though that trust is continually tested. And that "God infused" and worthy trust compels David to continually call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, confidently assuring himself that he will be saved from his enemies. God has not changed, even in spite of David's sins, and so, in keeping with God's covenant lovingkindness toward David, David can continually call upon God, and anticipate God's favor and deliverance. What he knows to be true about God; what God has confirmed over and over again, compels David to respond in faith, by calling upon his God, and praising his God, whenever he is in trouble.

Such is David's opening statement in this lengthy Psalm of praise, brethren. Next time, we will begin to tread into the meat of it, which supports the bold statements, made in these first four verses.

III. Closing Thoughts and Applications

Having considered the content of the first four verses, brethren, for the remainder of our time then, let us look at a few closing thoughts and applications:

1) Brethren, recognize right from the outset of this Psalm, the great, necessary and edifying benefit of reflecting upon the ways, in which, God has shielded, protected and brought us through our past trials. That you were converted, when a host of invisible, principalities and higher powers, actively sought to pluck up the seeds of the Gospel, which took root in you, is no small matter! Your conversion alone, when every demonic influence without, and every contrary, deadly influence within, came against you, is a great testimony to the delivering power of God, is it not? That is one reason that we call it our "testimony."

But, carrying it on from there, what kinds of trials and tribulations have you faced, throughout the duration of your walk with Christ? How many unbreakable knots has God, over time perhaps, untied for you, restoring you to a fresh joy and peace in Him? How many temptations has He carried you through? How many times has He enabled you to process His free and felt grace, in spite of your many sins, leading you to an assurance of your rest in His Son, Jesus Christ? What trials, within your home, at work, in the church, concerning your physical health, your mental health, your spiritual health... etc, has God brought you through? What dark caves and caverns has God brought you through, and to the other side? How many times have you dipped deep into the darkness; deep into the depths of the oceans of tribulation, only to be carried back up for air, at just the right time, by an evident power, far beyond your own.

Now brethren, let me stress something very critical and important in all of this. The assumption in all that David is saying here, is not that God has kept David back from trials, or that God has kept David from suffering, or that God has brought David immediate deliverance from his trials. We know enough, from all that we have gone over, which is only what we have recorded in Scripture, that David, often went through difficult, drawn out, and painful trials. And so, the point is not that God keeps us from the weight of trials, or brings about immediate deliverance. Often times, trials last for a long time, which is what makes the deliverance more obvious and powerful, when God brings it. Periods of testing must take time, more often than not, so that our self-dependence will be crushed, our faith will be stretched, and we will learn to depend more and more upon God. And so, the main emphasis here is that, in the grand scheme of things, we always win, and nothing can touch us, beyond the will of God. In fact, what does touch us, every thumb tack full of sorrow or pain, is limited by God's design, to use our trials for our sanctification and His glory. In other words, brethren, not a single stone, which is cast at us, crosses the line of God's providence, and when we are hit, God preserves us, utilizes the pain for our good, and delivers us always, from ultimate destruction. And that is the great encouragement to be taken from all that David is saying here.

There is no short cut to glory, and any attempt at forcing a short cut, only sets us back, but when we cast our trust upon the Lord; when we lay our confidence upon His invisible reality,

we will always find, through it all, that He is, indeed, our Rock, our Refuge, our strength, our Strong Tower, our Fortress... etc!

And so, brethren, again, the main point is this: Recognize the great benefit of pondering and reflecting upon, the very specific ways, in which, God has revealed Himself to you, by His deliverances. Doing so, will lead you to praise Him, during the present storms, compelling you to seek His aid, and to stay the course, for the duration of the trial. God wants us to ask; He wants us to knock, and to keep knocking, fully assured, that in due time, when He has accomplished all that He has intended to accomplish by your trials, He will deliver you out of (or better yet, through) them. If you want to stand firm in the present, remember God's faithfulness in the past. And don't give up seeking Him, and remaining faithful to Him, in the present. Trust Him! And the enemy, who troubles you, will ultimately, only serve, to strengthen you, and to drive you back to the source of your strength and hope, in Christ! Remember, your covenant with God, broken in Christ, is the greatest, most absolute assurance, that God will not let you down. You will not be ashamed. Stay the course! God delights in shining forth the light of His glory, in delivering you out of impossible trials, where you have nowhere to run but Him. And if necessary, He'll gladly part the Red Sea even!

2) Finally, let me say a word to those of you, who are outside of the Lord Jesus Christ. If you are not in Christ; if you have not fled to Him, as your only certain Refuge and Strength and Fortress of Hope, so that you might be delivered first and foremost, from the wrath of God, which meets you in your sin, then you need to see that you are on a certain path to destruction.

Indeed, you have everything to fear, if your are not truly in Christ! For, not only are you not guaranteed the protection of God, but furthermore, His wrath actually hangs over your head, at this very moment. And it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of an angry God, who hates and cannot tolerate, what we might deem to be, even the least of our sins. And in due time, you will meet your dying day, right in accordance with His divine will. Ahab went out to war, and did all that he could to shield himself from being harmed in the battle. He cloaked his royalty in regular armor, thinking he could somehow escape the prophetic Word spoken against him. But, an ordinary arrow, perhaps, poorly shot even, just happen to hit him in one of the chinks of his armor. And ultimately he died. There is an arrow with your name on it, friends! Don't meet it,

apart from being reconciled to God, in Christ! For that would be to your ultimate doom and destruction, far beyond the boundaries of this life.

Embrace God's free covenant forgiveness and grace in Christ, who died on behalf of sinners, and who was raised from the dead, securing their justification. Repent of your sins, and believe into this Christ; be saved from your sins, before it is too late! May God give you the grace to comprehend the true urgency of the matter, so that you might find Refuge in Christ, and in Christ alone, who can provide it, to the fullest!

AMEN!!!

Benediction: Jude 1:24-25