

A King's Prayer

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Bible Verse: Psalm 144
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Well, we come this evening to Psalm 144 and I invite you to turn there with me as week by week we're coming closer to the completion of our exposition of the entire psalter and Psalm 144 is our text for tonight. So glad that you're with us.

Psalm 144.

1 A Psalm of David. Blessed be the LORD, my rock, Who trains my hands for war, And my fingers for battle; 2 My lovingkindness and my fortress, My stronghold and my deliverer, My shield and He in whom I take refuge, Who subdues my people under me. 3 O LORD, what is man, that You take knowledge of him? Or the son of man, that You think of him? 4 Man is like a mere breath; His days are like a passing shadow. 5 Bow Your heavens, O LORD, and come down; Touch the mountains, that they may smoke. 6 Flash forth lightning and scatter them; Send out Your arrows and confuse them. 7 Stretch forth Your hand from on high; Rescue me and deliver me out of great waters, Out of the hand of aliens 8 Whose mouths speak deceit, And whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood. 9 I will sing a new song to You, O God; Upon a harp of ten strings I will sing praises to You, 10 Who gives salvation to kings, Who rescues David His servant from the evil sword. 11 Rescue me and deliver me out of the hand of aliens, Whose mouth speaks deceit And whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood. 12 Let our sons in their youth be as grown-up plants, And our daughters as corner pillars fashioned as for a palace; 13 Let our garners be full, furnishing every kind of produce, And our flocks bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our fields; 14 Let our cattle bear Without mishap and without loss, Let there be no outcry in our streets! 15 How blessed are the people who are so situated; How blessed are the people whose God is the LORD!

Now, as you read that Psalm it seems evident on just a first glance at this is not your typical devotional type Psalm. There's something distinct about this, as we'll see as we go through the four sections of the Psalm. This is uniquely and particularly a king's prayer.

This is the prayer of David the king. The inscription says it's "A Psalm of David," and that's particularly important to realize David is writing in his capacity as the king of Israel here rather than as an individual. And so we don't step immediately into the sandals of the one writing this Psalm, even though it has much to teach us, we are reading the prayer of a king and his role as a national leader is critical as we study this text. It's very important to keep that in mind, he's writing as the head of the nation of God's chosen people, so he has a different set of responsibilities, different priorities than what necessarily animate you and me in our day-to-day lives; and yet at the same time, those that aspire after leadership roles can certainly learn from the way that David handled his leadership responsibilities in the presence of the Lord.

Now with that little bit of introduction, the flow of this Psalm is not at all obvious on a first reading. It's not obvious on a second reading even. It initially seems to bounce from one topic to another, that the themes do not seem to be related at all when you first look at it, but as you study it further, there is a deep underlying unity that pervades the sections as they flow from one section to another in this Psalm. The basic idea of this Psalm is this: David, the king, is seeking peace and prosperity for his people. He's seeking peace and prosperity for his people and in the process he praises God for God's defense of the nation and he humbly seeks help in the face of their enemies. And so David is preeminently seeking the peace and prosperity of his people, the fact that there are foreign armies that are waging war against them, seeking to undermine them, seeking to defeat them, is addressed in the prayer but it's addressed in that overall broader higher theme of seeking God's peace and prosperity upon the nation.

Now we won't take the time to explore what I'm about to say, but this Psalm has many echoes from Psalm 18, and many commentators have noted those parallels in the course of their exposition. But what we want to do tonight is just take a quick overview look at it, look at four sections and it starts in the first section of this Psalm with David expressing his humble trust, his humble trust. If you're taking notes that can be the first point for this evening, his humble trust. David opens this Psalm with praise even though war is on his mind. Verse 1 where he says,

1 Blessed be the LORD, my rock, Who trains my hands for war, And my fingers for battle;

So you immediately see that he is praising God but there are the thunder-steps of war that are echoing just on the outskirts from where he is praying. And so he's addressing God, and remember that as king David had the responsibility to lead his people into battle. You know, I've never been in the military, never been in a military-like structure so I can only imagine or try to guess at the responsibility that a commander feels as he leads troops into battle knowing that some of them are going to go home in body bags, so to speak. And so David is mindful of the responsibility that he has for the nation, mindful of what he himself is going to engage in the battle, and looking for God's protection upon the people and upon the troops as they go into battle. And so as he says here in verse 1, look at it again with me, "Blessed be the LORD, my rock, Who trains my hands for war, And my fingers for battle." He's alluding to the fact that over the course of his life God had

providentially prepared him for the role that he now has as a king, and David is grateful for the fact that everything in his past leading up to this time, to this moment in his leadership of the nation, God had providentially prepared him and that providential preparation is of great consequence and great importance to David. He realizes that God has prepared him for precisely this moment in his life and in his leadership.

Now that's important for all of us, that is a principle that all of us can take refuge in and knowledge in. You know, as new situations come, as new challenges come to us, as you know, maybe as we're facing death or facing conflict, facing unknown challenges in our family and not sure what to do, it's important for us to realize that everything about your life God has woven together and so even if you feel weak in the moment, God has prepared you for this time for precisely the moment that you are facing, and the knowledge of God's past providential preparation of you gives you great courage as you move forward. This is why theology is so very important, it is why it is so important for you to be deeply rooted in an understanding of the sovereignty of God, of the providence of God. God has not only providentially ordered the circumstances that you are in right now so that you have precisely the life today that God has given to you, it's important for you to understand that God has been working from the moment of your conception, through your birth, your childhood, all of your adult experiences, God has prepared you for exactly the moment that you now have in front of you. As you will see, that leads us to a humble trust, it leads us to dependent prayer, but to understand that the Lord has prepared you for whatever it is that you're facing in life right now. And yes, it may seem overwhelming. Yes, it may seem too much to bear. But Scripture tells us that no temptation has overcome you but such as is common to man, and God is faithful who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also so that you may be able to endure it.

Now look, understanding that and resting in that and drawing confidence from that is critical for the days in which we live. I'm speaking on a regular basis these days with a variety of people in a variety of occupations who are finding their jobs or threatened and they're, you know, and they're uncertain about how to move forward with the woke and homosexual, transgender policies that their employers are imposing upon them. And it is very difficult and as I stand here, I don't have answers for everyone that's facing it, but we must understand that even if we don't see the path forward, even if it seems like the forces are too great for us, God has prepared you for such a time as this and this is an opportunity to draw near to him and to realize that God has prepared you and is preparing you for whatever lies ahead. We must know these things. We must know our God. We must know his sovereignty. We must know his providence because as we do, we no longer respond out of a sense of fear and uncertainty but there is a growing confidence that can come in our hearts that says, "Whatever this is, whatever the outcome of it is, this is what God has prepared me for and it's what God has prepared for me." And so we go into the battle with a sense of confidence that God's power is with us just as God's power was with David in this time in Psalm 144 to overcome his enemies.

Beloved, we can't overestimate, we can't over-stress the importance of Bible reading in your own day-to-day life and of solid reading of theology and things like that that are

going to prepare you for this. Look, there is going to be no help from the world for. Christians who want to be faithful to God in the days to come, in the days in which we live. Your source of strength is going to be found in Christ alone, in Scripture alone, and in a deep understanding of theological principles. We no longer have the luxury of just riding along with the wave, riding on the waves of other people's spirituality. We no longer have the luxury of living in a culture that is relatively supportive of Christian principles. It's hostile. It's a battle now, and the only strength for battle that you have is in the truth that God has revealed in Scripture. And so it is essential for you, it is essential for you to be studying God's word, being with the people of God as God's word is opened because this is our lifeblood and this is our strength as we go forward in this life.

Now with all of that said, David here in this Psalm, he is not boasting in self. This is not the arrogant boast of a soldier who thinks he can beat everybody who comes to him. It's not like that. David in this Psalm from the very beginning is giving all of the glory to God. Look at verse 2 with me where he says, and remembering that he opened up, "Blessed be the LORD," and what God had done to prepare him. Now he goes back and describes these terms, these attributes, to the God in whom he trusts. Verse 2,

2 My lovingkindness and my fortress, My stronghold and my deliverer,
My shield and He in whom I take refuge, Who subdues my people under
me.

Six different terms in that one verse to describe God in his loyal love, his protecting presence, the fact that we can take refuge in him. Again, there are these warlike metaphors that he is using: my stronghold, my shield, the one in whom I take refuge. In addition to the warlike metaphors, notice also the pronouns that he uses, and people want to talk about pronouns today in our society, well, let's talk about biblical pronouns and what they say to you and me.

David here is speaking in the first person singular as we've often pointed out across the Psalms. He says, "He's my loving kindness, my fortress, my stronghold, my deliverer, my shield, the one in whom I take refuge." They're all first person singular pronouns. David has an intimate awareness and acquaintance of God in his presence with him so that he can say, "You are mine and I am Yours. You belong to me and I belong to You." It's deeply intimate, deeply personal relationship that he has with his God, and so this gives him great strength, "The God who is like the nature described with these attributes, fortress, lovingkindness, stronghold, and deliverer, that's my God. I'm in Him and He is with me." And beloved, do you see how that has great consequences for the perspective on which you live your life and as you face the challenges that come your way? We cannot simply look at these things on a horizontal basis, we can't simply measure them by the human difficulty and the quotient of hardship that they are going to bring with us; as the occasion rises in its challenge to your heart and to your life, so your faith can rise to the challenge as our Lord Jesus said in John 16:33, "In this world you will have tribulation, but take heart, take courage, I have overcome the world." And if you are in Christ, then the one who overcame the world is going to enable you to overcome the world as well. That's how Christians live with courage. That's how we live with strength.

That's how we avoid being intimidated by the society around us. It's because we know our God, we know our Christ, we know his sovereignty, we know his providence, and we belong to him.

And so beloved, all of those things are an outworking of theology. All of these things flow from a true understanding of doctrine. So-called Christians who don't embrace these doctrines, or Christians who neglect them, are bound to live weak and defeated lives. What enables men to be strong, what enables women to rise to the occasion of the difficulties in their lives, what enables a church to stand firm in the midst of opposition is knowing who God is and knowing that he loves us and cares for us as David goes on to express in verses 3 and 4. The reality of the intimacy and the protection from the prior two verses humbles David as we're going to see in verses 3 and 4. This is one of those places where what is said now does not immediately seem to connect with what just went before. He's made this great statement about God and then in verse 3, he says,

3 O LORD, what is man, that You take knowledge of him? Or the son of man, that You think of him? 4 Man is like a mere breath; His days are like a passing shadow.

What David is saying is this in these two verses, he's saying, "How can I, a man of clay, have a status like that before a God like that? God, You are sovereign and omnipotent over all things. Why would You take notice of any man? Why would You take notice? You have no need for me. I can't add anything to Your perfect essence. I can't contribute anything to the essential glory of God so why in Your existence as You dwell above time and as You dwell above history, and as You dwell above the universe, why would You take note of me? Why would You take note of any man? Why would You take knowledge of him? Why would You think on him?" Is the idea being expressed. Why would the eternal bend his ear to hear the earthly?

And we see that in the span of four short verses, this Psalm has taken us, as so many Psalms do, has taken us vertically high in transcendence looking at the nature of God, and yet has also taken us closely inward with the immanence of God, meaning that God is near. He is transcendent, he is beyond us, and all of these attributes that make him great are infinitely beyond us, and yet in his condescending love and care, he is near us. "I fear no evil for You are with me. Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me." David is saying, "God, You exceed us. You are beyond us. And yet You care for us." The two seem to be almost inconsistent with each other, certainly by human measure. You know, in human terms, the higher a man gets, the less he has time for the little people, right? We understand that. Well, David's expressing his humble trust. He knows who God is, he trusts him, and yet it humbles him at the same time to realize that this great God is with him for the battle of the day.

Well, that meditation leads into the second section of the Psalm, his bold prayer. His bold prayer. His humble trust leads him to a bold prayer, and the rhetorical question in the prior verses, "What is man that You take knowledge of him? That You think of him?" That rhetorical question now yields over, now it produces the fruit of courage in him.

God is transcendent, and yet he is with David and that brings him to pray and invites him and encourages him to pray in a bold way as he contemplates the battle ahead.

Verse 5, he says,

5 Bow Your heavens, O LORD, and come down; Touch the mountains,
that they may smoke. 6 Flash forth lightning and scatter them; Send out
Your arrows and confuse them.

What David is saying here is this, the continuity of the flow of the thought of the Psalm is this, "Yes, I am transient but You, O God, have laid hold of me, and that means that I can pray to You and I can have boldness and ask bold things from You because You have taken the initiative to become my God. You have drawn near to me." And so David prays boldly and this reads like a prayer of a king that is heading immediately into battle.

Look at it there with me, "Bow Your heavens and come down, touch the mountains that they may smoke. God, exercise Your power in a great display of Your warrior ability on our behalf. Exercise Your power against the enemy and give victory to us." The imperatives are dramatic, they are picturesque, and they are full of strength. Look at them with those thoughts in mind. "Bow Your heavens, come down, touch the mountains that they may smoke, flash forth lightning, scatter them," referring to the enemies there, "send out Your arrows, confuse them." This is the imagery of war and what David is saying is this, the spirit that underlies those requests that he makes to God is this: if God takes up the battle on their behalf, no enemy can stand before them. If God fights on our behalf, we will be victorious. No one can oppose him. No one can successfully resist him. And as we read in the book of Revelation, we'll see that on display in the ultimate sense in the end times when Christ returns and overthrows all of his enemies, including Satan himself. There's this great battle that will take place and God will be victorious in the battle.

Now as we go from those transcendent themes to just remembering things in kind of a, you know, in just a way of application for us today, to understand that he is the same God today as he walks with you and me. He has always been sovereign and he is sovereign as he walks with you and as he leads you and guides you and protects you and provides for you. He is the same God today and, beloved, that has consequences in the midst of everything that life throws at you and hurls at you as though, you know, as if you were facing a machine gun of opposition coming at you. Whatever the case may be, beloved, if you are in Christ, you should understand that you can be and should be very strong and courageous in the midst of it. Not because you're adequate in yourself for anything to come from you, but because this God who is a warrior, this God who is a stronghold and a refuge to his people, is your God and he perfects his strength in your weakness. So even as you are feeling the weakness of your life and even of your tentative heart, you should be drawing courage from the fact of who God is and that he has laid his hand upon you.

Look over at the book of Hebrews with me for just a moment, Hebrews 13 in verse 5 we see this, "Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, 'I will never desert you nor will I ever

forsake you,' so that," there's an implication of God's promise to be with us always, there is an application of faith that you and I are to make as a result of that. We understand this God is with us and that has a consequence on the way that we think in our heart and what we say in the privacy of our homes and what we say before men. "So that," verse 6, "we confidently say, 'The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?' Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." The Christ who strengthened the apostles to preach with such boldness in the book of Acts is the same today. The Christ that stood by the martyrs in the early church and enabled them to give great testimony of faith even though the fires were building up and lapping at their legs as they were tied to the stake, or as wild animals were sicced upon them in Roman coliseums, beloved, the same God that strengthened them and thereby they left behind such a powerful testimony of witness to the sustaining power of God, that God who did that for them is the same God that is our God today. And so as you face difficult medical reports perhaps, be strong and courageous. As you face unfaithful difficult spouses, be strong and courageous. As you face a future not knowing what is going to come, as you face end of life issues, as sometimes maybe you literally struggle for breath because of the difficult situations you have, remember who the God is that is with you in the midst of them and be strong and courageous. Be content in him. That is what David is teaching us from Psalm 144.

Now, going back to it as we move on into verses 7 and 8, we see his bold prayer continuing. David goes on and he asks for deliverance from his enemies. He says in verse 7,

7 Stretch forth Your hand from on high; Rescue me and deliver me out of great waters, Out of the hand of aliens 8 Whose mouths speak deceit, And whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood.

The great waters here, perhaps a metaphor for a flood of opposing troops that are coming from many nations. What David is saying here is that his enemies are powerful. They are a legitimate threat to his well-being. They are stronger than he is in human terms, and they are deceptive. They might swear an oath of peace with their right-hand raised, but it's an act of deception not of sincerity. They make treaties that they do not honor. They make promises that they do not keep. "Lord, I can't trust them and they're too strong for me and so I come to You and I appeal to You, O God. You who are stronger than they, exercise Your strength on my behalf against them and turn them away. You who are true, You who are loyal, You who are trustworthy, You show Your faithfulness to me, O God, I ask in the face of these whose word cannot be trusted." That's the idea. It's a bold prayer asking God to come down and exercise his power in the battle on behalf of his people, asking him to overthrow enemies who are too strong and too deceitful for him.

Now, before we leave this section, I just want to point out to you in verse 8, it kind of serves as a refrain later in the Psalm, verse 8, speaking of these aliens whose mouths speak deceit and whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood, David repeats that in verse 11 which we'll see in a moment, where he says, "Rescue me and deliver me out of

the hand of aliens whose mouth speaks deceit and whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood." And so these deceitful, wicked, powerful enemies are greatly present. They are breathing down his neck, so to speak, even as he is praying in this way.

So we see his humble trust, we see his bold prayer, and you can tell that this is a prayer of true faith by what follows in the third section of the Psalm when we see his confident pledge. His confident pledge. We've seen his humble trust, his bold prayer, and now we come to his confident pledge there in verses 9 and 10. He is full of faith as he pens this Psalm. Verse 9, he says.

9 I will sing a new song to You, O God; Upon a harp of ten strings I will
sing praises to You, 10 Who gives salvation to kings, Who rescues David
His servant from the evil sword.

Now in these two verses, he's not talking about salvation from sin in the way that you and I tend to use that word in this New Testament economy, the parallelism of the verse where a statement is made in the first section and then there is a parallel statement in the second part of the verse, they're meant to say the same thing in a different way. And so you can see here that David is using the word "salvation" in the sense of deliverance. Verse 10, "Who gives salvation to kings," in other words, who gives deliverance to them as shown by the fact that the echoing phrase in verse 10 says, "Who rescues David His servant from the evil sword."

Now what has David done here in these two verses where he says, "I will sing a new song to You. I will sing praises to You, the One who gives deliverance and rescues David His servant from the evil sword." What's he doing here? This is a great testimony of faith. The outcome is so sure in David's mind because he has committed his cause to his God, the outcome is so certain and assured that he does this, he commits himself in advance to thank God for the deliverance that he is going to give to him. David says, "When it's all said and done, Lord, I'm going to sing a new song to You. I will use my musical ability to sing praises to You in thanksgiving for the deliverance that You give." And beloved, a truly Spirit-filled man, this kind of praise, this kind of singing is the natural overflow of a faith-filled, of a word-filled life.

Look at Ephesians 5:18 through 20 with me. Ephesians 5. The Apostle Paul instructing the church is telling us that we are to be controlled by the Spirit, which is another way of saying that we are to be filled with the word of God, as I'll show you in a moment. But for now I just want you to see this, that the instruction to the church beginning in verse 18, "do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit." Instead of being under the influence of alcohol, be under the influence of the Spirit of God. And then he goes on to describe what the results of that will be, what the marks of a Spirit-filled life will be. He says in verse 19, "speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father." You see this exuberant singing, this exuberant joy that comes out from having a heart that is rooted in the word of God, but not just as a matter of private devotion, of

private joy, the one who is filled with the Spirit comes and joins with other people of God in order to do this in a corporate sense. You know, it is impossible, it is ridiculous to talk about someone being a true Spirit-filled Christian who by their own choice and by their own preference lives in isolation and wants nothing to do with the people of God. That is a contradiction in terms. If you are filled with the Spirit, you will long to be with like-minded Christians to share in the joy, to share in the encouragement and to sing praises together to the God who saved you.

Now I need to say a word here because sometimes these messages go beyond our walls. I understand that for some people in some areas, they don't have the opportunity that you and I do here at Truth Community Church. They would love to be in a biblical church that taught the word of God. They would love to be with people like you who share in the things of Christ and a love for Christ and a reverence for his word and the fear of God. They would love that, but they can't because there's just nothing like that anywhere in the surrounding area around them. I realize that some are in that situation but note the distinction from what I was describing, people like that, they want it but right now the opportunity does not seem to be present for them, and so they long for what they can't have. That's not what we're talking about here. What we're talking about is somebody who does not even desire that, who prefers his isolation, who does not want to give of himself to the people of God, who does not care about singing praises or being a source of encouragement to other believers. He's consciously set against it and avoids it because he doesn't want it. That distinction is very important, and what we're saying is that the person that doesn't even want it needs to seriously examine himself to see if he's even in the faith or not, because a Spirit-filled, word-filled person is someone who is going to desire to share in the fellowship with other believers singing and giving thanks to God.

Look over at Colossians, just two books to the right in your Bible. Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians. You see a parallel passage that beginning in verse 12, you see the corporate dynamic of it. "So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other." You see, this is a corporate text. Paul is speaking to those in the church and assuming that they have a matrix, a web of relationships within the body of Christ where they are exercising these spiritual attitudes with one another.

He goes on, "whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you." Now drop down in verse 16. We had seen in Ephesians 5 to be filled with the Spirit, now we see, we get an interpretation from the word of God of what that means, what that's like. It's not a subjective, mystical experience. It's this in verse 16, "Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another," there it is again, the "one another's," each other, "admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God." You see, in Ephesians 5 you're filled with the Spirit and these attitudes flow. In Colossians 3, you're filled with the word of God which the Spirit of God inspired and wrote through the human instruments, and the same spiritual attitudes flow so that you have the word of God producing these attitudes, so that in verse 17, and here's where you see a parallel to the theme expressed by David in his confident pledge, verse 17,

"Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."

Well, with that New Testament elucidation and illumination on the text, go back now to Psalm 144:9 and 10. You can see that being filled with the word of God, being filled with the character of God in his mind, he says, "I'll sing a new song to You. Upon a harp of ten strings, I will sing praises to You." So David was a skilled musician and what he's saying is, "God, I am going to use my musical gifts in order to give glory to You." If you, as a Christian, have been given musical ability, one of the primary things that God has given that to you for is so that you would give glory to him with the talent that he has given to you. But you know it's the same for the rest of us who have no musical ability, and believe me, I am at the front of that line. I have no musical ability whatsoever. I cannot read music. I've never played an instrument and I never will. But you and I, even if we don't have musical ability, we still have to ask the question, what is the talent, what is the ability, what is the giftedness that God has given to me? What do I have by way of time, ability or resources to realize that God has given that to you so that you would consider how to use it for his glory, how to give thanks to him in all things with what he has given to you? This is part of the Christian life is taking an honest assessment, an honest inventory, what do I have, what talents has the Lord given to me, and how can I convert them from human ability into that which is of service to his people and to his kingdom? That's how we have to think about the way that we approach life.

And so here in verses 9 and 10, David says, "I will sing praises to You," and the reason in this context that God is worthy of praise is because he enables kings to gain victory in battle. The kings that belong to God get victory in battle and God is to be praised as a result of it. David is saying, "I am going into war with enemies who are stronger than me and who are deceitful and cannot be trusted," and he says, "God, because You're with me, I know that I'll prevail in this battle and as a result of that I will give You praise." And yet again we see that this is not a prayer of boastfulness, this is not an arrogant man praying. This is a man who is conscious of his need and his dependence upon God as we see in verse 11 when he says this. He says,

11 Rescue me and deliver me out of the hand of aliens, Whose mouth speaks deceit And whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood.

Important principle here: God is able to give the victory to David, God will give the victory to David, but David still asks for it. This is the economy of God. The sovereignty of God, the promises of God to sustain us are real and always in force, but that does not make us negligent, that does not make us self-confident. The effect of that, that that is supposed to have on your heart, is to turn you into a man or woman of dependent prayer. "God, You have promised this and therefore I ask You based on Your promise to do it." You are meant to take the promises of God and exercise them by faith in prayer, not simply neglect them and in presumption, and in a neglect of God, to just go about life without concern for these things. The one who best knows the promises of God is the one who should be most prayerful before him. James says, "You do not have because you do not ask." And one of the things that prayer does as we pray in this way, as you pray in the

midst of your battles, one of the things that prayer is doing is it is preparing your heart for the answer that God will give and preparing your heart to make the connection between the promises beforehand and the deliverance and the blessedness afterwards. You see the promises, you pray for God to be faithful to them, so that when you see his deliverance and you see his answer, your heart has been prepared naturally to give him thanks for what he has done for you. And so the prayer here expresses dependence and trust in this God and that dependence and trust in itself is a way of honoring God in your affliction.

Now look, this applies in church ministry and church life as well, and I just want to take the opportunity. I'm grateful for those of you that pray not only for the individual needs in the congregation, but that pray for the ministry of our church. Look, ministry does not advance without that. We cannot advance a spiritual ministry by carnal means. We cannot do this in the flesh and the natural ability of ourselves. We must be seeking the Lord in prayer as we do, and I'm grateful for those of you that I know pray for the ministry of the church and the ministry of the Pulpit. We all benefit from that. This is the plan and the purpose of God.

So we have seen David's humble trust, we've seen his bold prayer, we've seen his confident pledge, "God, I've prayed and when You answer, I'm going to give You thanks." Now in the final section, the fourth and final section, we see his optimistic petition. His optimistic petition in verses 12 through 15. David looks beyond the battle that is just at hand, he looks beyond the battle to its aftermath as he closes, and we see this in verses 12 through 15. Let's read the whole section and then we'll pick up the verses individually as we go along. Verse 12. He's praying again and he says,

13 Let our garners be full, furnishing every kind of produce, And our flocks bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our fields; 14 Let our cattle bear Without mishap and without loss, Let there be no outcry in our streets! 15 How blessed are the people who are so situated; How blessed are the people whose God is the LORD!

Now remember again, beloved, David is praying as the king. He is praying as the head of the nation, the one who is responsible for their protection and the one who looks out and has a heart of concern for the welfare of his people. And so David looking for victory in the battle, having prayed for that, now is looking to what will come after the battle, you might say. And he looks on the youth in the nation and he says this in verse 12,

12 Let our sons in their youth be as grown-up plants, And our daughters as corner pillars fashioned as for a palace;

He's looking at the next generation and looking at those that will come up after him and what is he doing here? What is he doing here? He's not merely a national leader. He's not merely a military leader. He's a spiritual leader and he has this heart of concern for the young people in his domain and he is seeking God's blessing on them in the midst of his kingdom. What are grown up plants but they are this: grown-up plants are those plants that flourish, that take deep root, whose foliage is bright and beautiful and brings forth

fruit. David is saying, "God, let our sons be like that. Let them grow to maturity. Let them flourish. Let them abound." The reference to daughters "as corner pillars fashioned as for a palace," perhaps a little bit obscure but corner pillars, what do they do in the architecture of great buildings? They add grace to it. They add beauty to it. They add symmetry and lines and a general sense of attractiveness to the palace. David is saying that let our daughters be like that. Let them be beautiful in the midst of the prosperity that you will give to us. Let them adorn the kingdom, you might say. Let our young men be strong and fruitful. Let our daughters adorn the kingdom with their grace and with their beauty.

And so taken together, taken together, what he's doing here is he's asking blessing on the families in the kingdom and he goes on and he asks beyond blessing on the families, he asks for material prosperity in the kingdom. Look at verses 13 and 14. "Let our garners be full, furnishing every kind of produce, And our flocks bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our fields." So there's the produce of agriculture, there's the productivity of the cattle. Verse 14, "Let our cattle bear Without mishap and without loss." And so he's praying that their agriculture would flourish, that the animals which were not pets but were economic necessities for their well-being, that the animals would fruitfully reproduce. And so he's praying for prosperity for his kingdom after the battle is over. "God, when this battle is over, bless our families, bless our economic structures."

And then he goes further and there's this statement at the end of verse 14, which again seems a little bit out of place, but it has its purpose in the prayer of David here. Verse 14, he says, "Let there be no outcry in our streets!" What's he saying there? Why would he ask for that? Well, think about our present day and age. Think about the conflict that is in our streets. Our Supreme Court justices cannot eat a meal in peace without being faced by angry activists. Since the Dobbs decision, we see in our streets, you see in the news, vile, angry pro-abortion crowds looking to influence the direction of the country and protesting against the decisions. What is that? What is the effect of that except to manifest the fact that there is division, there is ungodliness in our society and the conflict of men just shows that there is not peace and that there is not stability in what is around us. And it's painful just to look at the headlines, let alone to read the reports or to see it in live action. The angry protests that we are used to seeing is unsettling, and it is a manifestation of a deeper conflict that takes place within our society. Well, understand that and then you can realize what a great blessing David is asking for from God when he says, "Let there be no outcry in our streets!" David is saying, "Let there be such a peace and unity among our people that there is not public division taking place." He's asking God to unite the people around his own name, around his own blessing. "God, bring us to Yourself. Bless us and keep us, and let us recognize that the blessing is from You." And as we do, we will live in harmony with one another so that there won't be marches in the street, there won't be outcry, there won't be opposition, and the people in the nation, remember, this is coming, this is what he's asking for after the war, after the war is over David says, "Let us appreciate peace. Let us appreciate prosperity and let that appreciation cause us to live together in harmony." The people should appreciate peace because of the preceding war. You know, it reminds me of the news clips that you see of the jubilation at the end of World War II and the celebration in the streets, the war is

over, you know, and we have veterans in our congregation, we have men that have decorated themselves and vindicated and proven themselves in battle in a way that I never have. I have no music. I have no military. I don't have any of this stuff that distinguishes men in that way. But coming back from a victorious war, there was celebration. That's what David's talking about. Bring us through this war to the other side of peace, prosperity and harmony together.

Look, beloved. If the Psalm ended right there, it might seem like a selfish prayer almost, but the last verse guards us from that conclusion. This request is not selfish at all. This is a request made to the glory of God. Look at verse 15. "How blessed are the people who are so situated; How blessed are the people whose God is Yahweh!" Blessing comes to the nation because of its relationship to God and David says, "God, as You give this to us, we will recognize, we will acknowledge that all of this goodness has come from Your hand so that You get the glory." It's not prosperity for prosperity's sake. It's prosperity as a means of giving glory to God and manifesting his goodness to his people as a testimony to the surrounding nations of the supremacy of the God of Israel.

God's deliverance in this war on behalf of David would bring peace and prosperity to those under David's reign but, beloved, the ultimate blessing is not the external prosperity, the ultimate blessing is being a people who belongs to this good and great and gracious God. That's what David is praying for. It's ultimately all to the glory of God. It fits perfectly with what we saw in Colossians 3:17, "Whatever you do in word and deed, do all and give thanks to the glory of God in the name of Christ."

Well, beloved, we don't live in a nation whose God is the Lord, but he's made us his people and he's accomplished a different kind of victory on behalf of those whose faith is in Christ. He's delivered us from sin. He's delivered us from Satan. He has given us peace and spiritual prosperity in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in Christ we have the same kind of bold and confident access that David described in Psalm 144, we have a bold and confident access of our own that is in Christ to the throne of grace. Ephesians 3:12, "Let us approach the throne of grace with bold and confident access." Beloved, don't you see, don't you see that God delights in blessing his people? And because he is like that, because he is good, because he is great, because Christ has fully accomplished redemption on our behalf, we can go to him with bold and confident access, know that he will hear us, know that he will receive us favorably, and know that the outcome will work together for good with certainty to those who love God and are called according to his eternal purpose.

Let's pray.

Yes, Father, how blessed are the people who are so situated. How blessed are the people whose God is the Lord. We thank You for the Lord Jesus Christ who made this reconciliation possible. We pray that You would advance that work of reconciliation in the hearts of those that are here, those that are over watching over the live stream, those that, Father, are outside the walls of our church. Father, may all enter into this great prosperity, this great blessing of being in Christ, of being at peace with a holy God and

living life under His hand in a way that leads surely and ultimately into eternal glory. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

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