

(Through the Bible) Psalms 61-70

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes the importance of trusting in God's salvation and strength, especially in times of desperation and trouble, and encourages us to be uninhibited in our worship and praise.

Duration: 1:24:54

Scripture: Luke 16:19

Topics: "Worship Styles", "Gods Refuge"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker describes the procession of worship in ancient times, where singers and musicians led the way followed by young girls playing timbrels. The speaker reflects on how modern worship has become more structured and regimented. The sermon emphasizes the importance of diversity in worship and suggests that there is room for different forms of expression. The speaker also highlights the power and greatness of God, referencing the biblical story of the parting of the Red Sea. The sermon concludes with the message that when faced with overwhelming circumstances, it is important to turn to God as a place of refuge and strength.

Transcript

Shall we turn now to the 61st Psalm for our beginning of our Bible study this evening, Psalm 61. Hear my cry, O Lord. Now, in the Hebrew, this word for cry is very intense.

It is actually, hear my loud wailing, O Lord. Now, David was the kind of a guy, when he was in trouble, he really let go. Some people are very reserved in their nature.

I'm sort of a reserved kind of a person, but David wasn't. I mean, when he was in trouble, he wanted everybody to know, and especially God. And so, he would wail out, hear my wailing, my loud cries, O God, attend unto my prayer.

It is thought that David probably wrote this psalm at the time that he had been in exile as a result of the rebellion of Absalom. David had fled across the Jordan River when Absalom came from Hebron with an army to take Jerusalem. David did not want to encounter his son in battle.

He didn't want to be fighting against his own son. And so, rather than making a stand there in Jerusalem, which would have been the natural thing to do, because Jerusalem was a walled city, it was a difficult city to take, and he could have no doubt withstood Absalom. But yet, because of his son and all, and his own

broken heart, he just fled from Jerusalem with his armies and with those that followed after him, and just sort of capitulated to Absalom, and fled across Jordan.

And now he is crying unto God, hear my cry, O God, attend unto my prayer. From the end of the earth, driven out of the land of promise, he now feels that he is out to the end of the earth. And if we would put that in our common vernacular, we might say, the end of the world.

And sometimes we do have those experiences which we feel are the end of the world kind of an experience. In other words, man, this is it. This is the end of the world.

This is as far as I can go. This is as deep as I can get. This is it.

You know, from the end of the world, or the end of the earth, will I cry unto Thee. When my heart is overwhelmed, many things can cause our hearts to be overwhelmed. The loss of loved ones, financial problems, the loss of a job, the loss of health.

So many things can cause our hearts to be overwhelmed. What do I do? When I get to the end of the proverbial rope, when I have no place else to turn, where do I turn? What do I do? Every one of us are driven by circumstances, sooner or later, to this end of the road type of an experience. Where I have no place else to go, no place else to turn.

And where I turn at this point is so important. Some people turn to pills. Some people turn to the bottle.

Some people turn to a gun and just try to end it all. When my heart is overwhelmed, David said, lead me to the rock that is higher than I. There is a place of refuge. There is a place of strength.

There is a place of security that we can have in Christ. The rock that is higher than I. A place where I can be sheltered from the storm. Sheltered from the enemy.

Protected. A rock is a symbol of strength in the Bible. The Bible says concerning Jehovah, He is our rock.

Deuteronomy 32. In 1 Corinthians chapter 10, Paul said concerning the rock from which the water flowed in the wilderness, and that rock was Christ. That life-giving source, the rock, smitten from whence life flows to all men.

So when my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I. It is so comforting to know that at my extremity, I can turn to God. There is a verse of the song, He Giveth More Grace, that beautifully describes that when we have exhausted our store of endurance, when our strength is gone ere the day is half through, when we've reached the end of our hoarded resources, our Father's full giving has only begun. His grace has no limits.

His love has no measure. His power has no boundary known unto men, for out of His infinite riches in Jesus, He giveth and giveth and giveth again. And when I've come to the end, when I'm overwhelmed, and I cry unto Him, that rock that is higher than I, at that point of my extremity, God has just begun His glorious work within my life.

God brought many people of the Bible to the end of the road. I think of the angel wrestling with Jacob all night. It was a bad day for Jacob.

He had just left his father-in-law, and that was a bad scene. They had had words, and their leaving wasn't on the best of terms, even though when they departed from each other, they said, Miss Pa, which means the Lord watch between me and thee while we're absent one from the other. Yet, that isn't as pleasant as it sounds when we put it into English.

In the Hebrew, it literally means, you've ripped me off, and now you're leaving with all of my goods that you've ripped off from me. And I can't keep my eye on you anymore, because you're going to be gone. You've gone with my daughters.

You've gone with my flocks, my herds, and I can't watch you anymore, so may God watch over you while we're absent one from the other, you crook. And it had been a bad scene. Jacob didn't know how he was going to fare out of it.

In fact, he wouldn't have fared so well unless God had been with him. And the night before his father-in-law caught up with him, the Lord said to his father-in-law, Don't you touch Jacob. You keep your hands off of him.

And so, because Laban was afraid of God, he didn't touch Jacob. He said, Listen, I have the power to really do you hurt, but last night the Lord told me not to touch you. And so, but I mean, it was a strained experience.

Now, Jacob has left his father-in-law. They've gone back toward Babylon. And Jacob receives word.

Your brother is coming with a host of men to meet you. But that isn't really a welcome home party kind of a thing that you're anticipating or looking for. Because the last time you saw Esau, seventeen years ago, he was saying, As soon as I get a chance, I'm going to kill that rat.

And his brother had been threatening to murder him. Now, if his brother was coming to welcome him home, he wouldn't need two or three hundred men with him in a welcome party. So Jacob knew that trouble was brewing and he was troubled.

That was the night that there came an angel of the Lord and wrestled with Jacob all night. The Lord was trying to bring Jacob to the end of the road. You see, he was going to need all kinds of strength tomorrow.

He's going to be meeting Esau. He doesn't know what the situation is going to be. It could be perilous.

And so all night, a night when you especially need sleep, you need strength for tomorrow. He's wrestling with this angel. Now, Jacob at this point is a ninety six year old man.

I mean, he's no spring chicken anymore. And in the morning, as the day began to break, still wrestling. Man, this guy is tenacious.

He's not going to give up. So the angel touched him in his thigh and caused his muscle to shrivel and cripple them. And the angel said to Jacob, let me go before the day breaks.

And Jacob at this point was hanging on with all that he had. But he broke down and he began to weep. Now, Genesis doesn't tell us that he wept, but Hosea tells us that Jacob now was in tears.

He was a broken man. And he said, I will not let you go until you bless me. But that wasn't a demand.

That was a plea. It was a plea with tears. Please don't go without blessing me.

He's defeated now. God has him where he wants him. Jacob, the name means heel catcher.

A cove. For when he was born, he had hold of his brother's heel. So they said, oh, look at that heel catcher.

And the name stuck. What is your name? My name's heel catcher. You won't be called heel catcher anymore.

You're going to be called governed by God, Israel. His life was changed. No longer the supplanter, no longer the deceiver.

Now a man, Israel governed by God. What a difference. But God had to bring him to the end of the road to bring about those necessary changes.

And so the last cry of desperation that came forth with weeping and tears from Jacob was really the first cry of victory. So often that is true in our lives when my heart is overwhelmed. When I turn to God out of desperation, that becomes the beginning of God's glorious victory in my life as he leads me to the rock that is higher than I. For you have been a shelter for me and a strong tower from the enemy, the shelter of the rock, strong tower.

I will abide in thy tabernacle forever. I will trust in the covert or the covering of thy wings. For thou, oh God, has heard my vows.

You have given me the heritage of those that fear thy name and you will prolong the king's life and the years as many generations. He shall abide before God forever. Oh, prepare mercy and truth which may preserve him.

And so will I sing praise unto thy name forever that I may daily perform my vows. And so David ends the psalm with more or less words of confidence. God, you're going to take care of it.

The rock that is higher than I will see me through. He'll bring me back. I'll dwell in your tabernacle.

I will dwell before thee. Psalm 62, another psalm of David. Truly, my soul waiteth upon God and from him comes my salvation.

He only is my rock. So remember the last one, lead me to the rock that is higher than I. Now David declares, He only is my rock and my salvation. He is my defense.

I shall not be greatly moved. How long will you imagine mischief against a man? You shall be slain. All of you as a bowing wall, you shall be and as a tottering fence.

They only consult to cast him down from his excellency. They delight in lies. They bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly.

My soul wait thou only upon God for my expectation is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation. He is my defense.

I shall not be moved. Now verse two and verse six are very similar. In fact, they're exactly the same with the exception of one word.

But that one word makes a vast difference in the two Psalms. And it shows that just in that space of time, there was a great increase in the faith of David. It's amazing how that when we begin to bring to God our problems, that even through prayer, our faith is increased.

Even while in prayer, we begin to gain faith and begin to be victorious and begin to experience that victory of the Lord. And this is expressed here in David's song between verse two and six. He only is my rock and my salvation.

He is my defense. And in verse two, he said, I shall not be greatly moved. And then he repeats the same thing in verse six, but now he leaves out the greatly.

I shall not be moved. He didn't have enough faith in verse two. Well, they might move me, but not very far.

But as his faith is increased in the Lord, they're not going to move me at all. I shall not be moved. Oh, how glorious it is when we finally bring things to God in prayer and how God can immediately just bring a change of our own attitude concerning the situation.

There have been many times when as the pastor of Calvary Chapel, I have been absolutely terrified at what God was doing. I stood in fear and in amazement of the work of the Lord. It was necessary for us to step out in faith a few times that just absolutely frightened me.

When we had to move from the chapel a block away and when we purchased this 10 acres here. And when I was contemplating the cost of putting up all of these buildings, I was absolutely terrified. The cost of the improvement of the property, putting up the buildings.

I had never pastored a large church in all my life. I didn't know anything about pastoring a large church. I had no experience for my job.

I've been pastoring small churches all of my life. And suddenly we were in a rapidly growing situation where we had to get this property, where we had to build new buildings. We were in triple services.

We had enlarged the thing. We were putting up seats in the patio and there was no room to stand even in the patio and we had to do something. So we purchased this 10 acres.

I was trying to assure the board that we could always sell off five acres and get our money back because it was such a good buy and surely we'll never need more than five acres. Of course, that's how great my faith was for what God wanted to do. That's why you can't really look and say, well, our pastor had great faith, you know.

No way. I was backpedaling as fast as I could go. And when I would drive up Sunflower Avenue from the other church, getting ready to go home, and I'd be sitting there in that left turn lane waiting for the arrow, I would look over at this 10 acres of ground and my heart was overwhelmed.

I'll tell you, I'd say, well, I'd say, Lord, what are we going to do? And you know, thoughts would go through my mind like this. Here you are in a facility that's paid for. Here you are with \$60,000 in the bank.

Here you are just comfortable over here. Well, it wasn't comfortable because it was so crowded, but here you are and things are really cooking, you know. And now you're going to plunge into an expense, \$300,000 for just the lot, \$125,000 just to put in the parking and the street improvements.

And that doesn't even start the buildings. And what if it doesn't come through? What if the attendance drops off? What if things go bad? Then look at the big debt and all. And I'd say, Lord, what if it doesn't go through? What if things drop off? What if? And the Lord would say to me while I was sitting waiting for the arrow, whose church is it? And I'd say, it's your church, Lord.

And he said, then why are you worrying? If my church goes broke, if my church goes bankrupt, no problem to you. It's not your church. Why are you worrying? And you know, before the arrow would turn green, I'd have the victory.

Up over the freeway singing, boy, I mean, no worry. It's his church. If the thing goes down the tube, nothing off of me, you know.

If you'll bring your needs to the Lord, even as you are bringing them, the Spirit of God will minister to you. And he will plant that faith in your heart. And you can go in prayer from the place of, I shall not be greatly moved to, I shall not be moved.

Because God is sustaining me and taking care of me and keeping me. In God is my salvation and my glory, the rock of my strength. And so, this figure of the rock continuing through the next psalm here.

My refuge is in God. Trust in Him at all times, ye people. Pour out your heart before Him.

God is a refuge for us. So, good exhortation. Trust in Him because He is our salvation, because He is our rock, because He is our strength and our refuge.

Trust in Him at all times. Pour out your heart before Him. Surely men of low degree are emptiness and men of high degree are a lie.

If you laid them in a balance, they are altogether lighter than nothing. So, the esteem of man. Men of low degree are emptiness, men of high degree are a lie.

Put them all in the balances, both low and high, and they're less than nothing. Trust not in oppression and become not vain in robbery. If riches increase, set not your heart upon them.

I think that that is an excellent exhortation. Number one, I don't think that we should actually be seeking riches as such. Promotion comes neither from the East or the West.

Promotion comes from the Lord. And they that will be rich or will to be rich, fall into diverse or diverse types of lust and temptations which damn men's souls in perdition. How hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man or a man who trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of heaven. Labor not to be rich, the scripture said. We are actually to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

All these things will be added. But should God seek, among other things, to add riches to you? If riches increase, and they may, God may bless you financially. But if He does, don't set your heart upon the riches.

God had spoken once, twice I've heard this, that power belongs to God. Also unto thee, O Lord, belongs mercy, for you render to every man according to his work. Psalm 63 is the Psalm of David when he was in

the wilderness of Judah.

Now, from Jerusalem west lies the coastal plains, fertile valleys, beautiful lush orange groves and apricot and pear and peach orchards and all. From Jerusalem east lies the Judean wilderness. Just outside of Jerusalem, just beyond Bethany, you begin to drop down into that great African rift to the area of the Dead Sea, 1200 feet below sea level at its surface.

And that area from Jerusalem east gets very little rain, maybe about an inch a year. And so it is quite a wilderness area and it is known as the Judean wilderness. David spent quite a bit of time in the Judean wilderness fleeing from Saul.

O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee, my soul thirsteth for thee. And I'll tell you, you can get thirsty down in that Judean wilderness. Actually, Bishop Pike died of thirst there in the Judean wilderness in his quest for the historic Christ.

Too bad he wasn't looking for the living Christ, he probably would still be around. My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is. I desire to see thy power and thy glory so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.

So David is using the barrenness of the wilderness to speak actually of the barrenness of his own soul. And there are times it seems when our souls become very barren and very parched, where we long again to feel the presence of God, to see and to feel that power of God working in us once more. I desire to see thy power and thy glory as I've seen in the sanctuary because thy loving kindness is better than life.

My lips shall praise thee. Thus will I bless thee while I live and I will lift up my hands in thy name. And so David lifted up his hands in the name of the Lord to worship God and to praise Him.

Now we, it seems, become very stilted in our worship and we oftentimes become so formal. Some of you have maybe never just lifted up your hands in the name of the Lord to worship the Lord or to praise Him. And there are exhortations in Scripture lifting up holy hands and all.

And one thing about the Jewish people that is really beautiful is they are very uninhibited in their worship and in their praise. Even there at the Western Wall today, it's always fascinating to go and to watch them as they are in their prayers and in their worship and they are uninhibited in their worship and in their praises. They, I don't know, have sort of a traditional kind of a bowing of the head and all.

And we've noticed it even with the little boys that they'll have their prayer book and as they're reading their prayers, even the little kids will start rocking, you know, with the prayer book as they're reading their prayers to the Lord. And some of the rabbis down there at the Wall, they really get into it. I mean, they really almost dance, you know, just getting going back and forth, you know, as they're reading their prayers and they get loud.

And it's a very interesting thing to watch these people in their uninhibited worship. But we want to be proper. And yet David said, I will lift up my hands in thy name.

My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips. When I remember thee upon my bed and meditate on thee in the night watches. If you have problem with insomnia, use it as an advantage to just meditate on the Lord in the night watches because thou has been my help.

Therefore, in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice. My soul followeth hard after thee, thy right hand upholdeth me. But those that seek my soul to destroy it shall go down into the lower parts of the earth.

They shall fall by the sword. They shall be a portion for foxes, but the king shall rejoice in God. Everyone that's worth by him shall glory, but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.

Psalm 64, another Psalm of David. Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer, preserve my life from the fear of the enemy. You know, fear is a horrible thing and fear can actually get hold of a person's life and be a very disability force within a person's life.

Preserve me from fear. Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked, from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity who sharpened their tongue like a sword and they bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even their bitter words. And so here David now pictures his enemies that are going around talking about him and sharpen their tongues to cut him to pieces with their mouths.

And they take their bows and they shoot the bitter words at him that they may shoot in secret at the perfect. Suddenly do they shoot at him and they fear not. They encourage themselves in an evil matter.

They commune of laying their traps privately. They say, who is going to see them? And they search out iniquities. They accomplish a diligent search, both the inward thought of every one of them and the heart is deep, but God shall shoot at them with an arrow.

Suddenly they shall be wounded. And so they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves. All that see shall flee away and all men shall fear and shall declare the work of God for they shall wisely consider of his doing.

The righteous shall be glad in the Lord and shall trust in him and all the upright in heart shall glory. So a prayer of David for preservation from his enemies, for protection, those that were seeking to destroy him with their words. Oh God, turn their devices against them.

Be my defense. All those that trust in the Lord and all the upright in heart shall glory. Psalm 65 is another Psalm of David.

And this Psalm looks forward to the glorious kingdom age when Jesus is reigning upon the earth. And so this is a prophetic Psalm. Going on into the next stage that is fast approaching.

Praise waiteth for thee, oh God, in Zion and unto thee shall the vow be performed. Oh thou that hearest prayer unto thee shall all flesh come. Every knee shall bow.

Every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord to the glory of God, the father unto thee. All flesh shall come. Iniquities prevail against me as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.

Blessed is the man whom thou choosest and causes to approach unto thee that he may dwell in thy courts. We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple. By terrible things, and the word terrible here is an old English word that has lost or changed its meaning through time.

So that now terrible to us has a whole different implications than it had when it was first translated. The word would better be translated now in our English word as awesome. So because we think of terrible being something that is horrible and all, it doesn't give us the true idea of the Hebrew word.

So wherever you read terrible, his terrible acts, if you would translate that as awesome, it will give you a much better indication of the Hebrew. By awesome things in righteousness will you answer us, O God of our salvation, who art the confidence of all at the ends of the earth and of them that are afar off upon the sea, which by his strength setteth fast the mountains being girded with power, which stilleth the noise of the seas and the noise of their ways and the tumult of the people. They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens.

Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and the evening to rejoice. Thou visitest the earth and waterest it. Thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water.

Thou preparest them corn when thou hast so provided for it. For thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly. Thou settlest the furrows thereof.

Thou makest it soft with showers. Thou bless the springing thereof. You crown the year with thy goodness and thy paths drop fatness.

They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness and the little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks and the valleys also are covered over with corn. They shall shout for joy.

They also sing. So the glorious kingdom age, when the earth again is bringing forth abundantly to the glory of God. When Christ is reigning, there in Zion and praise is being offered unto him in the courts of his holy temple there in Jerusalem.

How God by his awesome work has brought righteousness upon the earth and now is filling the earth with fruit. The kingdom has come. Psalm 66.

Make a joyful noise unto God all ye lands. Sing forth the honor of his name. Make his praise glorious.

Sing forth the honor of the name of the Lord. Make his praise glorious so that men would praise the Lord, the scripture said, for his glorious works. Say unto God, how awesome art thou in thy works through the greatness of thy power shall your enemies submit themselves unto you.

All the earth shall worship you and shall sing unto you. They shall sing to thy name. And here again, every knee shall bow.

Every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord to the glory of God, the father. All of the earth shall worship and shall sing unto thee and shall sing to thy name. God has highly exalted him, giving him a name that is above every name that at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, every tongue shall confess.

Come and see the works of God. He's awesome in his doing toward the children of men. He turned the sea into dry land.

They went through the flood on foot and there did we rejoice in him. So take a look at what God has done. Dried up the red sea so that his people were able to come through on dry land.

He rules by his power forever. His eyes behold the nations. Let not the rebellious exalt themselves.

Oh, bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard, which holds our soul in life and allows not our feet to be moved. For you, O God, have proved us. You have tried us as silver is tried.

You brought us into the net and you laid affliction upon our loins. You have caused men to ride over our heads. We went through the fire, through the water, but you brought us out into a wealthy place.

And so God took us through the fire. God took us through the water, but they were all necessary as God was seeking really to purge us, to purify our lives that he might bring us into that place of abundance in Christ. Jesus said, I am the vine, you're the branches, every branch in me that bringeth forth fruit.

He purges, the word purge is cleanses. He washes it. Now, if you go over to Israel today and through the area between Bethlehem and Hebron, the valley of Eshkol, the area where Joshua and Caleb picked a cluster of grapes that was so big that they tied it onto a stick that they carried between them.

There in the valley of Eshkol grow some of the most delicious grapes in all the world. And it is interesting that these grape vines grow on the ground. You'll see these big stalks and they put rocks under them to prop them up, maybe eight inches or so, but they grow on the ground.

They don't set up the terraces or anything for them or the wires and all, but they let them grow on the ground. But they're fabulous grapes. But in growing on the ground, as the grapes are developing during the summertime, they will come along and they will take these bunches of grapes that are lying there in the ground and they will lift them up and they will wash them in order that they might develop even fuller and better, that they might get more fruit.

If they just stay on the ground, those that are lying on the ground will sort of rot. But they'll lift them up and they'll prop them up. They'll wash them.

And Jesus said, and every branch of me that bringeth forth fruit, He washes it that it might bring forth more fruit. Now you are clean through the word that I have spoken unto you. There is a process of God in our lives of washing, cleansing.

There is also the process of God in our lives of that purifying through fire, as silver or gold is refined. That refining process of God, the end result, the producing of a more quality kind of a fruit for His glory. Because basically that's what God is looking for from your life, that you'll bring forth fruit for His glory.

God wants to work in you. God desires to do a work in your life, but never is God satisfied with just working in you. The work of God is in me first.

That's necessary. The husbandman must be the first partaker of the fruit. But God is working in me in order that having worked in me, He may now work through me to touch the needy world around me.

So God works in you what He can do for you in order that He might do through you in helping others who are in need. So the work of God in me is, first of all, subjective. That which He is desiring to do in my life, but always with God there's the objective in view, that which He can do through my life in touching others.

And so we are to bless God and make the voice of His praise heard. He will not allow your feet to be moved. He has proved us and tried us as silver in order that He might bring forth that fruit from our lives, that purity within.

That He might bring you into the wealthy place. Oh, how rich I am in Christ. Oh, the riches of God's glorious grace in Christ Jesus.

I will go to your house with burnt offerings. And the burnt offerings were the offerings of consecration. So I will go to your house with offerings of the consecration, God, where I consecrate my life to you.

I will pay thee my vows, which my lips have uttered and my mouth has spoken when I was in trouble. That's when vows are usually made to God. When a person is in trouble, I have found that there's nothing like trying to surf in a stormy surf, you know, when it's really running high to cause you to make vows to the Lord.

I've been up on top of some of those waves looking down. I said, Lord, if you get me out of this, I promise I'll go home. Vows when I was in trouble, Lord, just get me out of this mess and I'll serve you.

Lord, just help me to get out of here. Now go to church. I'll do anything, Lord, help me.

Well, the Lord listens to those vows that you make when you're in trouble. And after he's done his part, he expects you to do your part. I will pay the vows, which my lips uttered when I was in trouble.

I will offer unto thee the burnt sacrifices of the fatlings with the incense of rams. I will offer bullocks with goats. Come in here all ye that fear God and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.

I cried unto him with my mouth. He was extolled with my tongue. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me, but verily God hath heard me.

He hath attended to the voice of my prayer. Now he says, come and let me tell you what God has done for me. He has heard, he has attended to the voice of my prayer, but he said, if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.

A lot of times we wonder why our prayers are not answered. And one of the reasons for which prayers are sometimes not answered is because of the iniquity in our lives. In Isaiah 59, God declared, Behold, the hand of the Lord is not short that he cannot save, neither is his ear heavy that he cannot hear.

But your sins have separated you from God. In other words, the problem in prayer is not always on the upper end, which we are prone to usually think when our prayers aren't being answered. What's the matter with God? Why isn't God answering my prayer? Is God deaf? Is he having problems hearing me or what's going wrong? And we usually think that the problem lies on the upper end.

Quite often the problem lies on the lower end. My prayers are coming forth from a deceitful heart, from a wicked life. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord doesn't hear me when I pray.

That is, if I am regarding and plotting and planning evil and iniquity, your sins have separated, Isaiah said, between you and your God. Does God hear the prayer of a sinner? The president of the Southern Baptist Church, I guess, got in trouble recently by a statement that he made concerning whose prayers God hears. In the New Testament, there was a man who was born blind.

And Jesus came to him and he said, would you like to see? He said, sure would. So Jesus spit on the ground, made some mud, put it in his eyes and he said, go down to the pool of Siloam and wash that out. So the man went down to the pool of Siloam.

When he washed out his eyes, he could see. Now it happened on the Sabbath day and so it got the Jews upset. And they said to the man, how is it that you can see? And he told them the story.

This man came and he put this mud in my eye and told me to go and wash. And he said, when I washed, I could see. They said, well, who was it? He said, I don't know.

They said, well, we know he's got to be a sinful man because he told you to violate the Sabbath. He said, well, whether he's a sinner or not, I don't know. But all I know is where I was blind.

Now I can see. But he said, if he were a sinful man, then how is it that God heard his prayers? Because we know that God does not hear the prayer of the sinners. Now that particular statement cannot be taken for doctrinal truth because this is the statement of a blind man in a conversation with the Pharisees.

It's just quoting the statement of this man. The truth of the matter is that God does hear the prayer of sinners or else you would all still be sinners. But God hears you when you said, oh God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

He hears that prayer. How much more? I don't know. David said, if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord does not hear me when I pray.

God said through Isaiah, it isn't that my ear is heavy that I cannot hear, but your sins have separated. They've severed connections between you and God. So David is rejoicing in the fact that the Lord heard his prayer.

Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer nor his mercy from me. Psalm 67, God be merciful unto us and bless us and cause his face to shine upon us. Three things, be merciful unto us, bless us, cause his face to shine upon us.

Now there are some people that would find fault with this prayer. I never like to ask God for anything personal. That's so idealistic, it stinks.

I want God to bless me. I want God to be merciful unto me and I want God's face to shine upon my life. But the motive behind it, that thy way may be known upon the earth, thy saving help among all nations.

Let the people praise thee, O God, let all the people praise thee. O God, be merciful, cause your face to shine upon me. God bless me in order that your way may be known upon the earth and your saving help, that I might be the blessing then actually to all nations, that all people may praise thee.

O let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you shall judge the people righteously and govern the nations of the earth. Jesus is coming to judge the nations righteously. In the 25th chapter of Matthew, we are told of the coming again of Jesus Christ to judge the earth.

This was declared by Enoch in the book of Enoch, the prophecy of Enoch. Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints to execute judgment upon the earth and also to reign righteously as he governs over the nations upon the earth. Now there are many people that are concerned with the judgment of God.

What about a little child that dies before it is old enough to know Jesus Christ? What about people that have never heard of Jesus Christ? What about? Now the Bible doesn't give us the specifics of his judgment, what he is going to do in specific cases, but it does tell us that he is going to judge the world righteously. So whatever God does will be righteous, it will be fair, it will be just. I don't know what God is going to do.

There are a lot of unknowables, a lot of questions, a lot of imponderables. Now I do know some things. I do know that if I am walking with God, my children under the age of the accountability are safe.

I know that. What about the children of those parents that are sinners? I don't know that. That I'm going to have to wait to find out, but I don't like to live in a question mark.

And thus I like to be sure. Now I know for certainty how God is going to judge in certain areas. Those that believe on Jesus Christ, I know what's going to happen to them.

But what about those that don't? Well, I don't know for sure, but I don't want to live in that kind of a question mark. I want to live on the safe side, that which I know. I want to be found in Christ, not having my own righteousness, but the righteousness which is of Christ through faith.

Let the people praise thee, O God, let all the people praise thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase. Now this is interesting.

Let all the people praise thee, then shall the earth yield her increase. More and more we are discovering the effect of man's attitudes upon plants. They are now connecting some of these lie detector things to plants to watch the reaction.

For plants react much like human beings in that they have measurable responses upon these lie detector machines. And even as if you are holding the electrodes of a lie detector, as you start to tell a lie, your pulse begins to pick up and moisture begins to exude. And these little electrodes pick it up and you get this movement on the graph from this sensitive needle that's moving back and forth.

And so a man who is skilled can ask you a series of questions and tell you which ones that you were telling the lie and which ones you're telling the truth and by the galvanic responses and so forth. Now they're finding that plants have similar kind of responses and they respond to words of praise. It's interesting.

Now I didn't know this but there and of course it's just a very this it's very early in the experimental stage. I have watched some experiments. I've watched the plants respond and and it's interesting to watch the plant responses on these machines.

But when we were living in Newport Beach we had a hibiscus that I planted out in the front yard and every time I come out the door I'd turn and say praise the Lord hibiscus. And when I would enter the house I'd turn over to it and I'd say praise the Lord hibiscus. And you know that was the most blossoming hibiscus you've ever seen in your life.

Beautiful double orange blossoms covered constantly year round. That thing grew and prospered. It was the most healthy plant and most beautiful blossoming plant and I'd just come out and say praise the Lord hibiscus.

Let the people praise thee O God. Let all the people praise thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase.

Isn't that wild? The earth responding. Plants responding to praise unto the Lord. Now if I come into your house and I see all your plants withered and wilted you're going to be suspect.

God shall bless us and all the ends of the earth shall reverence him. The psalm begins with a prayer for blessing and the ends with an assurance of that blessing. Psalm 68.

Let God arise. Let his enemies be scattered. Let them also that hate him flee before him.

As smoke is driven away so drive them away. As wax melts before the fire so let the wicked perish at the presence of God. So sort of a thing against the enemies of God.

Let them be scattered. Let them flee. As smoke sort of just disappears is driven by the wind so drive them.

As wax melts before the fire so let them perish in the presence of God. But let the righteous be glad. Let them rejoice before God.

Yea let them exceedingly rejoice. All right righteous. Be glad.

Rejoice before God. In fact exceedingly rejoice. Sing unto God.

Sing praises to his name. Extol him that writeth upon the heavens by his name Yah and rejoice before him. The Yah.

The I am. And of course in the name you have then Yahshua, Yahosephat. So many different contractions with the Yah.

But to us the important one is Yahshua which is the Hebrew for Jesus. Extol him by his name Yah and rejoice before him. A father of the fatherless, a judge of the widows is God in his holy habitation.

God setteth the solitary in families. He brings out those which are bound with chains but the rebellious dwell in a dry land. O God when you went forth before your people when you did march through the wilderness the earth shook the heavens dropped at your the presence of God.

Even Sinai itself moved at the presence of God and the God of Israel. Now O God did send a plentiful rain whereby you did confirm your inheritance when it was weary. Your congregation hath dwelt therein.

Thou O God is prepared of thy goodness for the poor. The Lord gave his word and great was the company of those that published it. Kings of armies did flee apace and she that carried it home divided the spoil.

Though you have lying among the pots yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver and her feathers with yellow gold. When the almighty scattered kings and it was white as snow and salmon. The hill of God is as the hill of Bashan and the high hill is the hill of Bashan.

Why leap ye ye high hills? This is the hill which God desired to dwell in yea the Lord will dwell in it forever. In other words he sees the other hills as sort of being jealous and all because God has chosen really the hill of Zion to dwell in. Why leap ye high hills? You know we're so high it should be us and all.

The chariots of God are twenty thousand even thousands of angels. The Lord is among them as in Sinai in the holy place. Thou hast ascended on high.

Now we have here a prophecy concerning Jesus Christ quoted by Paul in the fourth chapter of the book of Ephesians. Thou hast ascended on high. Thou hast led captivity captive.

Thou hast received gifts for men. Yea for the rebellious also that the Lord God may dwell among them. Paul in quoting this said he who has ascended is the same one who first of all descended into the lower parts of the earth.

And when he ascended he led the captivity captive and gave gifts unto men and to some apostles and to some prophets and to some evangelists and to some pastor teachers for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry for the building up of the body of Christ. Until we all come into the unity of faith complete man the knowledge of the Son of God under the measure of the stature of the fullness of the image of Christ. And so Paul quotes this he has ascended on high he led captivity captive.

But to lead captivity captive he went first of all in the lower parts of the earth to free those that were captive. You see prior to the death of Jesus Christ those Old Testament saints could not enter into the glory of heaven. It was necessary that their sins be put away something that the sacrifices of the Old Testament could not do.

It was impossible that their sins could be put away by the blood of bulls or goats. All of the Old Testament sacrifices only were pointing to the better way that God would provide when he sent his only begotten son to be a lamb offering sin offering a sacrifice for our sins. So we are redeemed not with corruptible things such as silver and gold from our vain empty life but with a precious blood of Jesus Christ who was slain as a lamb without spot or without blemish.

So because the blood of bulls and goats could not put away sin but only speak of the better sacrifice which was to come their sins were covered and they when they died were held by death in the grave in Sheol or in Hades in hell. But hell prior to the death of Christ was separated into two compartments. One compartment was of suffering for the unbelievers.

The other was a compartment of comfort by Abraham for those who were trusting in the promises of God and in the fulfillment of God's promise. Now these Old Testament men of faith all died in faith not having received the promise but seeing it afar off they held on to it and they claimed that they were just strangers and pilgrims here and they were just journeying through looking for a city which hath foundation is maker and builder is God. Now when Jesus died he descended into hell.

He who has ascended is the one who first of all descended into the lower parts of the earth and when he ascended it is then that he led captivity captive. In the book of Isaiah chapter 61 the prophecy concerning Christ it said he is going to set at liberty those that are bound and open the prison doors to those that are bound. Set at liberty those that are chained open the prison doors to those that are bound.

Those that were bound by death waiting with Abraham for the promise of God when Jesus died he descended into hell and he preached to those souls that were in prison. The glorious fulfillment of God's promise the redemptive program is complete the blood has been shed whereby your sins are now put away once and for all. Now with their sins put away they can ascend on into the heavenly scene.

So when he ascended he led the captives from their captivity and then he gave gifts unto men. That is within the church. He gave gifted men as apostles as prophets as evangelists as pastor teachers for the perfecting of the saints.

So Paul quotes this in Ephesians four and of course it just ties together a whole group of scriptures. Luke the 16th chapter Acts chapter 2 and Ephesians chapter 4 and the reference there in Peter where he went and preached to those souls in prison and Isaiah 61. So you can look those up and find them tied together.

Blessed be the Lord who daily loads us with benefits. I love that. Oh blessed be the Lord who daily just loads me down with the benefits of being his servant benefits of walking with him.

Oh what benefits are mine in Christ Jesus even the God of our salvation. He that is our God is the God of salvation and unto God the Lord belongs the issues of death. Our times are actually in God's hands.

It's appointed unto man wants to die and unto God the Lord belong the issues of death. But God shall wound the head of his enemies and the hairy scalp of such as those that go on still in his trespasses. The Lord said I will bring again from Bashan and I will bring my people again from the depths of the sea that thy foot may be dipped in the blood of your enemies and the tongue of the dogs in the same.

They have seen thy goings oh God even the goings of my God my king in the sanctuary. The singers went before the players on the instruments and now here he is describing the worship of God in the sanctuary. You've seen the going of God in the sanctuary.

Now he's going to describe a little bit. First of all in the procession the singers are in the front. Following them are those players of instruments the cymbals the trumpets and all.

Followed after them were the young girls playing on their their timbrels. Bless you God in the congregations even the Lord from the fountain of Israel. So he sees now and of course you know we've come to sort of a stilted form of the worship of God.

We gather together we sit in pews we sit in rows we're regimented and all and we come and we have sort of a lecture on the word of God. But but I'm sure that there's an area for a diversity in our in our worship. You know where they were entering in even.

Singers were in the front as they were entering singing praises unto God. Followed by the band playing their instruments. Followed by the drill team the young damsels with their timbrels as they were playing on the timbrels unto the Lord.

When you go to Jerusalem on Friday evening at the beginning of Sabbath we always like to spend one Friday evening at the western wall as the people gather to worship the Lord on the Sabbath day. And really the excitement of the evening is when these young Jewish boys come down from the school and and they come down about four across several rows of them their arms over each other and they come down chanting and dancing. Sort of a you know a little dance step and all their arms around each other and they're chanting.

And of course this is the highlight of the evening when these kids come on down to worship the Lord there by the western wall. And and they do this little dance step coming in and then as they get down by the wall they start then their songs and and their chants as they sort of get in a a circle and they start dancing around the circle various dances and all unto the Lord. And then after about a half hour of this kind of worship and praise then they put their arms around each other and they dance back up the hill chanting and singing their praises unto God as they go back up the hill.

And it's a very moving touching sight. And I think that this is exciting. I think there's a place for a more of a demonstrative worship unto God.

You know we're coming into the sanctuary to worship him. Oh it should be an exciting experience. Enter into his courts with thanksgiving or into his presence with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise.

Be thankful unto him and bless his name. You see people gathering you know and they're honking their horns and you know I'm going to church you know all the day. And by the time we get here we really need it.

Rather than coming in with a joyful heart a heart that's overflowing with praises unto God in anticipation of worshiping him. Now he looks at these at the congregation that's assembled and oh there's little Benjamin with their ruler. The small tribe of Benjamin over there.

And there they are in their place with their ruler. And there are the princes of Judah and their council. And there are the princes of Zebulun.

And there over there are the princes of Naphtali. Thy God hath commanded thy strength. Strengthen oh God that which you have wrought for us.

Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring their presence unto thee. This of course is again looking forward to the kingdom age. When the kings of the earth come and offer their presence unto Christ.

Rebuke the company of spearmen the multitude of the bulls with the calves of the people till everyone submit himself with pieces of silver. Scatter thou the people that delight in war. Princes shall come out of Egypt.

Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands unto God. Sing unto God ye kingdoms of the earth. The glorious kingdom age.

Oh sing praises unto the Lord. To him that writeth upon the heaven of heavens which were of old. Lo he doth send out his voice.

And that a mighty voice ascribes strength unto God. His excellency is over Israel. His strength is in the clouds.

Oh God thou art awesome out of thy holy places. The God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people. Blessed be God.

So the glorious worship of God in the kingdom age is going to be exciting. The singers coming in. The instruments.

The girls with their timbrels and all. And the congregation as they rise to worship the Lord. The 69th Psalm is a messianic psalm.

That is it is a psalm of prophecy concerning Jesus Christ. And there are many scriptures within the psalm here that make reference to Jesus Christ. Save me oh God for the waters are coming to my soul.

I sink deep in deep mire where there is no standing. I am come into deep waters where the floods overflow me. I'm weary of my crying.

My throat is dried. My eyes fail while I wait for God. They that hate me without cause are more than the hairs of my head.

They that would destroy me being my enemies wrongfully are mighty. Then I restored that which I took not away. Oh God thou knowest my foolishness and my sins are not hid from thee.

Let not them that wait on thee oh Lord God of hosts be ashamed for my sake. Let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake. Oh God of Israel because for thy sake I have borne reproach.

Shame hath covered my face. Again referring to Christ for God's sake he bore the reproach. Shame covered his face.

I am become a stranger to my brethren and an alien to my mother's children. It said that his brothers did not believe in him. They thought he was crazy actually.

For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up. And the reproaches of them that reproach thee are fallen upon me. You remember when Jesus went into the temple and he saw them making merchandise and he took and made a scourge a whip and he began to drive out the money changers and those that were selling doves and said get out of here.

You've made my father's house a den of thieves. And then they remembered the scripture that was written of him that said the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up. The zeal for the house of God just it ate him up when he saw the terrible things that were being done in the house of God in the name of God.

I wonder what would be his reaction today if he should come and visit some of the bingo parties and other functions that have been devised to make money for the church. The zeal of mine house hath eaten me up. The reproaches of them that reproach thee fall upon me.

When I wept and chastened my soul with fasting that was to my reproach. I made sackcloth also my garment. I became a proverb to them.

They that sit in the gate speak against me and I was the song of drunkards. He is still the song of drunkards. The blasphemy when a person becomes intoxicated so often.

But as for me my prayer is unto thee O Lord in an acceptable time O God in the multitude of thy mercy hear me in the truth of thy salvation. Some believe that this is actually the prayer in the garden of Gethsemane. Deliver me out of the mire and let me not sink.

Let me be delivered from them that hate me and out of the deep waters. You remember he said if it is possible let this cup pass from me. Let not the water flood overflow me neither let the deep swallow me up and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.

Hear me O Lord for thy loving kindness is good. Turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies and hide not thy face from thy servant for I am in trouble. Hear me speedily.

Draw nigh unto my soul and redeem it. Deliver me because of mine enemies for thou has known my reproach and my shame and my dishonor. Mine adversaries are all before thee.

Reproach hath broken my heart and I am full of heaviness. The fact that when Jesus was pierced with a sword there came forth blood and water indicates actually that his death was by a heart rupture. The fact that there was water that came forth with the blood indicates death by heart rupture.

They broke reproach he said hath broken my heart. I am full of heaviness. Also there is something to that bloody sweat that indicates much the same and I look for some to take pity.

You remember in the garden of Gethsemane and in great heaviness he sweat as it were great drops of blood flowing to the ground and I look for some to take pity. You remember he came back to his disciples but they were sleeping. I look for some to take pity but there was none for comforters.

I found none. Oh Peter could you not watch with me one hour. Watch and pray.

I look for someone to have pity. I look for comforters but I found none. They gave me gall for my meat and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

You remember that when Jesus cried I thirst someone took a sponge and filled it with vinegar and put it to his lips. Let their table become a snare before them and that which should have been for their welfare let it become a trap. Paul quotes this in Romans the eleventh chapter concerning Israel.

Let their eyes be darkened that they see not and make their loins to continually shake the judgment that should come upon the Jews for the rejection of Jesus. Pour out thy indignation upon them and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their habitation be desolate.

Now in the first chapter of Acts Peter quotes this as referring to Judas Iscariot and he puts it together with another psalm. Let their habitation be desolate and let another take his bishopric. And so this is quoted concerning Judas Iscariot by Peter in Acts chapter one.

And let none dwell in their tents for they persecute him whom you have smitten and they talk to the grief of those whom you have wounded. Add iniquity unto their iniquity and let them not come into thy righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living and not be written with the righteous.

But I am poor and sorrowful let thy salvation O God set me up on high. I will praise the name of God with a song and I will magnify him with thanksgiving. This also shall please the Lord better than an ox or a bullock that hath horns and hooves.

The humble shall see this and be glad and your heart shall live that seek God. For the Lord heareth the poor and despise not the prisoners. Let the heaven and the earth praise him and the seas and everything that moves therein.

For God will save Zion and build the cities of Judah that they may dwell there and have it in possession. The seed also of his servants shall inherit it and they that love his name shall dwell therein. The 70th Psalm.

Make haste O God to deliver me. Make haste to help me O Lord. I can identify with that prayer.

God seems to move so slowly at times when I'm in trouble and I want God to hurry. Make haste O God to help me. Let them be ashamed and confounded that seek after my soul.

Let them be turned backward and put to confusion that desire my hurt. Let them be turned back for a reward of their shame that say aha aha. Now there's something real mean and dirty about that.

I don't know what it is, but all the way through the Bible where these phrase the phrase aha aha is used. It's always in a very derogatory sense. It's just really about the meanest thing you could have said you

know.

Aha aha. Now I've had them say aha to me before you know but and it doesn't feel good. It's more or less like I told you so look what's happening.

Aha aha you know sort of gloating over the problems that you're facing. Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee and let such as love thy salvation say continually let God be magnified. That's a phrase that we should be using more.

We say praise the Lord and all but there is a phrase that should be on the lips of God's people. Those that love his salvation let them say continually let God be magnified. Now you should add that to your spiritual jargon list.

Let God be magnified. Let's say it. Let God be magnified.

All right it sounds good. That I am poor and needy make haste to make haste unto me O God. Thou art my help and my deliverer.

O Lord make no tearing. So he begins the psalm with hurry up God and ends it with hurry up God. Don't tear it.

Let's get on the help here and get on with the help for me. Oh let God be magnified in the lives of his people through the week. Let's stand.

May the Lord enrich you in all good things in Christ Jesus. May he fill you with the knowledge of his love and his grace. And may you walk in fellowship with him through the week.

And may the Lord continue his work in your life as he draws you unto himself. As he cleanses you through his word. As he fits you and prepares you for that work that he would have you to do in touching the world around you.

God bless you and God strengthen you and keep you ever in his love and in his will in Jesus name.

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