

# (Through the Bible) Psalms 71-80

by Chuck Smith

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*The sermon explores the themes of hope, protection, and the resurrection in Psalms 71-72, and the importance of having a solid foundation in scriptural truth in the face of adversity.*

**Duration:** 1:29:48

**Scripture:** Psalm 73:18-19, Psalm 78:72 - 79:4, Psalm 79:13 - 80:1, Psalm 89:14, Psalm 119:11

**Topics:** "Gods Majesty", "Spiritual Guidance"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by describing the power and majesty of God, highlighting His control over nature and His guidance of His people. The speaker then shifts to addressing the audience, encouraging them to focus on the Lord rather than themselves in order to experience victory. The speaker references the history of God's faithfulness to His people and laments the defilement of the holy temple and the mistreatment of God's servants. The speaker expresses a longing for God's anger to cease and acknowledges personal feelings of envy and foolishness. However, the speaker ultimately finds comfort in the continuous presence and guidance of God, expressing gratitude for the assurance of being received into glory.

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## Transcript

Shall we turn now in our Bibles to Psalm 71. Psalm 71 is the psalm of the aged man. Probably David as he was getting up into years and his reddish colored hair had turned gray.

David's life was a tough life. He had many devoted friends, but also many avowed enemies. And David is always praying concerning those enemies that are seeking his hurt, seeking to destroy him.

And even up into the elder years as the Lord said to David, the sword shall not depart from thy house. And so, in the elder years of David, there was still that problem of the sword, that problem of enemies. And so, a psalm of again calling upon the Lord for His help, for His protection, even in his older years.

In Thee, O Lord, do I put my trust. Let me never be put to confusion. Deliver me in Thy righteousness and cause me to escape.

Incline Thine ear and save me. Be Thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort. For Thou has given commandment to save me, for Thou art my rock and my fortress.

David's prayer that God would be his strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort. We read in the Scriptures, the name Jehovah is a strong tower. The righteous runneth into it and is safe.

How many times have we run into the protection of the name of the Lord? How many times when faced by danger, just automatically almost, the name of Jesus escapes our lips. We're facing a real problem and we just sort of unconsciously say, oh Jesus, the strong tower, I run into it. We're a place of safety, a place of refuge.

Thou art my rock, my fortress, my dwelling place. And how wonderful it is when we have found that glorious dwelling place in Christ Jesus, of which the psalmist wrote, he that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. And so he declares the Lord is his habitation.

I continually resort, constantly finding that place of help and strength, comfort and refuge in the Lord. I continually resort. Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked and out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.

For thou art my hope, O Lord my God. Thou art my trust from my youth. So God is not just a place of hope, but he is also the place of trust.

I've learned to trust in the Lord, but I'm also hoping for his deliverance. By thee have I been held up from the womb. You took me out of my mother's womb.

My praise shall be continually of thee. For I am as a wonder unto many, but thou art my strong refuge. Let my mouth be filled with thy praise and with thy honor all the day.

Cast me not off in the time of old age." And so here's a hint to the time of the writing of the psalm, and later on he'll refer to his gray hairs. Forsake me not when my strength fails, the weakening position of the old age. For mine enemies speak against me and they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together.

Saying, God has forsaken him, persecute and take him, for there is none to deliver him. O God, be not far from me. O my God, make haste for my help.

Let them be confounded and consumed that are adversaries to my soul. Let them be covered with reproach and dishonor that seek my hurt. So again, David's prayers for his enemies, that God would take care of them.

But again, the tragedy that in the older years there are still those enemies of David. No rest because of the sin with Bathsheba, the sword is not to depart from his house. But I will hope continually and will yet praise thee more and more.

David, a man after God's own heart, even though he was oppressed by the enemy, yet he was close to the heart of God. And part of the reason for that is David's continual praise. Lord, I will praise you more and more.

My mouth shall show forth your righteousness and thy salvation all the day, for I know not the numbers. I will go in the strength of the Lord God. I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.

O God, thou hast taught me from my youth and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. Now also when I am old and gray-haired, O God, forsake me not until I have showed thy strength unto this generation and thy power unto all that is to come. Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high.

Who has done great things, O God, who is likened to thee? Thou which has showed me great and sore troubles shall quicken me again and shall bring me up again from the depths of the earth. So, here is David's declaration concerning his confidence in the resurrection. Lord, you will make me alive again.

You will bring me up from the depths of the earth. Again, we read, and it is, of course, declared to be prophetic concerning Christ. Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither will you allow your Holy One to seek corruption.

But there was that belief in the resurrection from the dead. You will make me alive again. You will bring my soul up from the depths of the earth.

The Bible teaches that the place of the grave, Sheol or Hades, is more than just the grave where a body is buried, a sepulcher, a sarcophagus where a body is placed. But there is a place of consciousness in the heart of the earth. And when David said, you will make me alive again, that you shall bring me up again from the depths of the earth, he is actually making reference to this place where the spirit of man went upon death.

Prior to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, there were two areas divided by a gulf, one a place of comfort with Abraham, the other a place of torment. Jesus, when asked for a sign, said, a wicked and an adulterous generation seeks after a sign, but no sign will be given except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the depths or in the heart of the earth.

So Jesus went down and preached to those souls that were imprisoned, and he led them from that captivity. 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 captives from their captivity, fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah 61.

So David makes mention here of his hope in the resurrection. You will not find much in the Old Testament written concerning the resurrection from the dead. Job made mention, I know that though the worms eat this body, yet in my flesh I'm going to see him when he stands upon the earth in the last days and so forth.

And his hope for the resurrection. And yet Job vacillated so much. But David, here he is old now and he is thinking of death, but you're going to make me alive again.

Thou shalt increase my greatness and comfort me on every side. I will also praise thee with a psaltery, even the truth, O my God. Unto thee will I sing with a harp, O thou holy one of Israel.

My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee and my soul which thou hast redeemed. My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long, for they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame that seek my hurt. So David speaking of praising the Lord with a psaltery, that is praising him with the music, praising him with the song accompanied by the harp, singing of God, greatly rejoicing and talking of God's righteousness all day long.

Psalms 72 is entitled, A Psalm for Solomon. As we read this, we find that it goes far beyond Solomon. It actually is a prophecy of that son that was promised to David, even Jesus Christ, who would sit upon the throne of David and rule it and establish it in order, in justice and in righteousness from henceforth forever.

And so Psalm 72 transcends beyond just David's prayer for his son Solomon, and it becomes an expression of Jesus Christ in the kingdom age upon the throne of David. And so there is that dual

interpretation of Psalm 72. Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son.

When Jesus Christ comes again, the first order is that of judging the earth, gathering together the nations for judgment. Give judgment unto thy king and thy righteousness to the king's son. He shall judge thy people with righteousness and the poor with judgment.

The mountains shall bring peace to the people and the little hills by righteousness. He shall judge the poor of the people. He shall save the children of the needy and shall break in pieces the oppressor.

They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure throughout all generations. He shall come down like rain upon mown grass as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish and the abundance of peace so long as the moon endures.

So you see, even by the words of the Psalm, they shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure throughout all generations. So it carries far beyond Solomon to that righteous king that God had promised to sit upon the throne of David and to establish it from henceforth even forever as long as the moon endures. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth.

Again, the kingdom of God covering the entire earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and the Isles shall bring presents.

The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. All kings shall fall down before him. All nations shall serve him.

Every knee shall bow. Every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord to the glory of God the Father. And the kings of the earth will gather and bring gifts from all over the world where his kingdom extends and will bring the praises of the people unto him in Jerusalem.

The glorious kingdom age. Now when you read of the kings of the earth coming and gathering and paying their homage and bringing their gifts, who are those kings of the earth? Revelation chapter 1 verse 7 unto him who loved us and who hath made us unto our God the kingdom of priest and we shall reign with him upon the earth. Revelation chapter 5 the song of the redeemed saints in heaven worthy is the lamb to take the scroll and loose the seals for thou was slain and have redeemed us by thy blood out of every nation, tribe, tongue, kindred and people and hath made us unto our God kings and priests and we shall reign with thee upon the earth.

The church. So this mention of the kings falling down before him is actually a reference to you, his church and your place with him in the kingdom age. For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also and him that hath no helper.

He shall spare the poor and the needy and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence and precious shall their blood be in his sight. And he shall live and to him shall be given the gold of Sheba.

Prayer also shall be made for him continually and daily shall he be praised. There shall be a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains. The fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon and they of the city shall flourish like the grass of the earth.

His name shall endure forever. His name shall be continued as long as the sun and men shall be blessed in him and all nations shall call him blessed. Blessed be Jehovah God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things and blessed be his glorious name forever and let the whole earth be filled with his glory.

Amen and amen. The prayers of David, the son of Jesse are ended. So this brings us to the end of the second book of Psalms.

As we mentioned to you, the Psalms are actually divided into five books and each of the books ends with a doxology. And here we find the doxology. The whole earth be filled with his glory.

Amen and amen. Just sort of, you know, the capstone on the thing, the conclusion. And thus the prayers of David, the son of Jesse are ended.

So as we enter into book three of the Psalms, we now get into a series of Psalms that are ascribed to Asaph. Now, Asaph was the chief musician. He was appointed by David.

As head over the musicians, whether it is the name of an actual person or the title for the chief musician is not known. It is quite possible that Asaph is just the title for the chief musician. And thus the Psalms of Asaph would be the Psalm of the chief musician and not necessarily of the same person.

Some of these Psalms ascribed here to Asaph are Psalms that definitely go beyond the Davidic period of rain, even into the areas of the desolation. Psalms that were written after the nation of Israel was devastated by their enemies, which, of course, goes then beyond Solomon's reign. Psalm 73 begins with an affirmation of a basic foundational truth concerning God.

Truly, God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. It is important that we have basic foundational truths that are undergirding us. Because we all of us are going to face experiences of life that we will not understand.

Hard, painful experiences, experiences that will challenge God's goodness and God's love. If God is good, then why did God allow this tragedy to happen to me? If God loves me, then why would he allow me to have to experience this heartache? I do not understand all of the things that happen to me in life. And I have made it a practice, whenever I am faced with a situation I cannot understand, I fall back on what I do understand.

There are certain foundational truths upon which I fall back when I am faced with circumstances that I cannot understand in my life. And what I do understand is that God is good, that God loves me, and that all things are working together for good to those who love God. And thus, by faith, I accept my adverse circumstances, though I don't understand them.

I accept them knowing that it is God that has brought these circumstances. It is God who is in the control of my life, for I have committed my life to him. And I know that God is working in these circumstances, though they may seem bitter and adverse, yet God is working a good and perfect plan in my life.

And I just live with it, I just accept, well Lord, I'll just leave this with you, that you will bring out of this your good purpose and your good plan for me. If I did not have the basic foundations underneath, then when the troubles come, when I get into these kind of circumstances, I would be totally wiped out. And you do see people that they seem to be really going great in their walk with the Lord, and then adversity arises, and they just can't seem to handle the adversity.

The reason is that they have not really had a solid foundation in scriptural truth. These people who are being encouraged to believe God for healing in all circumstances, that give no place for any sickness, when sickness does come or when death does come, they're not able to handle it because they don't have a proper foundation in God's Word and in the truth. And thus, when the superstructure is shaken, they've got nothing to fall back on.

Jesus said, a foolish man built his house upon the sand, a wise man built his house upon the rock, and the rain came, the floods rose. The house that was built upon the sand perished, but the house that was built upon the rock stood. Luke's gospel tells us that the wise man dug deep and built his house upon the rock.

And it's important that we lay a good foundation for our relationship with God, and that good foundation has to be based upon proper concepts of God that are brought to us through the Word of God. So, God is good, I know that. I must remember that, because that truth will be challenged by the experiences of my life.

But underneath, I know that God is good. So, the psalmist begins with that basic foundation. I know that God is good, but as for me, different story.

My feet were almost gone, my steps had well nigh slipped. I almost had it, I was almost wiped out, I was slipping, I was going under. For I was envious at the foolish when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

We are told in the law not to covet. In the New Testament, we are told that envy is one of the works of the flesh. It is easy if I get my eyes off of God and onto people to become envious at the prosperity of the wicked.

It would be exciting to have your own personal jet. It would be exciting to have a yacht all equipped and ready to go anytime you went down to the dock. They'd salute you and bring out your chair, you know, and you'd say, I want to go to Catalina this weekend, or let's go to Baja or something, you know, and just to have the whole thing, you know, where you had that kind of power and possessions, to have a beautiful estate with manicured grounds.

And you see these kind of things and when we have a hard time paying our rent, we think it's not fair that those people can spend two million dollars for a stupid painting and I can't buy a Big Mac. And we begin to be envious at the prosperity of the wicked. Here I am, Lord, I love you.

I go to church faithfully. I pray. I pay my vows.

I'm obedient. And yet I have this hardship. Yet I seem to always be in trouble, financial problems.

My kids are sick. And here are these people. They don't even think about you.

They blaspheme your name. They're ungodly. They're unrighteous.

And yet they're blessed. They're prosperous. They have more than their heart could wish.

And you start looking around at the inequities within the world, and it is difficult to handle. It would seem that if God is good, he would bless good people and smite the wicked. I was envious at the foolish when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

And then he begins to express the things that he was observing. Yet it must be recognized and admitted that the things that he is saying about the wicked are not always true. But Satan has a way of putting and planting a thought in our minds and then building on it.

And as he begins to build this thought in our mind, he begins to exaggerate the thing. So we begin to make rash statements of generalization that aren't really true. But I don't want you to tell me they're not true.

I don't want you to tell me I'm generalizing because I'm upset and I want to just blow the thing, you know, blow it up bigger than it really is. And we do have a tendency when we are upset to blow the situation to a greater degree than is actually true. But that's just one of the games that Satan plays in our minds.

There are no bands in their death, but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued as other men. Now, this is not true.

Wicked people have weakness. They become sick. They become infirmed, just like everybody else.

Look at Howard Hughes. Now, I don't mean to infer that he's wicked, but he didn't have any real testimony that I ever heard of real faith in trusting God. There were bands in his death.

There were years of drug addiction. He did have troubles. He was plagued.

And yet, you know, you pick out isolated cases and then you exaggerate that. Therefore, pride compasses them about as a chain and violence covers them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness.

They have more than their heart could wish. And yet, these men are corrupt. They speak wickedly.

They speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens. They speak against God.

And their tongue walketh through the earth. Therefore, as people return hither, waters of a full cup are wrung out to them. They've got all they could ever wish, but yet people are always bringing them gifts and, you know, catering to them.

And they say, how does God know? And is their knowledge in the most high? In other words, they deny the existence of God. Behold, these are the ungodly who prosper in the world, and they increase with riches. Now, the psalmist, upon looking at this and upon building this case in his mind, was led to false conclusions.

And that, of course, is always the purpose that Satan has in building up in your mind situations like this. The purpose is to lead you to false conclusions. The false conclusion that the psalmist was led to is, verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain.

Or, it doesn't pay to try to live the right kind of a life. It doesn't pay to be good. It doesn't pay to seek to be righteous.

The wicked are the ones that get all the breaks. The wicked are the ones that have it made. It doesn't really pay to try to live right.

I've washed my hands in innocency for all day long. I'm plagued. I'm chastened every morning.

I've got problems surrounding me all the time. Now, if I say I speak thus, then I would offend against the generation of thy children. And when I sought to know this, it was too painful for me.

Life does have painful experiences. And there are some things that are so painful we don't like to think about them. In fact, there are some things that are so painful we've got to somehow put them out of our mind.

When I sought to know this, when I sought to understand the things in my life, it was just too painful. I couldn't do it. It is wrong to think that you're going to understand everything that happens in your life, why it happened.

We always seek and search for the rationale why God allowed a Christian lady to be raped and murdered in her own home. And so we try to rationalize. You can't.

There's no way we can understand that. We know that God is good. Why God would allow that, we don't know.

We can't understand that. There's no sense of trying to pretend that we do. There are many experiences that we will face in life that we do not understand.

The ways of God or the whys of God. And so often a person comes up and says to me, Chuck, I don't know why God. And I say, don't go any further.

I don't either. I don't know the whys of God. I'm not God.

I can't tell you why God allows certain things. When I was first in the ministry, I was under a heavy, heavy burden because I felt I had to have an answer for everybody because I was young. I just had, you know, people ask me questions.

I had to have an answer. Even if I didn't know one, I had to figure one out, frame one. Under all kinds of pressure to give answers.

I was trying to answer why God was doing various things. Thank God now that I'm older, people don't expect me to know everything anymore. And so I have a lot of questions that people ask me and I just flatly answer, I don't know.

And it's been so comfortable since I've matured to the place where I can answer honestly and say, I don't know. I don't know all the answers. Far from it.

I do not know the whys of God. It's very hard because I do represent God to people. As a minister of Jesus Christ, I seek to represent Him.

And people say, but why did God allow this to happen to my little girl? Why did God allow this to happen to my wife? I don't know. Painful. I seek to understand it is too painful for me.

And so the psalmist, his foot was slipping. He was almost gone. As his mind was dealing with these things, it just about wiped him out.

Till I went into the sanctuary of God and then I saw their end. Going into the sanctuary of God gave to him a broadened perspective. And that is always the chief value of coming into the house of God.

The chief value of gathering together with the word of God is that we come into the consciousness of the eternal and our perspective is broadened. Because my problem in trying to deal with the issues of my life is that I'm always looking at them in the narrow perspective of today, tomorrow and next week. The present discomfort that I feel, the present sorrow that I experience, the present hardship that I'm going through.

And I'm always interested in immediate relief from this present situation, from the pain or the grief or the hurt. Whereas when God is dealing in my life, He is dealing with the eternal in view. God is looking down into eternity and He's looking at the eternal values.

And it is better for me to go through life maimed and enter into eternity with Him than to go through life whole and to go to hell. And because God is dealing with eternity in view, sometimes He has to take away from me that which I count dear, that which I hold precious, in order that He might work in my life His eternal purpose and plan. But I'm always looking at just the fact that I've lost it.

I don't want to lose it. I, you know, wanted that. Oh God, why did you take it away? And God could see what it was doing in detracting me from my walk and fellowship with Him.

And thus He removed it because He was interested in my eternal well-being. And when I come into the sanctuary of God, coming into the consciousness of the eternal, then I see things in a clear perspective or I see them now in the eternal. As Paul said, we look not at the things which are seen, they are temporal.

We look at the things which are not seen because they are eternal. And the present sufferings then are not worthy to be compared with the glory that's going to be revealed in us. Even Jesus, who for the joy, the eternal joy that was set before Him, endured the cross though He despised the shame.

Sometimes I'm given a cross that I despise. I don't want to carry it. Father, if it's possible, let this cup pass from me.

I don't want to go through this experience. I don't want to suffer this loss. And yet God lays it upon me because He's looking down to the glory that shall be revealed.

He's looking down the line to the eternal benefits and welfare that He has in mind for me in His eternal kingdom. And so the psalmist almost tripped up until he went into the sanctuary of God. And then he got the broader view.

Surely, you did set them in slippery places. You cast them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation as in a moment they are utterly consumed with terrors? This is a portion of the text that Jonathan Edwards used in his sermon, Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.

Perhaps one of the most powerful sermons that has ever been preached on the American continent by old Jonathan Edwards, a Puritan. He was nearsighted and he had written the sermon out and he read it just right up close because he was nearsighted. But that sermon was so powerful.

Before he was finished, sinners were crawling down the aisles, crying out in agony, begging God for mercy. Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God. He took this, surely thou has set them in slippery places.

And he likened to sinners as walking on an icy plank over the pit of hell with nothing to hold on to. At any moment, your foot is going to slip and you'll be plunged down into destruction. God is under no obligation

to keep you alive.

God is under no obligation to hold you up. So the psalmist saw the end of the life of wickedness. It's not so good.

It's not so pleasant. Oh, how foolish to envy them. Look what their destiny is.

How foolish to be jealous of them. Look what is in store. They are consumed with terrors.

As a dream, when one awakes, so, O Lord, when you awake, you will despise their image. Thus, my heart was grieved. I was grieved with my own stupidity, with my own folly.

Imagine about to be tripped up over something like that. Oh my, how foolish I was and ignorant. I was like a beast before you.

That is, without reasoning capacities, without logic. I was just like an animal with no reasoning capacities. For nevertheless, here I was envious of them, but they are devoid of you.

I am with you continually. You hold me by my right hand. You guide me with your counsel.

And at the end, you're going to receive me into glory. Oh, what a wonderful life I really have. God is with me, holding me by the right hand, guiding me with his counsel.

And when I get to the end of the road, he's going to receive me into glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? There is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart fails, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

For lo, they that are far from thee shall perish. Thou hast destroyed all them that go a-whoring from thee, but it's good for me to draw near to God. I have put my trust in Jehovah God, that I may declare all thy works." The psalmist almost slipped, but he discovered that the wicked was the one who was really in slippery places, not him.

Psalms 74 is one of those psalms where the psalmist again is speaking of the desolation that has come and the apparent quietness of God in the face of the desolation. God didn't do anything to stop it. God has allowed this desolation and God's hand is not yet seen as far as the delivering of the people.

O God, why hast thou cast us off forever? Why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of your pasture? Remember thy congregation which thou hast purchased of old, the rod of thine inheritance which thou hast redeemed, this Mount Zion where you have dwelt. Lift up your feet unto the perpetual desolations, even all that the enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary. For thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations.

They set up their incense for signs. A man was famous according to as he had lifted up the axes upon the thick trees, but now they are breaking down the carved work thereof at once with axes and hammers. And so he speaks of the desolation that had come to the house of God.

How they had taken the axe and hammers and had destroyed the beautiful carved works that were there in the sanctuary of God. And how they then set it on fire and they defiled by casting down the dwelling place of thy name to the ground. And so the Holy of Holies was cast down.

They said in their hearts, let us destroy them together. They have burned up all of the synagogues of God in the land. And we see not our signs.

There is no more any prophet, neither is there any among us that knows how long. We don't know how long this desolation is going to go on. Oh God, how long shall the adversary reproach? Shall the enemy blaspheme thy name forever? Why do you withdraw your hand, even your right hand? Pluck it out of your bosom, Lord.

Get busy, God. Help us. For God is my King of all, working salvation in the midst of the earth.

You did divide the sea by your strength. You broke the heads of the dragons in the waters. You broke the heads of the Leviathan in places and gave him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness.

You did cleave the fountain and the flood and you dried up the mighty rivers. The day is thine. The night is also yours.

You have prepared the light and the sun. You have set all the borders of the earth. You have made summer and winter.

Remember this, that the enemy hath reproached, oh Jehovah, and that the foolish people have blasphemed thy name. Oh, deliver not the soul of your true love unto the multitude of the wicked. Forget not the congregation of the poor forever.

Have respect unto the covenant, for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty. Oh, let not the oppressed return to shame. Let the poor and needy praise thy name.

Arise, oh God, clean thy own cause. Remember how the foolish man reproaches thee daily. Forget not the voice of thine enemies, the tumult of those that rise up against thee increases continually.

And so the Psalmist, crying out unto God because of the desolations of the temples, the synagogues, by the enemies, the oppression of God's people. Psalm 75, unto thee, oh God, do we give thanks. Unto thee do we give thanks.

For that thy name is near, thy wondrous works declare. When I shall receive the congregation, I will judge uprightly. This is, of course, God answering now.

The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved. I bear up the pillars of it. And so many of times in the Psalms we find God's response to the cry of the Psalmist.

And it is always a beautiful thing when God responds directly to the prayer, to the cry. And this happens in many Psalms. Psalm 32, Psalm 75, Psalm 91, where God himself responds.

I said to the fools, deal not foolishly unto the wicked, lift not up the horn, lift not up your horn on high, speak not with a stiff neck. For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge, and he puts down one and sets up another.

This, to me, shows the folly of our endeavor to promote ourselves or to promote our own efforts, or even to promote the program of God. So many churches have promotional programs. I was in that trap for years.

In fact, we were sharing with some pastors in Portland this week, as I was asked to speak at a conference up there. And I had breakfast with some pastors, and this one pastor was telling me, we were talking about contests and giveaways and gimmicks and all to get people to church. And he was telling me how this one pastor that pastored the church prior to his moving there advertised that they were going to give a baby chick to everyone who came to church on Easter Sunday morning.

And so they brought the chicks, I guess, there the night before, and they said when they came into the church, it smelled like a barn on Easter Sunday. And there was one lady whose husband was unsaved, and they had been praying for this man for years. But he was just bitter and stubborn and hard, and he just wouldn't go to church.

But finally, this Easter Sunday, he consented to go to church. And of course, everybody was rejoicing and praising the Lord that her husband finally consented to go to church. So, the next week when the pastor saw this lady, he said, well, how did your husband enjoy this service? And she said, oh, pastor, when we came up to the door, they were having so much problem passing the chicks out.

Someone asked him if he wouldn't help pass out chicks. And so he never did get into the service. He spent the whole time passing out chicks.

How tragic. When we try to promote God, or to promote the work of God, or even try to promote ourselves. God said promotion doesn't come from the east, from the west, from the south.

God is the judge. He's the one that raises up and He's the one that puts down. And oh, that we would learn to just let the Lord do the promotion if He so desires.

But we would not try to promote ourselves or the work of God. For in the hand of the Lord, there is a cup and the wine is red. It is full of mixture and He pours out the same, but the dregs thereof, all of the wicked of the earth shall wring them out and drink them.

But I will declare forever, I will sing praises to the God of Jacob. All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off, but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted. God's cup of wrath, the wine is red.

In the book of Revelation, we read also of that wine cup of God's wrath in chapter 14, where we read, the third angel followed them saying with a loud voice, if any man worship the beast, his image receive his mark in his forehead or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the lamb. That wine of the fierceness of God's wrath that is to be poured out upon the earth. And so referred to here in the Psalm and also made mention of in Revelation.

Psalm 76, in Judah is God known. His name is great in Israel. Judah, of course, was the southern kingdom.

Israel was the northern kingdom. In Salem also is his tabernacle. That would be Jerusalem and his dwelling place in mountain Zion.

And there break he the arrows of the bow, the shield, the sword and the battle. Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey. The stout-hearted are spoiled.

They have slept their sleep and none of the men of might have found their hands. At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and the horse are cast into a dead sleep. Thou even thou art to be feared.

And who may stand in thy sight when once you are angry, you did cause judgment to be heard from heaven and the earth feared and was still. When God arose to judgment to save the meek of the earth, surely the wrath of men shall praise thee. The remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.

Vow and pay unto the Lord your God that all be round about him. Bring presence unto him that ought to be feared. He shall cut off the spirit of princes.

He is awesome to the kings of the earth. Psalm 77, I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with a voice, and he gave ear unto me. Now notice in the 77th Psalm how the first part of it is centered around I. You might find it beneficial to underline every time he refers to my or I. It, the whole first part centers around I. I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice, and he gave ear unto me.

In the day of my trouble, I sought the Lord. My sore ran in the night and ceased not. My soul was refused to be comforted.

I remembered God and was troubled. I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Thou holdest mine eyes waking.

I am so troubled that I cannot speak. I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times. I call to remembrance my song in the night.

I commune with mine own heart, and my spirit made diligent search. Will the Lord cast off forever, and will he be favorable no more? Is his mercy clean gone forever? Doth his promise fail forevermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he, in anger, shut up his tender mercies? When my attention is always on myself, I do lose that consciousness of God, and it does seem that I am apart from him. And I said, This is my infirmity, but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.

I will remember the works of the Lord. Surely I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also of all thy work and talk of thy doings.

And now he gets turned around in verse 12, as he begins now to refer to God, thy work and thy doings. And thus the psalm ends in a brighter note than it begins, because now the emphasis is taken off of me and put upon God. How many times, they say prayer changes things, and I believe this, but how many times prayer changes me and changes my attitudes? While I'm in prayer, God is working and changing my heart and my attitude.

We had a friend in Huntington Beach who was an alcoholic, and the family was always in an uproar. He'd get to drinking and, you know, just everything would break loose. And there were always the threats of divorce and, you know, threats of everything.

So one night the doorbell rang. I went to the door and here he stood, and he said, I need help. My wife's going to leave me.

My family doesn't love me. And I just, you know, had a big fight, tore the phone off the wall, and all. And I need help.

I need God, but there's no one who will pray me through. Well, I didn't know what he meant to pray him through, what he was trying to pray through. But he said, no one will just pray with me long enough.

And so I accepted that as a challenge. And so I said, well, let's go over to the church. We were living right next door to it at the time.

And I said, I'll pray with you just as long as you need prayer. So he went over. We went over together actually.

Of course, he smelled like the brewery itself. And we knelt down and he began to pray. And I knelt beside him and I began to pray.

But I was listening to his prayer. And it was, oh God, you know how they haven't been treating me right. You know, Lord, you know how they are so mean to me and they don't understand me.

And just, it was just, Lord, you know, you know them and how bad they've been and so forth. And he went on for an hour telling the Lord how bad, you know, the family was and how mistreated he was and how unfortunate and, you know, everything. And after an hour, I noticed there became, there came a change in the prayer.

God, my life is really messed up. Lord, I haven't been serving you. I know I should serve you.

God, I'm sorry that I haven't been serving you. And I failed you, God. And I repent, Lord, and I'm sorry.

All right, now we're getting somewhere. We finally have prayed through and I found out what is praying through, all the garbage that he had in his heart towards the family. Now he began to deal with the issues of his own heart.

And after about an hour of praying this way, then his prayers changed again and they were sort of, oh Lord, I thank you for your help. Lord, I thank you that you love me. Lord, I thank you.

Father, thank you. And then pretty soon he was sleeping. So I went back to the office and got a blanket and I covered him and I went home.

And when I got home, my wife said, well, how did it go? And I said, well, I don't know for sure, but I left him sleeping in the Lord. And I relayed to her how there was an obvious change in the whole tone of his prayer, which sounded good. Next morning, I went over to the church and he was already gone.

So I still didn't know how it went. But that evening at five o'clock, the doorbell rang again. And there he was, spruced up suit, looking great.

He says, what time does church start this evening? Anyhow, God did a real work change in his life. But when it was, when he got his eyes off of himself and onto God, that God began to work. And that is always true.

We need to get our eyes off of ourselves, off of our situation, off of our problem. We are so self-centered. And it's usually reflected so much in our prayers.

I, I, I, I, I, me, me, me. But when we can get our eyes off of ourselves and begin to focus on God, then is when God can really work. Before I was born, my cousin died of spinal meningitis, who lived just two

blocks away from my family in Ventura, or from where my family was building their new home.

And my sister evidently was exposed by her cousin, and she too had spinal meningitis. And for all apparent signals, had died. She had gone into convulsions, her eyes rolled back in her head, her jaw locked.

She ceased breathing. My mother had been a lifelong Baptist, but on the way to the Baptist church, she was passing by a Pentecostal church where she used to sometimes stop in and enjoyed their services and didn't make it always to the Baptist church because it was two blocks further up the street. And when she saw her little daughter lying there in that rigid position, she knew it was too late for doctors to help.

And she went running up the street to this Pentecostal church because she knew that they knew how to really pray. The parsonage was next door to the church and she went up and rapped on the door. And when the minister came, she held her daughter and she was hysterical.

And she said, my baby, my baby, I need God to heal my baby. And so she laid my sister's stiff body on the floor. And as she was just really hysterically crying out to the Lord, the pastor, Dr. Mitsner said to her, young lady, get your eyes off of your baby and get your eyes on Jesus.

And just begin to worship Jesus and praise the Lord. My father had come in from the pool hall where he spent most of his time. And when my mother wasn't there, they were living in a hotel while their home was being built, the Fosno Hotel there in Ventura.

He said to some people in the lobby, have you seen my wife? And the nurse said, yes, Mr. Smith, your little girl, I think is dead. And she went running up the street, I think to the church. And so my dad took off for the church, intending to beat up on the minister and grab his daughter and get her to some competent help.

But when he saw her lying there, he realized that she is beyond man's help. And he just fell down on his knees and began to cry out to God. The pastor kept encouraging my mother, get your eyes off of your little girl, get your eyes on the Lord.

And she began to turn her eyes upon the Lord, began to worship the Lord. And she said, Lord, if you will just give me my little girl back again, I will give my life to you. I will serve you the rest of my life.

I will minister. I will do anything you ask me to do, God. I'll be your servant the rest of my life.

But give me my daughter back. And with that, my sister regained consciousness, was instantly healed completely. They took her home and she was just laughing and just completely well.

Two months later, I was born in the Big Sisters Hospital in Ventura. When the doctors came in and told my mother, you have a baby boy. She closed her eyes and said, Lord, I will fulfill my vow to you through my son.

My dad went down the hallway of the hospital saying, praise the Lord, it's a boy. And so I grew up in a godly environment. But the importance of getting your eyes off of yourself and on the Lord, how it changes the whole situation.

Oh, I'll tell you, you get your eyes on yourself and your surrounding circumstances and you can go down fast. There's no quicker way to sink than to get your eyes on the waves and on your surrounding

circumstances upon yourself. But you get your eyes upon the Lord and you can walk on water.

And so the psalmist began, eyes on himself, I, I, me, my, me, I, I. But then he turns in the middle of the psalm and now the attention is towards the Lord. And thus the psalm ends in a note of victory. Thou art the God that doest wonders.

Thou hast declared thy strength among the people. Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. The water saw thee, O God, the water saw thee.

They were afraid, the depths also were troubled. The clouds poured out water, the sky sent out a sound, thine arrows also went abroad. The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven, the lightnings lightened the world, and the earth trembled and shook.

Thy way is in the sea and thy path in great waters, and thy footsteps are not known. Thou leadest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron. So turning the situation around, get your eyes off of yourself and get your eyes on the Lord, and you'll come into the victory.

Psalms 78 is a psalm that rehearses the history of God's people. And the psalm was written in order to remind the children, the coming generation, of the works of the Lord. One of the important obligations that we have is that we not see a move of God and then see it die with the passing generation.

But unfortunately, rarely does a work of God continue into a second generation. Unfortunately, we begin to get our eyes upon, you know, the things that God has done upon, you know, the great monuments, and it turns into a monument rather than keeping our eyes upon God who was doing the work to begin with. And it's always a tragedy when the work of God turns into a memorial.

Somehow we need to communicate to our children that glorious work and consciousness of God. So it goes on and on and on. And the children of Israel sought to do this, but they failed.

And so many times, you find that from one generation to the next, the work of God was forgotten. Case of Hezekiah, followed by Manasseh, his son. Hezekiah, marvelous, righteous king.

Manasseh, an evil, wicked king. Somehow his father did not relate well to Manasseh, his faith, his trust, his confidence in God. So give ear, O my people, to my law.

Incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable. I will utter dark sayings of old, which we have heard and our fathers have told us.

We will not hide them from the children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord and his strength and his wonderful works which he has done. For he established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers that they should make them known to their children, passing it on to the children that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, whom would arise and declare them to their children, that they might set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments. So the transmission of truth from generation to generation and might not be as their fathers, a stubborn, stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation that set not their heart aright and whose spirit was not steadfast with God.

The children of Ephraim being armed and carrying bows turned back in the day of battle. They did not stand up against the enemy. They retreated.

They kept not the covenant of God. They refused to walk in his law. That's why they turned back in battle and they forgot his works and his wonders that he had showed them the forgetfulness, marvelous things he did in the sight of their fathers in the land of Egypt, in the fields of zone.

He divided the sea, caused them to pass through, made the water stand up as a heap in the daytime. He led them by the cloud and night with the light of fire. He broke the rocks in the wilderness and gave them drink out of the great deep depths.

He brought streams also out of the rock and cause waters to run like rivers. And yet they sinned against him by promote, provoking the most high in the wilderness. And they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust.

And yea, they spake against God and said, can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Behold, he smote the rock, the waters gushed out, the streams overflowed. Can he give bread also? Can he provide flesh to his people? Therefore, the Lord heard this. He was angry.

So a fire was kindled against Jacob. Anger came up against Israel because they believe not in God and trusted not in his salvation. God's anger because of unbelief.

The Bible says without faith, it is impossible to please God. Though he had commanded the clouds from above and opened the doors of heaven, he rained down manna upon them to eat. He had given them the corn of heaven.

Man did eat angels food. He sent them meat to their full. He caused an east wind to blow in the heaven.

And by his power, he brought the south wind. He rained flesh also upon them as dust and feathered fowls like the sand of the sea. And he let it fall in the middle of their camp round about their houses.

So they did eat and were well filled for he gave them their own desire. But they were not estranged from their lust. Even though they were filled, they were still filled with lust.

In other words, you lust, but lust cannot really be satisfied. And though they were filled, still they were hungry. But while their meat was in their mouths, the anger, the wrath of God came upon them and slew the fattest of them and smote down the chosen men of Israel.

For all of this, they continued to sin and believe not his wondrous works. Therefore, their days were spent in emptiness, their years in trouble. And when he slew them, they sought him and returned and inquired early after God.

And they remember that God was their rock and a high God, their redeemer. Nevertheless, they did flatter him with their mouth, but they lied unto him with their tongues, for their heart was not right with him and neither were they steadfast in his covenant. How many times people are doing the same thing, lying to God, flattering with their mouth, but their hearts are really far from God.

But being full of compassion, he forgave their iniquity and destroyed them not. Yea, many a time he turned his anger away and did not stir up all of his wrath, for he remembered that they were but flesh. Thank God for the mercies we're with.

He deals with us and he remembers that we're but flesh. Now, sometimes we think we're supermen. We think we're a rock of Gibraltar.

We think we're so strong, we're so powerful. You know, I'm so strong I can stand against, oh, how I cringe when I see some of these young Christians. They come up and they say, I really want to go out and serve God in a mission field.

Well, how long have you been a Christian? Two months now. I feel God's calling me to a mission field, you know. Oh, I'm ready to conquer the world.

You feel so strong. But God knows you're just dust and it's good when we find out that we're just dust too. And we trust not in the arm of our flesh, but we learn to trust the Lord completely.

God remembers that they were but flesh, a wind that passes away and comes not again. People have always asked, what scripture can you give me against reincarnation? Well, here's one. You might mark it.

Your life is spoken of as a wind that passes away and comes not again. It's talking about your breath of life. It is something that is going to pass, but it won't come again.

So you're not going to come back. But who in the world would want to? When I read the predictions for the year 2000, whoo, I don't want to be around. To come back again and have to go through this under the conditions that will exist in the year 2000 or even the year 2020 is even going to be worse.

No, thanks. Now, how often they provoked him in the wilderness and they grieved him in the desert. Yes, they turned back and tempted God and limited the holy one of Israel.

Here's a very interesting verse. And that is that God can be limited by the unbelief of people. When Jesus was in Nazareth, he said, it said he did not many works there because of their unbelief.

Your unbelief can actually limit the work that God is wanting to do in your life. The children of Israel put limitations on God and man today is often putting limitations on God. One of the limitations that we so often place upon God are dispensational limitations.

The dispensation of the apostles, you know, the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. It all ended with the apostles. God doesn't work anymore.

God doesn't heal anymore. God doesn't, you know, work miracles anymore. And and the gifts of the spirit are not in operation anymore.

They all cease with the apostles. And we put limits on God, not because God won't, not because God doesn't want to, but because of our unbelief, our failing to believe God to do it now. And it is still possible for us to be putting limitations on the work that God wants to do in our lives.

When I come to God, I say, God help me to be totally open to anything and everything you want to do in my life. I don't want to put any restraints on that which God is wanting to do in or through me. By presuppositions, by my own cultural upbringing, by the things that have been planted in my mind in the past, by my education or anything else.

I don't want anything there that would restrict or limit that which God wants to do. They limited the Holy One of Israel by their unbelief. They remember not his hand or the day when he delivered them from the enemy.

He wrought the signs in Egypt and turned the rivers into blood and the floods that they couldn't drink and sent the flies and the frogs and gave the increase of their fields to the caterpillar and to the locusts and destroyed their vines with hail and their sycamore trees with frost and gave their cattle also to the hail and the flocks to the hot thunderbolts. And he cast upon them the fierceness of his anger and wrath and indignation and trouble by sending evil angels among them. Uh, no doubt reference to the, uh, slaying of the firstborn.

He made way to his anger. He spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to pestilence and smote all the firstborn in Egypt, the chief of their strength, the tabernacles of Ham. But he made his own people to go forth like sheep and guided them into the wilderness like a flock.

He led them on safely so that they feared not, but the sea overwhelmed their enemies and brought them to the border of the sanctuary, even to this mountain, which his right hand had purchased and cast the heathen also out before them, divided the inheritance by line and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents. And yet they tempted and provoked the most high and did not keep his testimonies, but turned back and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers. They provoked him to anger by building the places of false worship.

They moved him to jealousy with their graven images. And when God heard this, he was angry and abhorred Israel so that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he had placed among men. The tabernacle, of course, originally was in the area of Shiloh, which was in the portion that was given to the tribe of Ephraim.

He delivered his strength into captivity, his glory into the enemy's hand. He gave his people over to the sword and was angry with his inheritance. Fire consumed their young men.

The maidens were not given to marriage. The priest fell by the sword. The widows made no lamentation.

And then the Lord awakened as one out of sleep, and a mighty man that shouted by reason of wine, and he smote his enemies in the hinder parts. He put them to perpetual reproach. Moreover, he refused the tabernacle of Joseph and chose not the tribe of Ephraim.

When God chose then a leader, he refused to take the tribe of Ephraim or Joseph, which would have also been Manasseh. But he chose the tribe of Judah and rather than Shiloh, Mount Zion, which he loved. And there he built his sanctuary like the high places, like the earth, which he established forever.

And he chose David also, his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds, from following the youths, great with young. He brought him to feed Jacob, his people in Israel, his inheritance. So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart and guided them by the skillfulness of his hand.

A beautiful rehearsal of their history to remind them of the work of God in their past. O God, heathen are coming to your inheritance. Thy holy temple have they defiled.

They have laid Jerusalem on heat. So this goes out to the future, to the time when the temple was laid waste, perhaps under the reign of Rehoboam by the Egyptians. The dead bodies of thy servants have given to be meat and to the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of the saints, to the beast of the earth.

Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem, and there was no one to bury them. We are become a reproach to our neighbors, a scorn and a derision to them around about us. How long, O Lord, will you be angry forever? Shall your jealousy burn like fire? Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that

have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name.

For they have devoured Jacob, laid waste his dwelling place. So remember not against us former iniquities. Let the tender mercies speedily prevent us, for we are brought very low.

Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name, and deliver us and purge away all of our sins for thy name's sake. Why should the heathen say, where is their God? Let him be known among the heathen in the sight by the revenging of blood of thy servants which is shed. Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee according to the greatness of thy power.

Preserve thou those that are appointed to die, and render to our neighbors sevenfold into their bosom their reproach, wherewith they have reproached thee, O Lord. And so we thy people, the sheep of thy pasture, will give thee thanks forever, and will show forth thy praise to all generations. And so it begins, of course, with speaking of the desolation that was brought by their enemies upon the temple, upon the people, and asking God to take vengeance upon those that had wrought the destruction upon the nation Israel.

Give ear, O shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock, thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth. God's dwelling between the cherubim, actually in the book of Revelation, John describes the throne of God with the four cherubim round about the throne, crying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, ceasing not to declare the greatness and holiness of God night and day. Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh, stir up your strength and come and save us.

Turn again, O God, and cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved. O Lord God of hosts, how long will you be angry against the prayer of thy people? You feed them with the bread of tears. You give them tears to drink in great measure.

You make us a strife unto our neighbors and to our enemies. They laugh among themselves. Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.

Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt. You have cast out the heathen and planted it. The vine out of Egypt, of course, is the nation Israel.

You've brought it out of Egypt, and you've planted it in this land. You've prepared room before it. You did cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land, and so the people of God filled this land of Israel.

The hills were covered with the shadow of it. The boughs thereof were like goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs into the sea or branches to the river.

Why have you then broken down her hedges, so that they all which pass by the way do pluck her? The boar out of the woods doth waste it. The wild beast of the field doth devour it. Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts.

Look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine. And so the nation Israel typified as a vine. This is a symbolism that is used also in the prophet Isaiah.

God speaks of his vineyard, how he planted it and cultivated it and put the winepress in it, but it never did bring forth the fruit that he desired. And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, the branch that thou hast made strong for thyself, it's burned with fire, it's cut down, they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance. Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, and upon the son of man whom thou

madest strong for thyself.

So will not we go back from thee, quicken us, or make us alive, and we shall call upon thy name. Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts. Cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.

O God, turn to us once more. Cause your face to shine. For God had forsaken the nation Israel because they had forsaken God.

And as Asa was told by the prophet, the Lord is with you while you'll be with him. And if you seek him, he'll be found of you. But if you forsake him, he will forsake you.

So the nation Israel forsook God. God forsook them. But I can think of no greater tragedy in life than to be forsaken by God.

And thank God it's an experience that none of us need to go through. On the cross, Jesus cried, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? There on the cross, Jesus was forsaken of the Father in order that you never need be forsaken by God. Thus turn, O God.

Remember your people. Bring thy salvation. Shall we pray? Father, we thank you for the opportunity of studying your word.

May we learn from the lessons that are here, Father. O God, may we really apply the truths to our own situations. And may we walk, O Lord, with thee in Jesus' name.

Amen. Shall we stand? David said, I will hide thy word in my heart that I might not sin against thee. And may you do likewise.

May you go forth and let the word of God dwell in your hearts richly through faith. That you might be able to comprehend how much God does love you, how much God is concerned with your well-being, how much God wants to help you and strengthen you. And thus may you walk with him this week in a renewed consciousness of his love and of his power and of his goodness.

And may he strengthen you for every test and trial that you might face. And may you walk in the victory of Jesus Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit, living a life that is acceptable and pleasing unto him in Jesus' name.

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