

(2 Samuel) the Grateful Retrospect

by David Guzik

David's life is a reminder that we all need to rely on God's strength and the strength of others, and that our legacy is not just what we accomplish, but what we leave behind.

Duration: 58:08

Scripture: 2 Samuel 22:17, Psalm 18:4, Matthew 7:1-2

Topics: "Divine Deliverance", "Spiritual Legacy"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on Psalm 18 and the deliverance of David from his enemies. The speaker highlights the sense of danger that David expresses in the psalm, including the waves of death, floods of ungodliness, sorrows of shield, and snares of death. The speaker emphasizes the desire to witness the great deliverance of God, but also acknowledges the reluctance to be put in a situation where one must rely on God's deliverance. The sermon also discusses the importance of passing on the lessons of victory to others, using David as an example of raising up four giant killers. The legacy of David is seen not only in his personal accomplishments, but also in what he left behind. The sermon concludes by highlighting the three main points of the psalm: David's praise of God, the source of his deliverance from God, and the reasons why God delivered him.

Transcript

Tonight, we meet on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, and it's fitting for the passage of scripture that we're going to take a look at tonight once we get into chapter 22. Let's take a look at where we left off last time, 2 Samuel, chapter 21, verse 15. These last four chapters of the book of 2 Samuel are sort of a catch-all basket, just assorted events from the later reign of King David over Israel.

There's not necessarily a chronological arrangement of the events in these last four chapters, but it's just sort of some things that the Holy Spirit wanted us to know from these last years of David's reign. 2 Samuel 21, beginning of verse 15. When the Philistines were at war with Israel, David and his servants with him went down and fought against the Philistines.

And David grew faint. Then Ishbi Benob, who was one of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose bronze spear was 300 shekels, who was bearing a new sword, thought he could kill David. But Abishai, the son of Zariah, came to his aid and struck the Philistine and killed him.

Then the men of David swore to him, saying, You shall go out no more with us to battle, lest you quench the lamp of Israel. Well, we see there in verse 15 that it says that David grew faint. And it's true that even a great man of God grows old.

I mean, David had his years as this young warrior slaying Goliath as a teenager, winning great battles against the Philistines and other nations, set against the Lord and the Lord's people in the early years and even up much into his adulthood. But now David's pushing, oh, I don't know, 60, 70. And he's just not as young as he used to be.

You know, as I think about this and picture it in my mind, I picture 65-year-old David being able to whoop my tail in a minute. But, you know, Philistine giants are Philistine giants. And David just can't compete with them anymore.

And so his life was endangered as he grew faint in a battle against one of the descendants or relatives of Goliath. And it sort of makes us ask the question, what's the people around him going to do? You know, when they see this weakness in their king, how do they react? Do they say, well, you know, David's getting old now, out with the king, let's get a new one. Or are they going to say, well, I guess we don't have to obey David much anymore.

No, when they saw this weakness in their leader, they understood that it could be explained. I mean, there was a good reason for this weakness. David's getting older.

This wasn't sin on his part. This wasn't any kind of moral failing. This was just frailty and old age.

And so what they did was outstanding. They rallied around their leader and supplied what he couldn't. David, you don't have the same strength anymore.

Let us be your strength. And that's exactly what Abishai, the son of Zariah, did. Did you notice it there when it describes in verse 17? It says Abishai, the son of Zariah, came to his aid and struck the Philistine and killed him.

David was growing faint. He couldn't do that work for himself anymore, but it's OK. He has people around him who can do it for him.

And so when David's strength failed, God protected him through the strength of other people. We need to understand this, that God will allow us to be put into positions where we need the strength of other people. You may not like those positions.

You may be that sort of Lone Ranger kind of person, that the solitary person who just wants to fight every battle on your own. God will deliberately put you in situations where you need to rely on the strength of someone else in the family of God. Remember what it said in Ecclesiastes chapter four, where it says, two are better than one, for they will have a good reward for their labor.

For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who's alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him. Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him.

Well, that's the whole idea here. David was too weak, too frail in his old age to fight these battles on his own. But if he had people around him to help him, well, then he could rely on their strength as well.

But at the end of it all, in verse 17, we sort of have a logical reaction here. The men of David swore to him, saying, You shall go out no more with us to battle, lest you quench the lamp of Israel. David, you're retired from the field of battle.

That's it. You know, you're 65, 70 years old. No more taking on Philistine giants in their young 20s.

You know, when you were 60, you could do it, but not when you're 20. And so we don't see the lamp of Israel go out now. Now, David, you're retired from the field of battle.

David understood this. David submitted to this. He wasn't stubborn in his older age.

Verse 18. Well, by the way, let me say that. I guess we just have to point out that old age does not bestow an automatic blessing upon people.

You know, in ancient cultures, they venerated the elderly person in a way that I think is very healthy and very good. But the idea was that if you're older, you were wiser. You had character shaped by the years.

And oftentimes, thank God, that is the case, but not necessarily. You can find people to whom the years have made them bitter instead of better. The years have made them more stubborn instead of more submitted to the will of God.

And David wasn't like that. He allowed these ongoing years to draw him closer to the Lord. Verse 18.

Now, it happened afterward that there was a battle again with the Philistines at Gob. Then Shivakai, the Hushethite, killed Saf, who was one of the sons of the giant. Again, there was war at Gob with the Philistines, where Elhanan, the son of Jeraorigim, the Bethlenite, killed the brother of Goliath, the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear was like a weaver's beam.

Yet again, there was war at Gath, where there was a man of great stature who had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot. Twenty-four in number. And he was also born to the giant.

So when he defied Israel, Jonathan, the son of Shimeah, David's brother, killed him. These four were born to the giant in Gath and fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants. Well, you see, the lesson here to the end of the chapter is that David's men could still slay giants, even if David couldn't.

The giants were still going to get beaten. It was just a matter of David wasn't going to do it directly, but the people around him were. These men accomplished heroic deeds when David was finished fighting giants.

And God will continue to raise up leaders when the leaders of a previous generation pass the scene. You know, sometimes we look at great lights in the Christian world, great men and women of God who seem to be advancing in age. And you wonder, well, what's going to happen when they pass from the scene? I'll tell you what's going to happen.

God will raise up other leaders. There's no problem with this with God. And when David, the great killer of giants, was no longer able to do it.

No problem. God raised up four in his place. Now, you might say it took four men to take the place of David.

But, you know, God had those. God raised up new leaders. I think we also see in this something remarkable in that David's legacy lay not only in what he accomplished, which was great, but his legacy also lay in what he left behind.

He left behind a people prepared for victory. All those triumphs that David had, they were meaningful not only for himself, but for other people who learned victory by David's own teaching and example. I mean, honestly, what's better? One David who goes out and kills giants or four men beyond him who can do it.

You see, David had both. He accomplished it himself, but he was also able to pass it on to others and raise up four giant killers in his place. You know, the Apostle Paul emphasized this.

He said in one of his letters to pastors, he said, find faithful men and pour your life into them is essentially what he told Timothy. You show them the things that I've taught you. That's what David did with these four giant killers.

Did you see that interesting reference there in verse 20 about the guy with six fingers and six toes? You know, it's interesting. You read commentators and after you read commentators after a while, you feel like you kind of get to know these guys and you can almost anticipate what they're going to say. There was this one fellow who wrote towards the end of the 18th century, Adam Clark, the beginning of the 19th century and of the 18th century, Adam Clark, and he he just has a particular personality and characteristic about him.

And I just knew that Adam Clark was going to mention two or three cases of people he knew that had six hands, six hands, six fingers or six toes. And wouldn't you know, Adam Clark does exactly that. He mentioned a couple of people in his own day just to let you know that this really happens.

And that's just sort of characteristic of Adam Clark. I've never met a person with six fingers or six toes, but I'm sure they're out there. But you see as well here at the very last verse of the chapter, it says that these four were born to the giant in Gath and fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.

Now, with these four particular giants, I don't know that David lifted up his hand against any one of them. But do you see what it says? It says by the hand of David and the hand of his servants. You see, the whole idea there is that the defeat of the four giants could rightly be credited to both David and the servants because David raised up the giant killers who went out and did the job.

Now, chapter 22. Then David spoke to the Lord the words of this song on the day when the Lord had delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. Second Samuel chapter 22 is a remarkable psalm of praise.

It's one of the longer psalms in the Bible. By the way, if you'd like to take notes in your Bible, right next to the number 22 there, where it says Second Samuel 22, write Psalm 18, because this is virtually the same psalm as Psalm 18. There's a few minor variations.

Some people believe that David composed this psalm as a young man in gratitude for the Lord. And perhaps in his older age, he repeated it here with just a few changes at the end of his reign. You know, for many reasons, most commentators assume that this was a psalm that David sung and wrote many years before this time.

You'll see why in a few minutes when we get to it. But the assumption is that David must have sung this psalm before his sin with Bathsheba and Uriah. And they just kind of assume that, well, David must have sung this psalm before.

And now it's inserted just sort of out of chronological order. Now, I agree that's possible. But I'd like to suggest to you that it's not necessary.

This psalm is, well, it's almost David's final words. And I think it's his grateful retrospect over his whole ministry. I mean, here we are the evening before Thanksgiving Day, and it's a great time for us to look at a psalm like this, when David is going to give great thanks to the Lord for all the ways that God has blessed him and touched him during his great reign as king.

And David sung the psalm after he saw the Lord's deliverance in great, great power in his life. So let's take a look. Verse two.

And he said, The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer. The God of my strength in him I will trust. My shield and the horn of my salvation.

My stronghold and my refuge. My savior, you save me from violence. I will call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised.

So shall I be saved from my enemies. Did you see here in the first couple of verses of this great psalm of praise, how David piles title upon title in praising God. My rock and my fortress and my deliverer.

You know, this is one of the great glories of the psalms and one of the reasons why we need to become familiar with them. Do you feel limited in your vocabulary before God? You know, God, I love you. I love you.

God, you're good. You're good, good. You're extra, super good.

Well, it's helpful to read the psalms in those situations and to let the psalms become deeply impressed upon your heart. It will give you a genuinely spiritual eloquence. Now, we don't care about rhetorical eloquence.

You know, for a person to be able to spin out beautiful words in prayer where people who listen to him pray, you know, oh, my, what a spiritual man. This is the most wonderful prayer that's ever been delivered before an audience. You know, it's ignoring that the prayer is made to God.

I'm not talking about rhetorical eloquence in the sense of speech making. I'm talking about true spiritual eloquence. And spiritual eloquence comes from knowing God and knowing his word.

Now, David could have just said, Lord, you're always there for me. Which is true, but how about this? You're my rock, my fortress, my deliverer, the God of my strength. It's the same idea, but it's expressed in a vivid poetic way.

I think this is one of the great reasons why God gave us the book of Psalms so that we would really grow in our godliness and in our ability to communicate with the Lord. Now, if you want to know truth and theology, well, then fine, the whole Bible is there for you. But if you want to grow in godliness, spend a lot of time in the Psalms.

It'll deepen your own personal relationship with God. For the past many, many months, the focus of my own devotional time has been in the Psalms. As a matter of fact, for the last many months, that's about all I've read in my devotional time before the Lord.

And it's been doing a beautiful work in my own life. And you can see why when you see David's great spiritual eloquence. I mean, after all, take a look at it there again in verse two.

He says, the Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer, the God of my strength. Now, isn't that significant? That's much more than saying God is a rock. God is a fortress.

God is a deliverer. Now, I might know theoretically that God's a rock. I might know theoretically that God is a fortress that I can find refuge in.

Someone that theoretically can deliver people. And I'm a people, so he might deliver me. It's an entirely different thing to say he's my rock, my fortress, my deliverer.

This speaks of the fact that David is experiencing these things. And that's the great legacy of the Psalms for us. It's rich in Christian experience.

And I think as I look by and large at the body of Christ today, there's such a crying need for genuine, deep Christian experience. To have a deep experience with God. And David experienced the Lord's deliverance.

God delivered David from Goliath. God delivered David from Saul. God delivered David from backsliding.

God delivered David from Israel's enemies. God delivered David from Absalom. You know, I think the greatest deliverance that God wrought in the life of David.

When God delivered David from David. From the own sinful passions that used to reign over and ruin his life. God has delivered David from those.

And so he looks back and says, Lord, you've delivered me. You're my rock, my fortress, my deliverer. I have experienced these things from you.

And he goes on and he says, verse three, the God of my strength in whom I will trust. You know, when we seek God for who he is, it's easy to trust him. When you know by experience that God is a rock and a fortress and a deliverer and a shield and a stronghold and a savior, it's natural to trust him completely.

I mean, you just do. Faith does not completely depend on knowledge, but right knowledge of God gives strength to faith. David knew who God was, and so it gave strength to his faith.

Notice what he says there towards the end of verse three, where he says, my savior, you save me from violence. Do you see the connection? My savior, you save me. He just doesn't know this as a title of God.

Well, isn't it wonderful to have this title of God's savior? Yes. Nice title. Isn't that wonderful? No, he says you have saved me.

Every title is meaningful to David because God has fulfilled the meaning of each title in David's experience. This isn't like the list of the names of God that you might find in a systematic theology, which might be felt well and good. But this is the knowledge of God combined with the right experience of God.

So David calls out to the Lord. Did you see it there in verse four? I will call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised. So shall I be saved from my enemies.

You know, it's good for us to pray to God, to approach him as someone who deserves our praise. He deserves it. Suddenly, then our worship, our praise doesn't become a matter of how much we feel like praising God at a particular moment.

Instead, it gets transformed into something. Listen, God deserves it. I'm going to give it to him because he deserves my praise.

Well, now, in the second section of the psalm, beginning in verse five, David's going to talk about his deliverance and where it comes from. I'm going to read all the way through to verse 20. So follow carefully here, beginning at verse five.

When the waves of death surrounded me, the floods of ungodliness made me afraid. The sorrows of Sheol surrounded me. The snares of death confronted me in my distress.

I called upon the Lord and cried out to my God. He heard my voice from his temple and my cry entered his ears. Then the earth shook and trembled.

The foundations of heaven quaked and were shaken because he was angry. Smoke went up from his nostrils and devouring fire from his mouth. Coals were kindled by it.

He bowed the heavens also and came down with darkness under his feet. He rode upon a cherub and flew and he was seen upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness canopies around him, dark waters and thick clouds of the skies from the brightness before him.

Coals of fire were kindled. The Lord thundered from heaven and the most high uttered his voice. He sent out arrows and scattered them lightning bolts and he vanquished them.

Then the channels of the sea were seen. The foundations of the world run covered at the rebuke of the Lord at the blast of the breath of his nostrils. He sent from above.

He took me. He drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy, from those who hated me, for they were too strong for me.

They confronted me in the day of my calamity, but the Lord was my support. He also brought me out into a broad place. He delivered me because he delighted in me.

Did you catch the sense of danger that David spoke about beginning at verse five? The waves of death, the floods of ungodliness, the sorrows of Sheol, the snares of death. Now, how do you like that? Do you want to see the great deliverance of God? Oh, I want to see the great deliverance of God. Well, do you want to be put in a situation where you just absolutely have to see the great deliverance of God? Oh, no, no.

I want to see the great deliverance of God, you know, from from the easy chair, from the rocking chair. No way you want to see the great deliverance of God. Get ready for the waves of death.

Get ready for the floods of ungodliness, the sorrows of Sheol, the snares of death. That's what goes along with the great deliverance of God. When danger surrounded David on every side, physically, spiritually,

emotionally, socially, David was on the brink of ruin when he cried out to God.

What did he say? He said right there, in my distress, I called upon the Lord. That's in verse seven. I think Satan has a strategy against us to make us think that we can't call upon the Lord in our distress.

You know, as if we have to be right with God and sitting peacefully in a prayer chapel before you can really pray right, pray rightly. No, David was in tremendous distress, but he called out. He knew that God hears distress signals.

And that's what he did. He called out to the Lord in his distress. And what did he know? He knew that the Lord heard his voice.

Did you see that in verse seven? He heard my voice. It was that simple. He cried out to God and God heard.

Now, he also knows that God can't hear the distress of his people without taking action. You know, there's people who all they have to do is hear of the problem and they set about to fix it. That's how God is.

He hears of your problem. You know, he's going to work on it. You know, he is.

There's no doubt about it. And what does he do? This perhaps one of the most precious passages in this psalm. If you take a look at verse eight, it says, then the earth shook and trembled.

The foundations of heaven moved and shook. You know, God was so concerned about David's problem that it seemed that heaven and earth shook to meet David and his need. You know, it's as if God gets up out of his throne.

But wait a minute. David's in trouble. God comes down off of his throne from heaven.

You know, he rides down on the cherubim, the fastest cherub he can find. I'm going to ride right down. I'm going to send the thunder.

I'm going to send the earthquake. Anything to help my servant. That's how David felt.

That's how loved he felt from the Lord. He pictures the Lord coming to meet his need, coming with glory and speed. It came so fast that it seemed like God traveled upon the wings of the wind.

And then he he uttered his voice. Did you see that in verse 14? The Lord thundered from heaven and the most high uttered his voice. When God spoke on David's behalf, it's as if he commanded all creation to respond to his passionate desire to deliver his child.

Hey, you get busy. My child's in trouble. You you minister to him, creation.

It's as if we see in this David's great confidence in the love of God. I mean, David has such a sense of God's love for him that God won't tolerate the distress of his beloved when things aren't right for his beloved. All creation has to see his passion and his urgency to meet the need of the one God loves.

And so do you see how David describes it there? It's beautiful. In verse 17, 18, he says he sent from above. He took me.

He drew me out of the many waters. He delivered me. He took me.

He drew me. He delivered me. David saw that God applied all his majesty and strength to meeting his need.

The problems, the challenges, they were too big for David. They were too strong for him. Did you notice that in verse 18? He delivered me from my strong enemy, from those who hated me, for they were too strong for me.

David knew this is bigger than what I can do. This was miraculous. If God had not sustained me, I would have fallen.

Now, that's where God wants us. God wants us venturing out into places where if he doesn't support us, if he doesn't come through, we're going to fall for sure. There's not a prayer.

Doesn't come through. And David knew this. He said, if I didn't have the Lord for support, I would have surely fallen, felled, fall.

He would have been ruined. I notice here how he says it at the end of verse 20. He brought me out into a broad place.

He delivered me because he delighted in me. David had a sense that God delighted in him. His plea for deliverance was rooted in relationship.

You know, when you have a problem. You'll take that problem to people whom you have a real relationship with. Or you may take the problem just to anybody who can help.

Now, David took it to the Lord out of relationship. This wasn't just a desire to survive. It wasn't just like, well, OK, Lord, can you help me? Baal, can you help me? Saul, can you help me? Anybody help.

If God will tell me, great. Anybody else? No, David wasn't thinking like that at all. He came to the Lord because the Lord delighted in him and he knew it.

And why? Why would God deliver David? Look at verse 21. The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands. He has recompensed me for I have kept the ways of the Lord and have not wickedly departed from my God.

For all his judgments were before me. And as for his statutes, I did not depart from them. I was also blameless before him and I kept myself from iniquity.

Therefore, the Lord has recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to my cleanness in his eyes. Now, these few verses here, 21 through 25, these are one of the great reasons why many people believe that David had to have penned this song before he sinned with Bathsheba. They say, listen, David would never talk like this after his sin with Bathsheba.

He would never say, Lord, look at my righteousness. Look at the cleanness of my hands. Look at my blamelessness before you.

But I would ask you to take a look at the first verse of this chapter. Again, the text seems to indicate that David sang this towards the end of his days. Then David spoke to the Lord the words of this song on the day when the Lord had delivered him from all his enemies and from the hand of Saul.

Well, some people say, well, it must have been right after Saul was dead. Not necessarily. I would say context suggests for us that this was delivered as a song towards the end of David's reign.

I say, well, wait a minute. How could David possibly go before the Lord and say, look, look at my righteousness. Lord, look at my cleanness.

I want you to remember something. First of all, even before God delivered him from the hand of Saul, David had a significant period of backsliding in his life. You'll find that towards the end of the book of First Samuel.

David got so discouraged from the years of Saul chasing him around the Judean countryside that one day David said, there is nothing better for me than to go and live among the Philistines. David left the land of God. He left the people of God and he lived among the pagans as a pagan.

Do you know what David did for a living during that year that he lived among the Philistines? He became a bandit. Literally, he went around raiding people. Now, he wouldn't raid Judean towns.

He would raid Philistines or Amorite towns, things like that. But David basically became a bandit. He became so backslidden in his heart that when the Philistines were gathering an army to go against the people of Israel, David tried to enlist his troops to fight for the Philistines against the Israelites.

And it was only because the Philistines rejected him that he did not fight for the Philistines against the Israelites. Friends, this was backsliding. Now, God shook David out of it.

And that's a whole other story in itself. But I want you to know it's not like David lived this amazing sinless life all up until the time that he sinned with Bathsheba. There was a significant period of backsliding in his life before Saul ever died.

The second thing I want you to understand is I think that it's very possible that David could have sung this psalm at the end of his days after the sin with Bathsheba. Why? Because he believed the word of the Lord. Well, what do you mean? All right.

Keep your finger here in 2 Samuel 22. Turn back to 2 Samuel chapter 12, verse 13. We're familiar with this dramatic encounter that David had with Nathan, the prophet, when Nathan, the prophet, called David on this sin that David had been hiding.

But look at what Nathan says to David in 2 Samuel 12, 13. Then David said to Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said to David, the Lord also has put away your sin.

You shall not die. Well, did you see that? What did God do with David's sin? He put it away. David, you're forgiven.

You're clean again. You've been made clean. David knew he was a forgiven man and that the cleanness of his hands.

Well, they were clean, but they were clean because they had been cleansed by God. So when David stands before the Lord and verse 21 says, according to the cleanness of my hands, he has recompensed me. He's standing before the Lord and he's saying, Lord, my hands are clean, but you've washed them.

I'm not standing before you in some kind of feigned sinless perfection. No, my hands have been dirtied, but you have cleansed them. I mean, if you were to read this paragraph, the Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness.

I'm at verse 21, second Samuel 22. The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands. He has recompensed me for I have kept the ways of the Lord and I have not wickedly departed from my God for all his judgments were before me.

And as for his statutes, I did not depart from them. If you were to go to David and say, well, come on, David, what about this whole Bathsheba thing? Who are you trying to kid? David would say, oh, absolutely. And do you see how the Lord dealt with me when I sinned with Bathsheba? Oh, the consequences I suffered.

Oh, God's correcting hand against me. Oh, the cleansing I needed. You see, even though David sinned in this area, by and large, he's still the man after God's own heart, the man blessed by God.

And so he says, I have kept the ways of the Lord. He says there, verse twenty two, I have not wickedly departed from my God. He's not claiming sinless perfection, but a general righteousness that's observable in his life, but more importantly, is given to him by God.

I like what Charles Spurgeon said about this claim of David. He said before God, the man after God's own heart was a humble sinner, but before his slanderers, he could, with unblushing face, speak of the cleanness of his hands and the righteousness of his life. You see, David's not being arrogant here.

He's just saying, look at those who are out, look at my enemies. Lord, I'm walking with you and they're not. There's another line in these verses that sort of interests me.

It's in verse twenty four, which is I was also blameless before him and I kept myself from iniquity. Some think this is arrogance or pride on David's part. Spurgeon quoted one commentator who said, kept himself who made man his own keeper.

And what he's doing is criticizing David there. David, how dare you say I kept myself from iniquity? You should only say, oh, it was only the Lord that kept me. Well, no, I don't think that's true.

We know that there is certainly a sense in which we must keep ourselves from sin, even as Paul spoke of a man cleansing himself for God's glory and greater service. In Second Timothy, chapter two, verse twenty one, Paul says that if any man cleanses himself from some sins that he has just mentioned, he will be an honorable vessel for God to use. I've always been fascinated by that phrase cleanses himself.

What do you mean cleanse myself? I thought only Jesus cleansed me. What? Yes, there's very true that there's a sense in which only Jesus can cleanse us. But friends, there is another aspect in which Jesus says, cleanse yourself.

There is certainly a sense in which only Jesus can keep us from iniquity. But there's another sense in which Jesus says you keep yourself, not keep yourself apart from me, but I am going to work in you and through you for your keeping from iniquity. I guess I'm emphasizing this because sometimes I despair when I see this in Christians or perhaps I despair when I see it myself.

This this over overly passive attitude in the Christian life. Well, Lord, if you want me to be clean, then just cleanse me. Oh, Lord, well, if you want to keep me from iniquity, then you keep me.

God would say, well, yeah, I want you to be kept from iniquity. So you have my heart and you keep yourself from it. Not that you keep yourself from it by saying, oh, Lord, you get away.

I'll handle this. But no, Lord, you fill me. You work in me.

You work through me and then I can keep myself from iniquity. Well, that's the first part of the psalm. Now, it's interesting.

This psalm basically has three points in the first part. The three points in the first part are number one, David praises God. Number two, David talks about how his deliverance comes from God.

And number three, he talks about why God delivered him. Now we're going to count down three to one, because first David's going to speak about why God delivered him. Then he's going to speak about how his deliverance comes from God.

And then he's going to finish the psalm with praising God again. It's almost like he goes one, two, three, three, two, one at the end of the psalm. So now we're in the middle point.

Again, more reasons why God delivered David. Verse twenty six. With the merciful, you will show yourself merciful.

With a blameless man, you'll show yourself blameless. With the pure, you'll show yourself pure. And with the devious, you'll show yourself shrewd.

You will save the humble people. But your eyes are on the haughty that you may bring them down. You are my lamp, O Lord.

The Lord shall enlighten my darkness, for by you I can run against a troop. By my God, I can leap over a wall. With the merciful, you'll show yourself merciful.

Jesus discussed this principle in the Sermon on the Mount. Do you remember those words of his? He said in Matthew chapter seven, one, excuse me, seven, two, which is right after Matthew seven, one. Curiously enough, Matthew chapter seven.

Verse one is the most quoted verse in the Bible. People know this verse more than they know John three sixteen. This is the world's favorite passage from the Bible.

You know what Matthew seven one is. Judge not lest you be judged. That's everybody's favorite verse.

In other words, nobody can tell me that I'm wrong or that I'm in sin. Well, that's not the meaning of the verse at all, because Matthew seven two explains it like this. Jesus says, for with what judgment you judge, you will be judged.

And with the measure that you use, it will be measured back to you. All right. You know how critical you are of other people.

That's how critical God's going to be of you. Ouch. You know how short patience, how much, how what a shortness of patience you have with other people.

Oh, that's how much patience God's going to have with you. Then again, if you're rich in mercy to other people, that's how merciful God is going to be with you. You see, we want to turn it around.

We want to use the little tiny scoop of mercy with other people. And we want God to give us the great big scoop of mercy from heaven. And God just says, no, you just choose your scoop because it's fine with me.

You want the little scoop, then fine. We'll work with the little scoop. That's what you'll get from me.

What an incentive for us to be merciful and gracious to other people, isn't it? I mean, you know, you want it from God. You know, you need it from God. G. Campbell Morgan said, in these words, we have revealed the principles of relationship between God and man.

God is to man what man is to God. With the merciful, you'll show yourself merciful. I want you to know that David didn't only sing about this principle.

He also lived it and he benefited from it. God showed David great mercy because he showed great mercy to others. You might say and look at David and say, well, wait a minute, David, you committed this sin with Bathsheba.

You murdered Uriah. You should die. God, what are you doing showing this mercy to David? God would speak to you from heaven and say, oh, I'll show great mercy to David because look at the great mercy he showed to Saul.

Look at the great mercy that he showed to the descendants of Saul. Oh, I will show great mercy to David. There's another angle on this that I think you should take a look at.

It shows us that even the merciful need mercy. You know, sometimes we think of the very good people among us and we think that they don't need mercy from God. No, even the most merciful from us need mercy.

There's also an interesting line there as we take a look. He says in verse 27, and with the devious, you will show yourself shrewd and translators have trouble with this sentence because it communicates a difficult concept. It's easy to say if you're good to God, God will be good to you.

Right. That's easy. But do you say if you're wicked to God, God will be wicked to you? Well, you can't say that, can you? Why? Because God can't do wickedly.

And so David very carefully chose an ambiguous word here. He didn't choose a word wicked with the word literally translated. They're devious or shrewd.

It literally means twisted. With the twisted, you'll show yourself twisted. Notice with the people who deceive and are devious, God, you'll throw them a curveball right back.

David deliberately chose an ambiguous word there that could be wicked, but not necessarily so. But if you notice, and I love how he puts it here, it says in verse 28, you will save the humble people, but your eyes are on the haughty that you may bring them down. Oh, that's a principle repeated so many times in the Bible.

God resists the proud that gives grace to the humble. Do you know when you're filling out a very important form? It's because they have all those, you know, carbonless copies behind there, right? It must be really

important because it's in duplicate or triplicate right there. You know, so it's a very important form.

Well, this principle is so important to God that he repeated it in triplicate. That line, God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. That's repeated three times in the scriptures, in Proverbs chapter three, in James chapter four and in first Peter chapter five.

If you're haughty. If you're proud, God will resist you. There is something in true humility that prompts the grace and mercy of God.

It is if it draws it out of him. Did you know how a little baby just prompts the motherly love and care and concern of a woman? Well, it's the same way with God when we show him humility. It just arises within him this this desire to show us grace and mercy.

But there's something in pride and haughtiness that provokes the displeasure or the resistance of God. We need to be humble, but friends. We need to be truly humble.

You see, humility. Well, let me say there's a lot of counterfeit humility out there. Humility isn't necessarily a low opinion of yourself.

Oh, I'm no good. I can't do anything. It's just the Lord, brother.

Well, I could hardly walk if it wasn't for the Lord giving me strength for every step. It's all only to the glory of the Lord. You feel like slapping someone like that around.

Humility isn't that low opinion of himself. It's really a combination of two things. Humility is, first of all, an accurate opinion of yourself.

Now, accurate can be pretty ugly, right? Because accurate, you know, your sinfulness, you know, your weakness, but you also know the truth about who God is in your life and what God's doing in you. But maybe even more than an accurate opinion of self, humility is truly self forgetfulness. You just don't think about yourself at all.

You know, humility is the kind of quality that, you know, people are applauding and you step up on the platform and you look behind you to see who they're applauding for, because it just doesn't seem to occur to you for a moment. They wouldn't be applauding for me. There must be somebody else.

Humility, more than anything, is self forgetfulness and it is self loathing. Instead, he receives the strength from God. Don't you love how he puts it there in verse 29? You're my lamp, O Lord.

You'll enlighten my darkness, for by you I can run against a troop. By my God, I can leap over a wall. When God met David's need, he brought strength.

One man shouldn't be able to battle against a whole bunch of troops. One man shouldn't be able to scale over the protective wall of a city. No, no.

David said, I have the Lord's power in your strength. I can do these things. David knew the principle of Ephesians chapter six, verse 10, long before Paul penned those words.

Listen, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. God has this great resource of strength that he makes available to us.

And he says, you can be strong in my might. That's the problem. You've been trying to be strong in your might.

But no, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, his resource of power and strength. David knew that principle because God is strong. Can God run against a troop? Yes.

Can God leap over a wall? Sure. It sounds interesting the way David uses these phrases. I can run against a troop.

I can leap over a wall. I remember watching a very old, well, of course, it's old. It's been off the air for so many years.

I remember all in the family, you know, with Archie Bunker and all. And one time Archie was talking about God to somebody and he was trying in his own way to express the greatness of God, how big and how mighty God was. And all he could think to say was, God is so big he can throw a boat over a hedge.

And I mean, that was just about the studliest thing he could imagine anybody doing, taking a boat and chucking it over a hedge. Well, I don't know. I mean, God certainly could.

He could run against the troop. He could leap over a wall. He could throw a boat over a hedge.

And the whole point of it is that God gives us the same resource of strength. Now, David's going to talk now in verse 31 about how his deliverance comes from God. Again, a longer portion will read here, verse 31, all the way through verse 46.

He says, as for God, his way is perfect. The word of the Lord is proven. He's a shield to all who trust in him.

For who is God except the Lord? And who is a rock except our God? God is my strength and power. He makes my way perfect. He makes my feet like the feet of deer and sets me on my high places.

He teaches my hands to make war so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze. You've also given me the shield of your salvation. Your gentleness has made me great.

You enlarged my path under me so my feet did not slip. I have pursued my enemies and destroyed them. Neither did I turn back until they were destroyed.

And I have destroyed them and wounded them so that they could not rise. They have fallen under my feet where you have armed me with strength for the battle. You've subdued under me those who rose against me.

You have also given me the necks of my enemies so that I destroyed those who hated me. They looked, but there was none to save even to the Lord. But he did not answer them.

Then I beat them as fine as the dust of the earth. I trod them like dirt in the streets and I spread them out. You've also delivered me from the strivings of my people.

You've kept me from the head. You've kept me as the head of the nations. A people I have not known shall serve me.

The foreigners submit to me. As soon as they hear, they obey me. The foreigners fade away and come frightened from their hideouts.

You see, when God met David's need, he brought him protection. Did you see that there in verse 31? He says simply, he's a shield to all who trust in him. David could have all this strength, all this light, but he needed a shield, a protection.

Then he speaks about how God makes his feet like the feet of deer on high places. You know, have you ever seen deer just kind of jumping and leaping and how rapidly they go through very steep and mountainous and rocky places? They never seem to trip. I've never seen a deer stumble and fall and trip.

Well, why? They just have great footing and God gave David the same kind of skill in working through the challenges brought by his enemies. I mean, look at the kind of strength that the Lord gave to David. He says it there in verse 35.

He says he teaches my hands to make wars that my arms can bend a bow of bronze. I don't know if you've ever done archery, but you know, bows have different ratings as far as the pull strength on them. And some bows are very hard to pull and other ones are easier to pull.

Well, a bow that's hard to pull is going to shoot the arrow harder and faster. And David, he had been given so much strength from God. I can take a bow that's made out of bronze and I'll bend it and I'll shoot the arrow from that.

I love how David puts it there in verse 36. Do you see that? You've also given me the shield of your salvation and your gentleness has made me great. Isn't that beautiful? See, David, for him, it wasn't just about skill and power.

It was about receiving God's mercy and enjoying relationship with the God of great gentleness. This was a great resource of strength for David. You know, when God confronted David over his sin with Bathsheba, he did it with gentleness, didn't he? He didn't do it by having some guy come and beat David to a pulp until he confessed.

He didn't do it with brow beating. He did it with a gentle story. Story time with Nathan the prophet.

And suddenly the Lord's gentleness, well, convicted David and brought him back and it made him great. Do you see that there, too? He says, I pursued my enemies and destroyed them in verse 38. And you saw the very vivid description he gives.

I mean, he talks about just cutting his enemies to pieces and trampling them and stomping them and jumping up and down on them. David relishes the place of victory that he has in the Lord. He isn't hesitant to proclaim it.

It's not out of false humility or out of uncertainty of possessing the victory. He knows his enemies might rise again. It's not as if David's trying to say, well, I'll never have a problem again the whole rest of my life.

No, but he looks back at the field of battle and he says, they fell under my feet. And when they were under my feet, I trod them like dirt in the streets. There, the victories won.

Which is to the David not only had to deal with the problems from his enemies, but from his own people. Did you see that in verse 44? That phrase struck you, didn't it? Struck me. You have also delivered me

from the strivings of my people.

You know, it's like David said, look, Lord, I just don't need help from my enemies. These guys that I'm trying to lead, you know, I need help from them, too. He had to deal with the strivings of his own people.

And in the midst of the battle, he had to endure the contention of his own people. But God sustained him through that as well. David knew that it was God who kept him as the head of the nations.

Did you see that there in verse 44? You have kept me as the head of the nations. You see, David knew that the throne belonged to God. It didn't belong to him.

There's that memorable phrase that I read to you before from Gene Edwards book, Tale of Three Kings. He puts these words into the mouth of David around the time of the rebellion of Absalom, where David says the throne is not mine, not to have, not to take, not to protect and not to keep. The throne is the Lord's.

Well, David experienced the blessing of that because now when David sat on the throne, he didn't have to wonder if he got it just through political intrigue and his own scheming or or his own brutality. He knew it. You see it right there in verse 44.

You have kept me as the head of the nations. It's you, Lord. It's not me.

It's you who have given this to me. Well, now to the end of the chapter, verse 47, it was going to conclude on a high note of praise. The Lord lives.

Blessed be my rock. Let God be exalted. The rock of my salvation.

It is God who avenges me and subdues the peoples under me. He delivers me from my enemies. You also lift me up above those who rise against me.

You've delivered me from the violent man. Therefore, I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the Gentiles and sing praises to your name. He is the tower of salvation to his king and shows mercy to his anointed, to David and his descendants forever more.

You know, David thinks of the great victory of God on his behalf. He can only worship. Oh, Lord, look at all you've done for me.

Look at how you've delivered me. Look at the enemies that rose up against me and look at how you triumphed over them all. Lord, you're so good to me.

All I can do is praise you. All I can do is give you honor and glory. He emphasizes the thought very strongly.

Verse 48, it is God who avenges me, who subdues the people under me. This is the Lord's victory. He's won it for me.

The glory goes to him. And then he says he delivers me from my enemy. Did you notice that in verse 49? I love this.

Who delivers me from my enemies. You also lift me up. Now we see this in this psalm constantly.

I haven't touched on it before, but just notice it there in verse 49. You can see the contrast. He delivers me from my enemies.

You also lift me up. You see, we see in the psalm that David constantly moves back and forth from speaking about God. That's he delivers me to speaking to God.

You also lift me up. David doesn't seem to have a problem moving between the two aspects. This psalm is filled with it.

One line, he'll be speaking to God. The next line, he'll be speaking about God. You know, it's OK.

It's all praise. It's all worship. There's a place for both of them in praise.

And then he says, I will sing praises to your name. Verse 50. Oh, you know, that's why we sing.

That's why we begin with song before the Lord. The Spurgeon said to be saved. Singing is to be saved.

Indeed, many are saved, mourning and doubting. But David has such faith that he could fight singing and with the battle with and win the battle with the song still on his lips. That's how God wants us to be.

Not just fighting, not just surviving, but singing. And finally, look at it there in verse 51. He is the tower of salvation to his king and he shows mercy to his anointed.

You know, this is another reason why, even though there's some Bible teachers whom I greatly respect, and if you had to choose between their opinion and my opinion, you should probably take their opinion. But nevertheless, I would disagree with them on the point where they would say that David must have wrote this psalm before his sin with Bathsheba. I find that, first of all, any cleanness or any righteousness that David claims in this psalm, it would be cleanness and righteousness that he's received from God.

Secondly, look at the great dependence upon God's mercy. I mean, you saw that at the end of the end of verse 51, right? And shows mercy to his anointing. You see, he ends the psalm understanding his standing in mercy.

It's not all about what he's earned before God, but God's foundation of mercy. David's relationship with God was based on God's great mercy, not upon David's own righteousness. Well, that's where God wants to leave us.

I mean, really, when you relate to God, do you truly come in Jesus name or do you come in your own name? You know the difference between the two. When you come in your own name, you're coming because of who you are and what you've done or what you hope to do or what you'll promise to God you'll do. But when you come in the name of Jesus, you say, Lord, my standing is in him.

That's who I trust in. That's who I adore. That's who my standing, my place is standing in.

It's in Jesus Christ, not in myself. And so it's mercy to his anointed. I need that mercy.

I I think you need it. I know we all want it tonight. So let's close in prayer asking God for that.

Lord, we're so grateful. We can't read this great psalm of praise, this grateful retrospect in the life of David without coming back to you with great gratitude because you've delivered us. You've blessed us.

You've sustained us. You've been our rock, our fortress, our deliverer. Thank you, Jesus.

And Lord God, we ask that you would move with a great outpouring in our life. That you would touch and. And Lord, help us to come to you really because of mercy, to trust you for great victory.

Lord, we come to you as a great God, believing you to do great things. We're not afraid or ashamed to ask of you great things. Oh, but Lord.

When we do. We want to come in the name of Jesus on his merits because of your mercy to us. Help us to do it, Lord, and give glory to your own name through us in Jesus name.

Amen.

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