

Sermon Notes

WORSHIP SERVICE - 5.12.2024

PSALM 18 - OUR STRONG DELIVERER

I. INTRODUCTION

Psalm 18:1-6

1 I love you, O Lord, my strength.

2 The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer,
my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge,
my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

3 I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised,
and I am saved from my enemies.

4 The cords of death encompassed me;
the torrents of destruction assailed me;

5 the cords of Sheol entangled me;
the snares of death confronted me.

6 In my distress I called upon the Lord;
to my God I cried for help.

From his temple he heard my voice,
and my cry to him reached his ears.

- This is the longest Psalm in Book 1 and has one of the longest titles in the Psalms.
- To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, the servant of the Lord, who addressed the words of this song to the Lord on the day when the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. He said:
- Likely composed late in the life of David. Also found in 1 Samuel 22.
- Psalm 18 is a psalm of Thanksgiving.
- David is thanking God for the many gracious deliverances he has experienced because of the steadfast love of God.
- This psalm has many messianic themes.
- Calvin wrote in his commentary that, in this psalm, David "*shows that his reign was an image and type of the kingdom of Christ, to teach and*

assure the faithful that Christ, in spite of the whole world, and of all the resistance which you can make, will, by the stupendous and incomprehensible power of the Father, be always victorious."

II. PRAISE FOR THE DELIVERER (VV 1-3)

- David opens declaring his great love for Yahweh. "I love you, O Lord."
 - It is an expression of the intimacy of the relationship David has with Yahweh.
 - V1 "my strength" - David has personally witnessed and experienced strong deliverance in the face of adversity.
 - He bolsters this argument with several divine characteristics of Yahweh's protection and help (my rock, my fortress, my deliverer, my God, my refuge, my shield, my salvation, my stronghold).
 - The possessive adjective "my," reveals that this is not only how he sees God, this is what God has personally been to him every time he has turned to the Lord for rescue and deliverance.
 - Yahweh is the safe, defensive position David could trust and flee to for refuge.
 - The Lord has been an impenetrable shield to David so that the adversities of life would not destroy him.
 - All of these images signify what God has been to David, his refuge, protection, and deliverer.
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- Now we know that the Lord is not literally those things (fortress, stronghold, shield, etc).
 - David's point is that he relies on the Lord in the way that humans in distress rely on whatever advantages they may have: their own strength, the high ground in battle, or powerful allies that may come to their aid.
 - David's enemies might have had those things, but what David has is far better—he has the Lord himself.
 - This is why David is confident in the Lord's ability to deliver and that is why God is worthy to be praised.
 - Whenever he called on the Lord, David tasted the sweetness of deliverance from his enemies.
 - He could trust that God was with him, God would protect him, and God would deliver him.

III. A REPORT OF DISTRESS (VV 4-6)

- V4-6 frames how David felt in times of adversity.
 - He is recalling the intensity of his anguish, he felt as if death was circling around him, like ropes and cords pulling him down to the grave (Sheol). He felt trapped and unable to escape.
 - When David was a fugitive, running from Saul who was seeking his death, this is what he was experiencing, this is what it felt like to him.
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- We've not probably experienced distress at that level, but we have experienced adversities and difficulties in life where we have felt this way.
 - But it was at this very point that David remembers to call upon the Lord in his distress.
 - This was the pattern of David's life.
 - But it was not only his reflexive response in moments of distress and trouble. Prayer was what David breathed out of his lungs.
 - His was a life of continual worship, prayer, and of offering sacrifices (Psalm 5:3).
 - Prayer was a spiritual response to any and every situation he was facing.

- He could trust that Yahweh, the faithful, covenant-keeping God, would hear from heaven and come to his aid and rescue him from the very depths of Sheol when he called out to him.
- We must learn to trust God this way.
- If you've not cultivated a life of prayer, when things go from bad to worse, prayer seems difficult.
- If prayer is not a habit, then it will not be your first instinct when adversity comes.
- But a child of God that talks to God when everything seems to be going well, will reflexively turn to God and cry out for help when times are tough, and in moments of distress.

IV. STRONG DELIVERANCE FROM HEAVEN (VV 7-48)

1. GOD'S RESPONSE FROM HEAVEN

- David's cry from the pit of despair and distress, from the very depths of Sheol was heard from the heights of heaven.
- Vv7-15 David gives us a glimpse of God's reaction and response from heaven.
- Psalm 18:7-12 Then the earth reeled and rocked; the foundations also of the mountains trembled and quaked, because he was angry. 8 Smoke went up from his nostrils, and devouring fire from his mouth; glowing coals flamed forth from him. 9 He bowed the heavens and came down; thick darkness was under his feet. 10 He rode on a cherub and flew; he came swiftly on the wings of the wind. 11 He made darkness his covering, his canopy around him, thick clouds dark with water. 12 Out of the brightness before him hailstones and coals of fire broke through his clouds.
- This is more reminiscent of the Exodus from Egypt and the coming of the Lord at Mt. Sinai (Ex. 19).
- David employing these vivid, striking, and powerful images are meant to dramatize God's response.
- He describes them in theophanic language. Theophanies are manifestations of God.
- The Exodus and Sinai imagery suggests that David sees his deliverance from his enemies as his own personal exodus from Egypt,
- God is the Divine Warrior King, leaving his throne, exiting his temple.
- Nothing can oppose him. Nothing and no one can stand in his way.
- He is the glorious and victorious King over heaven, earth, and sea.
- There is no question as to his sovereignty or supremacy.
- David depicts his strong deliverance as coming from His strong Deliverer.
- He uses poetic and anthropomorphic language to portray God's power, might, and victory.
- It is an amazing picture of the power and determination of God to save.
- Now, this awesome display of God's power to save is hidden from our view, but God's power and deliverance are nevertheless real.
- God is always powerfully and passionately working on behalf of his people even when we do not see it.

2. DAVID'S COMFORT IN DELIVERANCE (16-19)

- This terrifying snapshot of God's fury, indignation, and readiness to vindicate David gives him immense comfort.
 - Psalm 18:17-19 He rescued me from my strong enemy and from those who hated me, for they were too mighty for me. 18 They confronted me in the day of my calamity, but the Lord was my support. 19 He brought me out into a broad place; he rescued me, because he delighted in me.
 - David's enemies were strong. But the Lord easily prevailed over their great strength.
 - They were too powerful for David, but not too powerful for God.
 - Instead of David experiencing calamity and defeat, he experiences the Lord to be his support.
 - Instead of distress, the Lord brings him into wide open spaces.
 - Instead of tasting death at the hands of the enemies who hate him, David experiences deliverance by the hand of the God who delights in him.
 - David does not fear God's coming in anger, because he sees God as a Father coming to his rescue.
- V20-30 David's provides the reasons as to why God provided him with strong deliverance.
 - He gives two, one based on his faithfulness to God, and one based on God's faithfulness to him.

3. THE CHARACTER OF DAVID'S FAITHFULNESS (20-24)

- Psalm 18:20-24 The Lord dealt with me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands he rewarded me. 21 For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God. 22 For all his rules were before me, and his statutes I did not put away from me. 23 I was blameless before him, and I kept myself from my guilt. 24 So the Lord has rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight.
 - It sounds like David is saying that God did everything he did for David because of all that David had done for God.
 - David seems to be bragging about his own righteousness.
 - How can David claim those things?
- David was devoted to God, he loved the Lord, even though he did fall into serious sin.
 - But when he was confronted, David repented. He grieved deeply over his sin.
 - His whole life was characterized by not only his desire for God, but his striving to keep God's covenant and word.
 - When he says that he is blameless, or righteous or clean, he is not saying that he is walking in absolute moral perfection.
 - Psalm 143:2 Enter not into judgment with your servant, for no one living is righteous before you.
 - What he is doing is contrasting his faithfulness to God with the wicked who hate God and his king.
 - He is not claiming that he has earned God's favor but rather that God's favor and kindness has really and truly made him different from those who hate God.
 - God has changed him. Because of God's steadfast love, David has come to love the Lord and his law.
 - This has affected the way David thinks and lives his life.
 - Read Psalm 19 and 119 and you will see how God's law regulated all of his life.
 - God's word produced David's righteousness. His character has been shaped by God's word.
 - God is the one that brought David into covenant with him and has given him the integrity that he has.

- The Lord delights in David and cares for him because of God's electing love, not because of David's righteous works.
- David is not bragging about himself, he is not celebrating his accomplishments in his faithfulness to God, he is celebrating God's faithfulness and loyalty as we will see in the verses that follow.

4. THE CHARACTER OF THE LORD'S FAITHFULNESS (25-30)

- Psalm 18:25-30 25 With the merciful you show yourself merciful; with the blameless man you show yourself blameless; 26 with the purified you show yourself pure; and with the crooked you make yourself seem tortuous. 27 For you save a humble people, but the haughty eyes you bring down. 28 For it is you who light my lamp; the Lord my God lightens my darkness. 29 For by you I can run against a troop, and by my God I can leap over a wall. 30 This God—his way is perfect; the word of the Lord proves true; he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him.
- The Lord helps those who are his own.
- And his own are the one who are concerned with being faithful, and blameless, and pure.
- God responds with deep concern to his covenant children. He shows steadfast love, integrity, and purity to those who show steadfast love, have integrity, and are pure.
- "With the crooked you make yourself seem tortuous" or "shrewd."
- From the account of how God rescued his people, we see instances where the Lord employs subterfuge.
- Those who go to war against the Lord will find him unyielding and uncompromising.
- "For you save a humble people, but the prideful you bring down."
- The haughty are the rebellious, who have no regard for the Lord or his word.
- God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6).
- David identifies with the humble, the afflicted, the persecuted, and so he counts himself among those whom the Lord saves.
- He says that it is the Lord who gives him light in darkness, and it is God who has enabled him to prevail over his enemies.
- V30 is a powerful declaration of God's perfect integrity and character, and David's unflinching confidence in God's ability to protect him when he trusts in him.
- His affirmations of God's perfection and goodness and character are the ground of his hope.
- Vv31-48, we find David expressing the ways that God has enabled him to triumph over his enemies and placed him as head over the nations.
- V 42 he asserts the incomparability of the Lord, "For who is God, but the Lord?" — No one!
- It is God who has equipped him with strength, gave him integrity. It is God who has given him the shield of God's salvation and who supports him by his right hand, and has equipped him with strength for the battle.
- And those are some of the reasons why David is now empowered and enabled to destroy his enemies.
- David attributes all of his success and power to Yahweh.
- With the help of the Great Warrior King, Yahweh, David is not afraid of his enemies.
- No enemy can stand against the Lord's anointed.
- Joshua encouraged Israel with the words, "One man of you puts to flight a thousand, since it is the Lord your God who fights for you, just as he promised you. (Joshua 23:10).

- With the help of God, David, the Lord's anointed, is "head of the nations" in fulfillment of God's word to Israel.

V. PRAISE FOR A GREAT SALVATION (VV 49-50)

- Psalm 18:49-50 For this I will praise you, O Lord, among the nations, and sing to your name. 50 Great salvation he brings to his king, and shows steadfast love to his anointed, to David and his offspring forever.
- For all of these great deliverances, because of God's perfections, steadfast love, and faithfulness, David declares he will praise God among the nations.
- The last verse, is meant to encourage God's people to look to how the Lord has chosen the anointed king of David's lineage to establish his kingdom and bring about this great salvation.
- "His anointed" is the Messiah, David's offspring.
- This suggests that the history of what God did for David is pointing forward to what God will do for the seed promised to David.
- Psalm 18 is pointing to the greater deliverance we have in Jesus, who is our strong deliverer.
- If we took the words of Psalm 18 and read them as if Jesus were speaking them, the true meaning of the Psalm is amplified.
- Beloved, God is always at work and for us and for our good.
- We should love the Lord and look to him as our strength and hope.
- We, like David, must call on the Lord at all times, confident in his loving care, protection and deliverance.
- We should love his Word and keep his word always before us.
- We should trust in Christ's righteousness, as he is the promised seed of David, the one in whom Great salvation and deliverance is found.
- In Christ, all of our strong enemies have been defeated, Satan, sin and death.
- In Christ, the Lord delights in us.
- In Christ, at his coming, we will be brought into the wide open places of the new heaven and earth.
- He will wipe away our tears and usher us into his eternal kingdom where pain and death are no more.
- Like David, we must always be quick to give God the glory.
- And like David, we should always be a people overflowing with praise and thanksgiving, especially for the great salvation and deliverance we have in Christ.

APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?