

41. The Book of 2Samuel—22:1-51

“A Psalm of Praise”

(6/11/17)

This morning we come to 2Samuel 22—A Psalm of David.

David is known as the “Sweet Psalmist of Israel” (23:1) who wrote half the psalms in the Book of Psalms.

We’re not exactly sure when David wrote the psalm that became chapter 22 of the book of 2Samuel (and also Psalm 18).

It seems likely that this psalm was written sometime after David had become King over all of Israel (2Sam.5) and before he sinned with Bathsheba (2Sam.11).

I say that because the language seems to be that of a man who is the leader of the nation and is fighting many enemies that are trying to bring him down.

Also, he could never have had written v.21-24 *after* he sinned with Bathsheba—

2 Samuel 22:21-24 (NKJV)

²¹ "The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; According to the cleanness of my hands He has recompensed me. ²² For I have kept the ways of the LORD, And have not wickedly departed from my God. ²³ For all His judgments *were* before me; And *as for* His statutes, I did not depart from them. ²⁴ I was also blameless before Him, And I kept myself from my iniquity.

Some would argue, based on the opening verse, that David wrote this psalm early in his life while Saul was still alive—

“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.” (v.1)

The reference could simply refer to the day David became king over all of Israel as God had promised him—despite how enemies like the Philistines and even King Saul for years had tried to kill him so that he never became king.

I. The LORD—Worthy of Praise—v.2-7

2 Samuel 22:2-4 (NKJV)

² And he said: "The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; ³ The God of my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, My stronghold and my refuge...⁴ I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised...

These verses become the introduction to this psalm as David opens up by stating some of the themes that he will elaborate on in the verses that follow—

That the Lord is **“my rock”** (a sure foundation for life); **“my fortress”** (a place of refuge and safety); **“my deliverer”** (the One who rescues from harm) etc.

David is saying that, because of who God is, and because of His faithfulness in protecting His children, in keeping His promises and providing all we need in life—for these reasons and so much more, He is worthy to be praised!

This is a great way to begin your prayers—by reminding yourself of how great, how faithful, how kind, and how powerful is your God—

Psalm 100:4-5 (NLT)

⁴ Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name. ⁵ For the LORD is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and his faithfulness continues to each generation.

When you start your prayers by reminding yourself of how great God is—it puts your problems into perspective and creates confidence in your heart that no problem is so big that your God isn't bigger still to solve. (Acts 4:24)

II. The LORD—Awesome in Power—v.8-16

2 Samuel 22:8-10, 14 (NKJV)

⁸ "Then the earth shook and trembled; The foundations of heaven quaked and were shaken, Because He was angry. ⁹ Smoke went up from His nostrils, And devouring fire from His mouth; Coals were kindled by it. ¹⁰ He bowed the heavens also, and came down With darkness under His feet...¹⁴ "The LORD thundered from heaven, And the Most High uttered His voice.

Here David describes the awesome power of God—the God so concerned about David's problem that it seemed to him as if the LORD shook the earth to meet his need.

"What is most impressive ... is the magnificent way the psalmist describes God rising from his throne in heaven in response to his servant's cry, parting the clouds, and descending to fight the king's battles accompanied by earthquakes, thunder, storms, and lightning." (Boice)

And once again, if we don't continually remind ourselves of the power of our God—then we will become overwhelmed by our personal problems and lose heart.

Psalm 27:13-14 (NKJV)

¹³ *I would have lost heart,* unless I had believed That I would see the goodness of the LORD In the land of the living. ¹⁴ Wait on the LORD; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the LORD!

Exodus 15:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ "Who *is* like You, O LORD, among the gods? Who *is* like You, glorious in holiness, Fearful in praises, doing wonders?

Psalms 145:3 (NKJV)

³ Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised; And His greatness *is* unsearchable.

Psalms 147:1 (NKJV)

¹ Praise the LORD! For *it is* good to sing praises to our God; For *it is* pleasant, *and* praise is beautiful.

There is power in praise.

It will get your eyes off the problem and on to God—which brings peace.

But it also strengthens our faith—and faith is the conduit that allows the power of God to flow into our lives.

The power source is still God Himself (like a power cord has no power in and of itself—it has to be plugged into the outlet...).

When others come against you or when difficult circumstances get you down—respond by spending time in God’s presence praising Him—fear will diminish, faith will be strengthened and God’s power will flow!

III. The LORD—Helper of the Helpless—v.17-25

2 Samuel 22:17-20 (NKJV)

¹⁷ "He sent from above, He took me, He drew me out of many waters. ¹⁸ He delivered me from my strong enemy, From those who hated me; For they were too strong for me.

¹⁹ They confronted me in the day of my calamity, But the LORD was my support. ²⁰ He also brought me out into a broad place; He delivered me because He delighted in me.

“He drew me out of many waters” (v.17)

What David is literally saying is: “*He made a Moses of me*”.

The name ‘Moses’ means “to draw out” and was the name given to him by Pharaoh’s daughter who saved him by drawing him out of the Nile River. (Explain)

However, God would use that name to remind Moses, for the rest of his life, that He had ‘drawn him’ out of death for a purpose—to deliver his people out of Egypt.

In that regard, we are all ‘Moses’—those drawn out of death by God (Eph.2:1) to live a life of purpose.

And what exactly is that purpose—to deliver others out of the bondage of the devil and the world of which Pharaoh and Egypt represent.

In fact, the word for church in Greek is ‘ekklesia’ and means “*an assembly of called out ones*”—those that have been called out of the world for a divine purpose—we call it the Great Commission. (Explain)

But here in a practical, personal sense David is acknowledging how God was his Helper when he was helpless against his enemies.

It reminds us of what Jesus promised His disciples in the upper room the night before His crucifixion—

John 14:15-17 (NKJV)

¹⁵ "If you love Me, keep My commandments. ¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever-- ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth, whom the world

cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you...(Comment)

IV. The LORD—Merciful and Just—v.26-28

2 Samuel 22:26-28 (NKJV)

²⁶ "With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful; With a blameless man You will show Yourself blameless; ²⁷ With the pure You will show Yourself pure; And with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd. ²⁸ You will save the humble people; But Your eyes *are* on the haughty, *that* You may bring *them* down.

This is one of those passages of Scripture that, at first glance, you think is easy to understand—but the more you think about it, the harder it is to grasp what the author (David) is really saying.

The simplest interpretation is that—God becomes to and does for people what they are and do to others.

Now, that's easy when it comes to the statements—"With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful; With a blameless man You will show Yourself blameless; With the pure You will show Yourself pure...You will save the humble people [from their enemies]; But Your eyes *are* on the haughty, *that* You may bring *them* down."

That seems pretty straightforward—God deals with people according to how they live their lives and treat others—it's what some have called "the law of reciprocity"—or in other words "*you reap what you sow*".

Warren Wiersbe—

"The Lord never violates His own attributes. God deals with people according to their attitudes and their actions. David was merciful to Saul and spared his life on at least two occasions, and the Lord was merciful to David. "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt. 5:7 KJV). David was faithful to the Lord, and the Lord was faithful to Him. David was upright; he was single-hearted when it came to serving God. He was not sinless—no man or woman on earth is—but he was blameless in his motives and loyal to the Lord. In that sense, his heart was pure: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8 KJV).

And so again, that's pretty straightforward—it's the last part of v.27 that becomes a problem—

“And with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd.”

The Hebrew word for **‘devious’** (NKJV) is a word that means ‘immoral’ or ‘perverted’.

But that can't be applied to God—we can't say “*to the immoral and perverted, God will show Himself immoral and perverted.*”

The Hebrew word actually comes from a root that means ‘*twisted*’.

I think the NIV captures best what David is literally saying—“*but to the crooked you show yourself shrewd.*”

What I believe David is saying is that with those who are merciful, blameless and pure to others—God will be that to them in return:

James 2:13 (NKJV)

¹³ For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

But to those who are twisted or crooked in their dealings with others—God will be even shrewder (not in any way sinful) and turn the tables on them in some way so that, what they intended to do to others will come upon them (the law of reciprocity).

V. The LORD—Strength of His People—v.29-37

2 Samuel 22:29-34 (NLT)

²⁹ O LORD, you are my lamp. The LORD lights up my darkness. ³⁰ In your strength I can crush an army; with my God I can scale any wall. ³¹ “God’s way is perfect. All the LORD’s promises prove true. He is a shield for all who look to him for protection. ³² For who is God except the LORD? Who but our God is a solid rock? ³³ God is my strong fortress, and he makes my way perfect. ³⁴ He makes me as surefooted as a deer, enabling me to stand on mountain heights. (Comment)

Isaiah 41:10 (NLT)

¹⁰ Don’t be afraid, for I am with you. Don’t be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.

VI. The LORD—Deliverer of the Weak—v.47-51

2 Samuel 22:47-51 (NKJV)

⁴⁷ "The LORD lives! Blessed *be* my Rock! Let God be exalted, The Rock of my salvation! ⁴⁸ *It is* God who avenges me, And subdues the peoples under me; ⁴⁹ He delivers me from my enemies. You also lift me up above those who rise against me; You have delivered me from the violent man. ⁵⁰ Therefore I will give thanks to You, O LORD, among the Gentiles, And sing praises to Your name.

Psalms 59:1, 16-17 (NKJV)

¹ Deliver me from my enemies, O my God; Defend me from those who rise up against me... ¹⁶ But I will sing of Your power; Yes, I will sing aloud of Your mercy in the morning; For You have been my defense And refuge in the day of my trouble. ¹⁷ To You, O my Strength, I will sing praises; For God *is* my defense, My God of mercy.

This psalm (song) of David was a song he sung after he had been delivered from his enemies and was being blessed by God.

I think it’s safe to say that any of us, as God’s people (and even some that are not God’s people), can offer Him praise in times of blessing.

But what about the times we don't feel like singing songs of praise because they're times—not of great blessing, but times of great sorrow, pain, fear, uncertainty or tragedy?

It's easy to sing praises to God when we're experiencing sunshine and blue skies in our lives—but what about times when the storm is raging and darkness is upon us like a smothering shroud.

What about the times when I'm feeling so alone or empty or fearful or am in so much pain that I can hardly breathe?

These are the times some have called, “*the dark night of the soul*”—what do we do then?

Listen, then more than ever, you need to offer God a “*sacrifice of praise*” (Heb.13:15)—what many call “*a song in the night*”.

Only a true child of God filled with the Holy Spirit can sing a ‘*song in the night*.’

One author put it this way—

“It is not difficult to sing when all is going well. But often God gives a special song to one of his hurting children during the night times of their life. Believers find new joys in their nights of sorrow and despair, and they discover a greater closeness with their Lord during times of deep need. The apostle John wrote the book of Revelation while on the barren island of Patmos; John Bunyan completed the classic Pilgrim’s Progress while in the Bedford jail; Beethoven composed his immortal 9th Symphony while totally deaf; and Fanny Crosby once remarked, “If I had not lost my sight, I could never have written all the hymns God gave me.””

How could Paul and Silas, after having been beaten and thrown into a dungeon in Philippi, praise God under such conditions?

It was because they understood what many Christians seem to forget—praising God does not depend on circumstances.

Christians do not rejoice *in their circumstances*, Christians rejoice in the glorious truth that the sovereign God *controls every circumstance* of life.

They know that God causes “*all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose*” (Rom. 8:28).

Acts 16:25-26 (NLT)

²⁵ Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening. ²⁶ Suddenly, there was a massive earthquake, and the prison was shaken to its foundations. All the doors immediately flew open, and the chains of every prisoner fell off!

When Paul and Silas were singing songs of praise in the night (literally in this case—‘*around midnight*’), not only was it a witness to the other prisoners—but there was power released causing their prison doors to open and the chains that bound them to fall off! (Comment)

Pastor Chuck Smith—

“Our spirits are lifted by singing. A dark dungeon can be turned into a house of worship. It takes our minds off of ourselves, our pain or fears, and it focuses our minds on the Lord. I have discovered that the more I focus on my problems the bigger they grow, until they seem insurmountable. The more I focus on the Lord, the smaller my problem seems until it becomes insignificant. Notice the Psalms, so many of them were songs written by David in response to dire circumstances that he was facing. Notice how they focus on the Lord, His power, His greatness, His strength. He is my fortress, He is my high tower, He is my strength. Next time you are worried, start singing.”

A Song in the Night

“During the Thirty Years’ War in the 17th century, German pastor Paul Gerhardt and his family were forced to flee from their home. One night as they stayed in a small village inn, homeless and afraid, his wife broke down and cried openly in despair.

To comfort her, Gerhardt reminded her of Scripture promises about God’s provision and keeping. Then, going out to the garden to be alone, he too broke down and wept. He felt he had come to his darkest hour.

Soon afterward, Gerhardt felt the burden lifted and sensed anew the Lord’s presence. Taking his pen, he wrote a hymn that has brought comfort to many.

“Give to the winds thy fears; hope, and be undismayed; God hears thy sighs and counts thy tears; God shall lift up thy head. Through waves and clouds and storms He gently clears the way. Wait thou His time, so shall the night soon end in joyous day.”

It is often in our darkest times that God makes His presence known most clearly. He uses our sufferings and troubles to show us that He is our only source of strength. And when we see this truth, like Pastor Gerhardt, we receive new hope.

Are you facing a great trial? Take heart. Put yourself in God’s hands. Wait for His timing. He will give you a “song in the night.” (Our Daily Bread, May 7, 1992)