

## PSALM 18:24-50

### INTRODUCTION

This Psalm is what is known as a thanksgiving song. Here we find David looking back over a lifetime of God's saving interventions in his life and so in this Psalm he pauses, reflects and praises God for his many deliverances.

### 1. THE HISTORICAL SETTING

We are told that David sang this song when the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. This Psalm is found in 2 Samuel 22 even the title given to the Psalm comes from that chapter. Now no one is sure which of the two recordings of the Psalm came first.

We do not know whether an original independent Psalm was incorporated into 2 Samuel or whether a Psalm originally written for the historical book of Samuel was later extracted and made a separate composition which was placed in the book of Psalms. However it is certainly the case that it was written by King David, as both Psalms attribute it to him. But this leads us to ask; what is the historical situation of 2 Samuel?

In 2 Samuel the Psalm appears almost as David's final words. Hence it is a summary thanksgiving of God's many deliverances of David through his long life of service for God. These deliverances really fall into three categories.

First and most dramatically there were the deliverances of David from King Saul during the long years David had to hide from him in the wilderness. The second half of 1 Samuel tells this story beginning with Saul's jealousy of David because of the way the people of Israel praised him. While David was in Saul's court Saul tried to kill him on more than one occasion and so David had to flee for his life.

He went first to the Philistines and later to the cave at Adullam and other wilderness fortresses, yet wherever David went Saul who desperately wanted to kill him pursued him. But these years of cat and mouse contain amazing accounts of how God more than once brought Saul to a place where David could have killed him but David did not do so.

Because Saul was God's anointed. David spared Saul's life but God spared David's life on many occasions during these difficult years.

Eventually Saul dies by his own hand after a disastrous battle with Philistines and so David becomes King first over the large southern tribe of Judah and then over all Israel.

Secondly God delivered David during the years of fighting against Israel's enemies and gave him many victories. In 2 Samuel 8 there is a list of David's victories over his enemies including the Philistines, Moabites and the Edomites. It was during this period that God was establishing David as King and was establishing his kingdom.

The third category of deliverance is from the hand of his son Absalom. The young man had plotted to drive his father from Jerusalem and take his kingdom for himself. He succeeded to the extent that David had to flee the city of Jerusalem in order to take refuge again in the rocky wilderness. A battle followed in which the armies of Absalom were defeated and Absalom was himself killed.

Once again God had intervened and David was rescued.

So it is appropriate that Psalm 18 is found in 2 Samuel 22 for it is a fitting expression of thanksgiving to God for his protection and deliverance during many dangerous and difficult years. Now last time I covered the first half of this Psalm (verses 1- 19) and I now want to look at the rest of this Psalm. I want you to notice first of all:

## 2. AN IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE (vs. 20-29)

In verses 20-24 David explains the reason for his many deliverances by God (vs. 20-21). But how could David make those claims particularly since we know that these words were written towards the end of his life after his terrible sin with Bathsheba and her husband. Well verses 25-29 explain for us how David can make such claims in verses 20-24.

The principle in these verses is that God deals with every person as that person deals with God. For example if a man keeps faith with God he will find that the Lord is faithful to him (v 25).

The principle applies for the opposite characteristics too. Translators have had difficulty translating the second part of verse 26. But the idea here seems to be that if a person insists in dealing with God in devious ways then he can be sure that God always outwits such a person, God is too clever for our scheming. Now this is a general principle and we must be careful not to push general principles into every specific case that we know.

The general rule is that the wicked do not prosper forever and the righteous that is those made righteous by God and therefore as a result live righteous lives are rewarded according to their righteousness.

This was certainty David's experience when he stayed faithful to the Lord he experienced the Lord's faithfulness to him. When he faithfully walked with God then God faithfully protected guided and supported David. Is this not our experience as well if we are Christians? Have we not known God's great faithfulness to us in guiding and protecting us when we walked with him?

Do things generally speaking not seem to go more smoothly when we are walking faithfully with God? But once we rebel and try to outwit God we find He is far too shrewd for us and no matter what we do he is dealing with us as we have dealt with him. If we are not walking with God and rebelling against him then we find his hand disciplining us and correcting sometimes those experiences can be very painful.

It is always right when life seems to be difficult, and when we seem to be making little progress in life to ask if we are walking faithfully with God. It may be we are and there may be other unseen and unknown reasons why life seems to be so difficult for us. I think of Job who walked faithfully with God yet unknown to him faced the attack of the Evil One because that was God's plan for him.

But the principle stated here stands as a general rule when we walk with God, God will show himself to be faithful to us but when we rebel against God then He will be one step ahead of us and will deal with us accordingly.

## 3. AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE (vs. 30-45)

In this section of the Psalm we have the story of vs. 4-19 retold. It is retold because the message is important I think we can say that the story is told in verses 4-19 from God's perspective. The language is clearly language that was used of God's appearance to Moses on Mount Sinai and his deliverance of his people in the battles under the leadership of Joshua.

God is described as rising from the throne in glory parting the clouds and descending to earth, accompanied by thunder, smoke, fire, darkness and earthquakes. The result is that David is drawn out of deep waters and rescued from his enemies' hands (vs. 16-17).

Now David speaks very personally about what God's deliverances meant to him. In short they meant that God provided for his every need. His language describes things physical. His feet are enabled to stand (v 33); His hands are trained for battle (v 34), his hands can use a bow and his ankles are strengthened (vs.34 & 36). It is God who gave him the strength to fight (v 32) and gave him the victory (v 35).

Although David had to fight the battles he was only successful because of the Lord's help. Verses 37-42 describes the extent of these victories, they are complete and total because David's victories depended not upon David's military skill and know how but upon the intervention and provision of God himself (vs. 43-45). David was King and a military commander, so he needed strength and guile for victory in battle.

Now we do not usually need God to literally fight for us but the principle demonstrated here holds true for us. Whatever needs we face in our own world and in our own time then David's God is the same God today, he promises to provide for the needs of his people so we can be sure that he will keep his promise (Philippians 4:19). Do we need wisdom today then God is the source of all wisdom and we are told in James that if we lack wisdom then we ought to pray for it and God who is generous in his giving will equip us with wisdom (James 1:5).

Perhaps because of some family situation or personal situation at this moment of time what we need is peace. Well God is the source of true peace therefore go to him and he will grant us peace. Is this not what he promised his disciples (John 14:27).

Perhaps we are in need of love or perhaps its joy that is our need. Well God promises that these are his gifts to us through the Spirit so seek him for all our needs (Galatians 5:22-23). There might be a physical or financial need then be assured that David's God is the same God who promises to meet us at the point of our need and to supply all that is lacking to those who seek him (Philippians 4:19).

Experienced Christians have found this truth to be true time and time again in their lives and I want to encourage us all this evening to prove God in this area. To go to him everyday with every one of our needs and to look to God alone to respond in meeting each one of those needs. We do not have one need that God does not possess the resources to meet. Perhaps you are here and this does not seem true to you.

You have many needs and God does not seem to do anything to meet them. Can I ask have you dealt with your greatest need first and foremost? Have you come and sought forgiveness because of your sin. Have you come to seek Jesus as your Saviour? Before you can expect God to meet any other needs then you need him to meet your greatest need first?

Ask him to forgive you and cleanse you, he has died to do so and then you will see that God is your heavenly Father who supplies every one of your everyday needs.

But unless you do that then how can you expect God to help you. You are his enemy. You are hostile to him and your sin is separating you from him. So deal with your greatest need tonight; and then God will deal with all your other needs. Likewise if you are a Christian and it seems that God is not supplying your need, then is there sin which has not been confessed in your life, are you seeking to walk with God and live for him?

For remember if you are faithful to God you will discover that he will be more than faithful to you in supplying all your needs. However, a little warning is needed regarding this. Make sure that it is

only our needs that we want God to supply. So often it is possible to make our wants become our needs. But God knows best and he knows what a true need is and what a perceived need is. We need God's wisdom to tell the difference.

But you can be confident that just as God met the needs of David in his various battles and trials then God will meet our needs as we seek to live life for him in our modern world.

#### 4. AN IMPORTANT RESPONSE (vs. 45-50)

The closing words of the Psalm summaries the content of the whole Psalm. Verse 46 summaries the beginning of the Psalm with a note of praise and verses 47-48 summaries the main bulk of the Psalm with God's deliverance of David and verse 49-50 is David's response. How will David respond to God's greatness and to his goodness towards him? He states clearly that he will seek to declare God to the nations (v 49).

That is he will seek to praise God and his kind dealings with him to the pagan nations that he comes into contact with for the remaining part of his life.

Paul quotes this verse in Romans 15:9 to illustrate that it has always been God's intention and plan to bring Jews and Gentiles together into his kingdom. But for David to say such a thing in the Old Testament went against the general thinking of the people but not David. David was so taken up with God that he wanted to proclaim to the pagan nations of the day yes even to the Gentiles the greatness of his God.

He knew that his God was living, he had proven him to be his rock and he knew him as his Saviour (v 47). After all he had experienced God's saving hand many times in his deliverances from his enemies.

He knew that his God was almighty and sovereign (vs. 47-48) therefore he will praise him and make his name known among the nations.

Is that not the effect that a true understanding of our deliverance from sin and Satan will have on us? If we have truly been born again and have come to know the truth that the Lord lives and is our Saviour then we will want to declare him and praise him among the unbelieving world.

Perhaps we have lost our way personally in evangelism recently. Then we need to ponder again God's great work of deliverance towards us. Did he not die for us in order that we could be forgiven and made right with God?

Does he not everyday deal so faithfully with us? Does he not everyday provide for us and supply all our needs? Ponder these great truths again and ask God to warm our hearts in such away that we like David will have such zeal to praise his great name among the nations and to sing praises to his great name.

Amen