

## A Praise for Deliverance

By Don Green

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As we open God's word this evening in Psalm 18, I invite you to turn there. It's very encouraging to see so many of you out to hear God's word on this evening and it's a wonderful Psalm that we have in front of us. Last time, last Tuesday, we saw in Psalm 17 that David was making a prayer for protection and he was asking God in the midst of a trial in anticipation of what was to come, he was asking for God's protection in the midst of an attack that he was facing from the hands of men. You could say that he was on the front end looking ahead anticipating God's deliverance and trusting God for what was to come. Here in Psalm 18, we see something that is much different. In Psalm 18, we are seeing David giving his response to a lifetime of God's help through many of his trials. David is thanking God for deliverance given in the past as opposed to looking forward into something that he needs in the future or that he needs right now. Just that very observation gives us some insight into the nature of spiritual life that I hope that you'll think about and anticipate and bring into practice in your own heart.

We're very familiar with the approach. We're kind of conditioned by the nature of life that we turn to God for the things that we need and we're asking him for the things that are ahead of us and the pressures that we feel on our heart. What I want you to see tonight and what I want you to be thinking about is that there is another critical aspect to spiritual life that is mindful of expressing our affection to God and our gratitude to God for the things that he has already done and that we're not simply looking for God to help us through life, we're entering into a relationship, a deepening relationship of affection for him that responds with thanksgiving to the fact that he has been so good and faithful and gracious to us and that he has helped us in the past. We sometimes sing the hymn,

"O God our help in ages past,  
Our hope for years to come,  
Be Thou our guard while life should last,  
And our eternal home."

I think I bridged the last clause there but you get the idea. There is this gratitude that we carry with us of the help that God has given us in the past and we're mindful of that and it cements our affections to God in an ever closer way as one year leads to another and as we see God providing help and giving deliverance and guidance. It just cements us all the

more and we just start to build this long record of God's faithfulness, this long account of how God has been good to us and that's what David is doing here in Psalm 18. He's at the end of his life looking back on a lifetime of multiple deliverances that God had given to him.

Psalm 18, the words of Psalm 18, were first recorded in the book of 2 Samuel, actually 2 Samuel 22. You see that this is almost verbatim reproduced in 2 Samuel 22 and that chapter comes at the end of David's life. It comes after David had been delivered from Saul early in his life. It comes after David had subdued many of Israel's enemies. It comes after the sad episode in his life when God delivered David from his own son, Absalom. So 2 Samuel 22 records the words of this Psalm after all of those deliverances and David is giving thanks to God near the very end of his life and that chapter has been adapted somewhat for Psalm 18, perhaps to make it more fitting and flowing in the course of temple worship as it would have been used in Old Testament times.

But this is a Psalm of praise and you ask the question: why is David praising God in Psalm 18? Well, one writer says it this way, "By Yahweh's help, David had subdued every enemy and now in his old age, looking back with devout thankfulness on the past, he sings this great song of praise to the God of his life." So we're seeing a man deeply in love with God, having walked deeply with God, sometimes failing but manifesting a life that overall should be considered blameless. We see that David writes this kind of as a swan song of his gratitude to God. And what he does here is this for us and this is how this matters to us here this evening, David is teaching us to consciously praise God for his faithfulness to us. We should be mindful. We should stir up our affections and stir up our thinking and stir up our hearts and we look back and we remember ways that God has done good to us as well as believers here today and we stir our minds up and we remember that and we're not like the nine lepers who were healed by Jesus and they go off and they don't even return to give him thanks. We say, "No, no, for me, that's abhorrent to think that I would be so ungrateful that I wouldn't ever turn back to say thank you." David here turns back on life, gives thanks to God and he teaches us how to do that in what we see.

So, look at the inscription here. Psalm 18, this opening inscription before verse 1. Most of it is recorded in 2 Samuel 22 and that teaches us to treat this inscriptions as an inspired part of Scripture even though they're not part of the numbered versing. Psalm 18 in the opening inscription,

1 For the choir direction. A Psalm of David the servant of the LORD, who spoke to the LORD the words of this song in the day that the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. And he said,

Then Psalm 18 is what follows here. We're just going to kind of follow this Psalm. This Psalm is 50 verses long. That's a long Psalm. One writer said, I didn't take the time to verify it, that this is the fourth longest Psalm in the Psalter. But we're going to do our best to treat it all in one message here this evening without keeping everybody until midnight.

What we're trying to do tonight is to just see the big movements in this Psalm without a whole lot of commentary. To see the big movements so that we have an appreciation of what David is doing and we see these major themes that come up through the great poetic language that he uses. Well, let's look first of all, at David's opening praise. David's opening praise. That's your first point if you're taking notes this evening and I encourage you to take notes as you attend Truth Community Church so you've got a record of what you've heard. You can go back and review it and reflect on it and drive it deeper in your own heart. David opens this up and he gives us the whole theme of what these 50 verses are about in these opening three verses. It's as if he's saying, "This is what I want to talk about in this Psalm," and he's expressing his gratitude and his praise and his love for Yahweh because of the way that Yahweh has delivered him through many difficulties in life.

Look at verse 1 here. It's intensely personal. It's intensely intimate. He says in verse 1,

1 And he said, "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.

The verb forms give you the sense that this is a continuous pattern of David's life. This is what he is known over the course of his lifetime and he's expressing this intimate love. Notice, we won't take the time to count them, but notice as you glance at these three verses how often he uses the personal possessive pronoun "my." Ten times in those three verses he is referring to God as "my Lord, my rock, my fortress, my shield, my deliverer, my horn, my refuge." He just goes on and on and on and what I want you to see is the multiplied references of that personal pronoun are very significant for understanding what he is saying here. David is speaking in personal terms of intimacy. His love for Yahweh is borne out of extensive personal experience and he's not talking about God as someone out there that is described in books by others, this is the God of his own life, the God of his own personal experience.

Beloved, I want to challenge you, I want to call you to the pursuit of a walk with God where your own intimacy with God is expressed in that kind of first personal singular sense. This is the way that God deals with us. He deals with us personally. We are meant to know him intimately and directly through our Lord Jesus Christ and so we don't need a priest to mediate for us. We don't need some false view of Mary to intercede with us before God. We go directly to God through the Lord Jesus Christ and we know him intimately and we see him display his power and grace and mercy personally on the platform of our own lives. If that sounds foreign to you, then I just encourage you to get alone with God and open up a Bible and to start to get to know him because this is where he has made himself known and as we know him in his word, then we start to see the way these things play out in the providence and the orchestration of our own lives. That is the birthright of every true Christian to have that kind of walk with God and if we are falling

short of that, the knowledge that this exists, the knowledge that this is the way that it should be should motivate us to get serious and to start pursuing that because this is the kind of walk with God for which you were saved. You are meant to know him intimately, personally, deeply. Paul said in Philippians 3, "I want to know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings." Well, David kind of lays this out for us and sets the bar pretty high for us. He had learned to trust Yahweh from intimate personal experience.

Now, in these opening three verses, he uses many military metaphors to describe his security in the Lord. David was a warrior King. You read about his life in 1 and 2 Samuel and you see that he was a man who conquered many armies. He was a man of war. He was a man of bloodshed. In fact, the Lord said that that's why he would not be able to build the temple personally because he was a man who had shed blood and so it was left to his son, Solomon, a man of peace, to build the temple. But David knew God. He knew the Lord in the midst of deliverances in military battles and so the metaphors "rock" and "fortress" speak of places of refuge. "Shield" and "stronghold" describe places of defensive protection. The "horn" symbolized strength. In multiple ways throughout his life and the course of his reign, David had seen in multiple ways the way that God had protected him in the course of his military endeavors, in the course of his life. In the course of external threats and in the midst of the battle, God had his hand on David and that's why David was alive at the end of a long life to be able to write this Psalm and give thanks to him. So David is opening up and saying, "I want to give this testimony of praise to my God who has protected me through so much in the course of my reign."

Now, as you go on in the Psalm, he goes on now, having given this opening statement, this statement of, "Here's the theme of my song," he goes on in what follows in verses 4 and following to explain why he is praising God. The second point here this evening we could say is he is giving a statement about God's powerful protection. God's powerful protection. The threat of death had often confronted David. Look at verses 4 and 5 with me and we'll start to just really plow through the text of the Psalm now without as much comment. In Psalm 18:4, David says,

4 The cords of death encompassed me, And the torrents of ungodliness terrified me. 5 The cords of Sheol surrounded me; The snares of death confronted me.

He was under risk of losing his life multiple times throughout his prior years and yet here he was in a position of safety and security being able to look back on them and saying, "Although I was in such danger that it was as if death had wrapped ropes around me and taken me captive and was prepared to execute me, I cried out to the Lord and he delivered me from such a great threat as that. God had heard my cries for help."

Look at verse 6. I love this. This is my favorite passage in all the Bible. Psalm 18:6, he says,

6 In my distress I called upon the LORD, And cried to my God for help;

And what happened? David says, "When I cried,

He heard my voice out of His temple, And my cry for help before Him  
came into His ears.

Listen beloved, what he's saying here is this: he is profoundly moved in his heart. He is profoundly grateful. He remembers the fact that he is a mortal human being, was in profound risk of losing his life and he said, "In that moment of weakness when the forces about me exceeded my human strength, I cried out to the Lord and do you know what he did? He listened to me. The God of the universe, the God of Israel, the God of the covenant, kept his promises to me and he heard my cry and he responded and he helped me. Do you understand why I love the Lord? It's because God displayed himself faithful to me in the midst of my dire need."

Beloved, that's what you should be building up in your spiritual bank account, if you can put it that way. There should be this sense that you're keeping a mental record, a mental checklist. Do you remember that financial thing that we went through? Do you remember when we had to walk through the valley of death? Do you remember the illness that we went through when it looked like I might lose my life? Do you remember when we said goodbye to people that we love? Do you remember when that church treated us so horribly and the people that we thought were our friends treated us so badly when we were just trying to be faithful to Christ? You remember those kinds of things and you rehearse them in your mind and you say, "And what happened then? We cried out to the Lord and he spared us medically. He provided when it seemed like there was no provision to be found. He was an intimate friend when human friends failed us and betrayed us." And you have this deepening sense of affection that says, "There is no one like him in my life. There is no one like my God. And there is a place of my deepest loyalty, my highest affections that are reserved for him and him alone and I'm going to recite it and I'm going to rehearse it and I'm going to declare with gladness and without embarrassment, I love this God who has been like this to me." That's what David is saying here. "I was in distress and I cried out to God and he helped me."

God heard his prayer. This God who is transcendent, condescended to his servant and said, "I hear your prayer. I will now rise and help you," and this is what David goes on to describe in verses 7 and following. He describes how God powerfully displayed his power, how God powerfully helped him in the midst of his distress. Remember in verse 6, he had just prayed for help. He says, "I cried out for help," and what happened in response? Look at this in verse 7. This is powerful poetry at its most profound sense. David says,

7 Then the earth shook and quaked; And the foundations of the mountains  
were trembling And were shaken, because He was angry. 8 Smoke went  
up out of His nostrils, And fire from His mouth devoured; Coals were  
kindled by it. 9 He bowed the heavens also, and came down With thick  
darkness under His feet.

Let's pause there for just a moment. David is using poetic language to describe how God exercised his power to help him. Understand that when God manifests his power, nature convulses in his presence. The strongest thunderstorms, the most profound earthquakes, the most severe hurricanes, are manifestations of the way that nature responds with power to the presence of God and that's what David is describing here only he's not describing natural phenomenon here for its own sake, he's saying, "The power that causes nature to convulse in his presence is the power that God brought to bear to help me in my distress. I cried for help. God heard and then power went forth to assist me in my difficulty." That's what he's describing here. The whole record of 1 and 2 Samuel is a display of that.

So David goes on and says, "It's not just that God responded with power, he came quickly." Look at verse 10. He said,

10 He rode upon a cherub and flew; And He sped upon the wings of the wind.

I remember a time of particular distress in my life, praying, "God, you have got to help me!" and praying out of the urgency of a deeply settled need. "God, you have got to help! You have got to intervene here!" and what a joy it was to see him swiftly answer that prayer with things that were outside of my control, things that I had no knowledge of and he brought things into my life that ultimately led to the formation of this church and led us to be here together today. Oh God, the power of that when we have no means of our own to accomplish our own deliverance. When we feel the urgency of the moment. Our heart is stretched to its breaking point and we just cry out, "O God, I can't do anything! O God, use your power! O God, do it quickly!" Then he does and it's like he's riding on the wings of angels, hastening to come to our help.

Well, what can you do when God does that except to profoundly love him and to profoundly glorify him knowing that, "I couldn't have made this happen on my own." Well, when God does that, beloved, we are meant to soak that in and have that shape our priorities and shape the way that we think and shape the way that we think about God and the way that we feel about him so that we carry that forward and not forget and not to be so unfaithful as to let that pass without it drawing us closer to him and deepening and strengthening our loyalty and our love for him. If God has blessed you with those kinds of deliverances, you should love him and be all the more committed to a deep profound loyalty to him and remember it was like the skies opened and, "God brought forth help with power to me. Praise be to his name!" you say. He's writing out of a depth of a grateful poetic heart as he describes God's powerful protection.

He goes on in verse 11. He says,

11 He made darkness His hiding place, His canopy around Him, Darkness of waters, thick clouds of the skies. 12 From the brightness before Him passed His thick clouds, Hailstones and coals of fire.

This is an extended description of the power of God. Understand that as you're reading these verses, it's an extended description. Verse 13,

13 The LORD also thundered in the heavens, And the Most High uttered His voice, Hailstones and coals of fire. 14 He sent out His arrows, and scattered them, And lightning flashes in abundance, and routed them. 15 Then the channels of water appeared, And the foundations of the world were laid bare At Your rebuke, O LORD, At the blast of the breath of Your nostrils.

In other words, God unfurled his power at the circumstances and the circumstances changed as a result.

Verse 16, you'll see here that all of this is building up, that David's not simply talking about weather and he's not talking about, "Oh, I saw an earthquake one day." No, you see in what follows is that he's building all of this up to describe the description of the deliverance that he is praising God for. Verse 16,

16 He sent from on high, He took me; He drew me out of many waters.

"It's as though I was drowning in the waters of danger and God, by his power, reached out and took me."

Verse 17,

17 He delivered me from my strong enemy, And from those who hated me, for they were too mighty for me.

You see as you follow the flow of this Psalm, this is one of the benefits of taking a big passage and looking at it in its broad view. Sometimes you see from the flow of the Psalm that David is describing in those earlier verses the fact that God simply exercised his power to deliver him from his enemy. He said, "I would have been lost. I would have been stuck. There wasn't anything that I could do. Those people were too strong for me and yet God delivered me by his power."

Verse 18,

18 They confronted me in the day of my calamity, But the LORD was my stay. 19 He brought me forth also into a broad place; He rescued me, because He delighted in me.

It's really remarkable and in David we see prefigured Christ in this, that a man of David's strength and military accomplishments had such a tender heart toward his God that all of the bloodshed didn't make him a vulgar, proud, arrogant man. Quite to the contrary, he was the sweet Psalmist of Israel. He had these tender affections in his heart that he openly displayed for the worship of Israel and ultimately pointed us to the nature of our Lord

Jesus Christ who was the perfection of what David imperfectly represented as the anointed of the Lord there. But he describes there in verse 19, "The Lord brought me into a broad place. Whereas before I was surrounded and pressed upon by enemies and danger was right in my face, now the Lord delivered me. He brought me into a broad place where there was room to breathe and there was safety and there was security. They would have killed me. God rescued me and brought me to a place where I could breathe, where I could operate, where I could do what he had called me and given me to do."

Beloved, here's what I want you to see as we stop and apply this for just a moment. Look at the length of what we've already covered here, verses 1 through 19. That's a long passage of Scripture. David poured his heart into that. What I would have you see in this just by way of application as you're thinking about your own prayer life when you go home and maybe get on your knees before your bed before you go to sleep tonight. I want you to think about the extended way that David expresses his thanks. We're good and I'm going to make an assumption that you're like me. We're good at extended prayers of asking God for his help in what we need. We're much less likely to take extended time to just express our gratitude and to thank him. We need to understand that that is a manifestation of spiritual immaturity that we need to address. That we should be as eager to show gratitude to God for blessings received as we are to articulate requests to God for blessings that we need and that our love for him should be so deeply rooted in our hearts that we respond with a willingness to take time simply to name our gratitude before him, rather than simply asking for more and more and more and forgetting what he's done in the past. David here gives us an example of a long stretch of gratitude in reciting to God his recognition of what God had done on his behalf. He dwells on the deliverance with deep gratitude.

Now, so we've seen that he is praising God for this powerful protection that brought him forth to a broad place, verse 19. Well, as the Psalm moves on, David now does something else. This is really profound. This is really significant what he does and I want you to just enter into the mind of David writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in what he says here. Remember what's going on here: David is saying, "I'm at the end of my life and I'm looking back and there is this gratitude that I have for God for all that he's done for me and I'm very grateful to him. I was in trouble and he delivered me powerfully out of his distress." Now, on one hand, you know, if David had stopped there and just ended the Psalm there, you could say, "Wow, that was good. God is strong and powerful to deliver. Thank him. Praise him. Give glory to him." All of that would be really good. But David in what follows, goes beyond that and what David goes on to say is that the fact that God delivers me says something and teaches us something about the character of God that is also deserving of praise. And it's not just that God was powerful, it's the motivation that God has to bring powerful deliverance to his people that David now talks about next.

It brings us to our third point. It's not just that God had powerful protection, our third point here: it was God's loyal protection. And when we enter into this, we get into that which casts us into an ocean of the goodness of God, an ocean of the unspeakable wonder and majesty and glory of his faithfulness that we see unfolded before us in what follows.



God's loyal protection. David is about to tell us that God delivers his people who walk in obedience to him. Look at Psalm 18:20, David says,

20 The LORD has rewarded me according to my righteousness; According to the cleanness of my hands He has recompensed me. 21 For I have kept the ways of the LORD, And have not wickedly departed from my God. 22 For all His ordinances were before me, And I did not put away His statutes from me. 23 I was also blameless with Him, And I kept myself from my iniquity. 24 Therefore the LORD has recompensed me according to my righteousness, According to the cleanness of my hands in His eyes.

Now, let's take a moment to think about what David is saying here because if you read that superficially you'd say, "Well wow, David's kind of taking credit for things here. You know, he's talking about his righteousness and the cleanness of his hands and all of that." But this is where context is so very, very important for us. David here is not boasting in his self-righteousness. He's not saying, "I deserved this in my own merit and therefore God was required to do this and look at me and my righteousness." Remember, the whole theme of this Psalm is that David is praising God for what God has done and so we need to interpret this and understand this in that light. What is he saying here then? If David is not writing these verses to proclaim his own goodness which he's obviously not, what is he saying? Beloved, this is so sweet and precious. What David is saying is and we'll see this in the passages to come, David is saying that God is a God of loyal love. David is saying, "I served God. I sought God. I kept his word before me and do you know what? That was not lost on God as I was in my distress. God took note of that. God rewarded me for that. In other words, my trust in God was not in vain." That is the crucial point that David is making here. He says, "I devoted myself to the word of God. I set my heart upon following him and then I found myself in distress and I cried out to God and do you know what I found? What I found when I cried out to God like that in the midst of a life like that, in the midst of the distress I found myself in, God was faithful to me and showed in return to me loyalty that went far beyond the loyalty that I had shown to him." David is saying, "God was loyal to me. God was faithful. He responded to me when I had been walking with him."

Look at verses 25 and following. He says,

25 With the kind You show Yourself kind; With the blameless You show Yourself blameless;

Notice how he's focusing on God now? Focusing on the character and the attributes of God and the way that God interacts with humanity? David expressing how the Lord had rewarded him according to his righteousness.

Verse 26,

26 With the pure You show Yourself pure, And with the crooked You show Yourself astute. 27 For You save an afflicted people, But haughty

eyes You abase. 28 For You light my lamp; The LORD my God illumines my darkness. 29 For by You I can run upon a troop; And by my God I can leap over a wall.

What David is saying here is that, "God manifested loyalty to me when he was rescuing me from my enemies. In the imperfection of my life," yes, David is not denying the fact that he sinned with Bathsheba as he says this. Rather, he's saying, "The tenor of my life was devoted to pursuing the word and the righteousness of God." He's not making a claim of absolute sinlessness, he's simply saying and echoing what the New Testament itself says about David, that he was a man after God's own heart. And David is saying, "I served him. I sought him. His word mattered to me and when the chips were on the table, when my life was on the line, God showed that he was not indifferent to the fact that I had sought him. He blessed me. He protected me. He rescued me by his mighty arm. His protection in my life was an expression of his loyalty to me as one of his covenant children." It's powerful what he's saying here. "I didn't seek God in vain. I didn't walk with him for no purpose. God knew my life. God knew my heart and God rewarded me with his protection in response."

This principle is huge, beloved. God blesses those who live for him. Obedience brings reward to us. Faithfulness is not neglected by God. Look over at Hebrews 11:6. I want you to see this because I'm about to make a profoundly important point that is absolutely formative to the way that you walk with God. What David is talking about here, this principle that we're addressing here is central to true biblical faith. Hebrews 11:6, the writer of Hebrews says, "Without faith it is impossible to please Him." Notice how faith is defined here. "For he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him." We are to so know God, we are to have settled in our view of the world, settled in our theology, settled in our approach to life, that God blesses those who seek him. That he rewards those who seek after him and who make his word, who make Christ Jesus, who make the Gospel the center of their affections and devote themselves to his word and to obedience to him. That those who give themselves over to Christ will find that he gives his blessing over to them in response.

This principle is huge. Some have put it in the sense that God is no man's debtor. Again, let me just to be clear: we're not talking about how we obtain salvation from our sins here, that is not the focus of this text. That's not what we're talking about here today. What we're talking about here and what we're seeing in Psalm 18 is the expression of a man who walked with God for many decades in his life and came to the end and said, "Do you know what? God blessed me in response to the fact that I sought him." That's what we're talking about here and this principle is massive. Listen to me carefully, especially you young people here tonight as you're shaping your life convictions under the teaching of God's word: this principle that God is a rewarder of those who seek him, that principle is where you sink the roots of your heart, the roots of your affections and you find courage in the face of danger. This principle is where you find courage in opposition. Where you find comfort in isolation. This is what gives you the heart of a lion as you go out in the face of a hostile world.

We believe the word of God. We take him at his word that he's a rewarder of those who seek him and no matter what comes against us, no matter what opposition we face, we are anchored in loyalty because we are looking to the certain reward that a faithful loyal God always gives to those who seek him. That's why centuries of martyrs were unflinching at the sword coming down on their neck. That's why Stephen could pray and look up and see the Lord Jesus at the right hand and say, "Lord, don't hold this sin against them," because he was anchored, he was certain of the reward that God had. It's why 11 apostles out of 12 could be martyred and not shrink from it. Why the Apostle John could be on Patmos in exile. Faithful. Beloved, this is where we will find our confidence and strength and steadfastness in the midst of a world that is increasingly hostile, seeking to silence people like us. We will not be silent because we will be confident that our God will reward us for faithfulness as we follow him no matter what the world says or does against us in response.

This is where you find your courage because under no circumstances would we ever want to diminish, to shrink back from the certain reward out of the great loyalty of God. I want to find out for myself, don't you? I want to know what that reward is that God gives to those who seek him. And nothing in this world is worth trading for that certain outcome. You see, beloved, if you believe this, it defines your whole approach to life. This is where people find the strength to let friends and family go who reject them for the cause of Christ. This is where people find the courage to sacrifice a job because they won't compromise their loyalty to Christ. This is where grieving families, grieving parents, grieving sons who have lost their fathers, find the strength to carry on and to move forward without compromising their walk with God. "Oh, this hurts," they say, "but I will march on. I will march on to that victory. I want that reward that God gives." What David is saying here in Psalm 18 is, "My life was like that and God blessed me in response with his protection."

So as you go on reading it, David knew the outworking of this protection from direct personal experience. Point 4 here is: David's experience of this protection. David is now going to discuss it a little bit from his perspective of his personal experience. This played out in his life in a real way. Verse 30,

30 As for God, His way is blameless; The word of the LORD is tried; He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him. 31 For who is God, but the LORD? And who is a rock, except our God,

Notice how he gets into the personal manifestation of it here now.

32 The God who girds me with strength And makes my way blameless?  
33 He makes my feet like hinds' feet, And sets me upon my high places.  
34 He trains my hands for battle, So that my arms can bend a bow of bronze. 35 You have also given me the shield of Your salvation, And Your right hand upholds me; And Your gentleness makes me great. 36 You enlarge my steps under me, And my feet have not slipped.

What David is saying here is that, "It was my hands that engaged the battle. My feet were sure in the midst of the conflict. I pursued my enemies and I defeated them." This is not abstract to David. This isn't the musings of a theologian writing from something that he knows nothing about from personal experience. David had been on the battlefield and had seen this work out in his own life.

So in verse 37, he says,

37 I pursued my enemies and overtook them, And I did not turn back until they were consumed. 38 I shattered them, so that they were not able to rise; They fell under my feet.

He stood triumphant on the battlefield.

Now, again, just as we saw earlier in the Psalm, so again here, beloved, you must understand what David is saying here. This is not an arrogant boast by a proud man like athletes today who glorify themselves and their conquests. David is telling about his victories as a means to a greater end. It is to show the hand of God in his human triumph. Look at verse 39 here. He makes it very clear so we can't miss his point. He says, "They fell under my feet." Why did this happen? Why was I victorious on the battlefield? "For," because of this, verse 39, "I was successful,

39 For You have girded me with strength for battle; You have subdued under me those who rose up against me. 40 You have also made my enemies turn their backs to me, And I destroyed those who hated me. 41 They cried for help, but there was none to save, Even to the LORD, but He did not answer them. 42 Then I beat them fine as the dust before the wind; I emptied them out as the mire of the streets.

He's saying, "My victory was complete," and he says, "The reason that I was victorious in battle as a King who had that responsibility to lead his people to victory, why did I have victory in the battle?" he says, "It's because you gave it to me. You strengthened me. I lived it out. I experienced it. It was my hands that drew the sword but God, I see beyond the human triumph. I see that you were giving me the victory." And now watch this in verse 43, now he gives the praise to God. Verse 43 he says,

43 You have delivered me from the contentions of the people; You have placed me as head of the nations; A people whom I have not known serve me.

"You have delivered me," he says. "You have placed me as the head of the nations. I enjoy this position by the hand of the blessing of God."

Verse 44,

44 As soon as they hear, they obey me; Foreigners submit to me. 45  
Foreigners fade away, And come trembling out of their fortresses.

He says, "I am in this exalted human position because an even greater God has given it to me and therefore I praise him. This is why," he's saying, "This is why I said from the very beginning I love you, Lord. I love you because you have given this to me by your power and by your loyalty. I couldn't have accomplished it on my own but by your hand, I stand in this position and my human position is merely a reflection of the fact that you have blessed me therefore to you goes all the glory." His whole point in Psalm 18 is to praise his God and he simply becomes an illustration of the point that he wants to make. From a human perspective, David was a great success. The whole point of this lengthy Psalm is to give glory to God.

That brings us to our final point, point 5: David's closing praise. David's closing praise. He comes full circle here at the end of Psalm 18. He repeats his opening theme of praise. Verse 46 brings us....all of it was leading up to verse 46. He opens up, "I love you, O Lord." Verse 46,

46 The LORD lives, and blessed be my rock; And exalted be the God of  
my salvation,

"Everything I've said in this Psalm, dear reader," he says, "is to lead you to this point that Yahweh is the living God and I bless him. He is my rock and my protection as I come to the end of my life. The closing testimony on my lips is this God lives and I praise him with all of my being."

Verse 47,

47 The God who executes vengeance for me, And subdues peoples under  
me. 48 He delivers me from my enemies; Surely You lift me above those  
who rise up against me; You rescue me from the violent man.

And David's love and affection is so consumed with God that he says it's not just going to be a matter of private praise before God on his knees, he's going to go out and proclaim it to the nations.

Verse 49,

49 Therefore I will give thanks to You among the nations, O LORD, And I  
will sing praises to Your name.

"God, you will not find me being ashamed. No, Lord, I will go out and I will proclaim it to everyone, Jew and Gentile alike. You are the rock! Blessed be my God! I give thanks to God for what he has been to me throughout my lifetime service to him."

Verse 50,

50 He gives great deliverance to His king, And shows lovingkindness to His anointed, To David and his descendants forever.

The New Testament shows God's plan and uses, builds off this closing passage to show God's plan to bring Gentiles to grace. Turn over to Romans 15 as we close here quickly. Romans 15:8. This Psalm, like many of the Psalms, point us to an ultimate fulfillment in Christ. The Apostle Paul says, Romans 15:8, "I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers, and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, "Therefore I will give praise to You among the Gentiles, and I will sing to Your name."

David had victory over human battles when death was a threat. Our Lord Jesus Christ had victory over literal death and one day he will rule over the nations. Beloved, in response to Psalm 18, let me just give you a couple of points to coalesce your thinking here. In response to Psalm 18 tonight, you do this: you thank God for his past help in your life. I know you can look back and say, "Yeah, there was a lot." Thank him for that. Live with courage now and trust him to lead you home. Be faithful in life so that you can declare your own deliverances to the glory of God when you come to the end.

Let's pray.

*Father, thank you. You are our rock. We praise you for your protection and we give all the glory to you alone. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.*

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