

## Confidence in Weary Times

### Psalm 68

Greetings to those in-person & on-line, where for the 14<sup>th</sup> and final week we turn to the Psalms.

\*This journey began March 15 when our nation went into lockdown and our state **got grounded**

\*Since then, much has **changed in culture**, yet God has been faithful and the church **remains on a firm foundation**.

\*In March, we had been in a series on Isaiah (God's Unfolding Plan) – and plan to resume that soon.

\*But that Monday (March 9) I woke at 5am with a verse on my mind:

***"We will not fear, though the earth gives way."*** That verse comes from Psalm 46, which became the **first of 14 weekly reminders to *choose faith over fear***.

**\*Today, we end our Psalms series on Fathers' Day** pointing to the God who is a **Father to Fatherless**.

\*Ps. 68 is: *"A Battle-Song of victory." "A triumphal song." "Crushing defeat of all evil."*

\*Picture it as a *'spike the football' celebration; a victory parade; a national celebration*.

**A few examples from culture will help understand the mood of Ps. 68:**

- **VJ Day in Times Square. 75 years ago (1945); Americans celebrated the end of WW2.**

"The Kiss" captured a moment when a **naval sailor (George)** kissed a **woman passing by (Greta)**.

\*Later when Greta was interviewed in her elderly years she said: *"It wasn't my choice to be kissed; the guy just came over...I wasn't kissing him. He was kissing me."*

**\*But it was a kiss to celebrate military victory.**

- **"Thank you, Dr. Salk."** Imagine living through a national epidemic where a disease has no cure.

**\*65 years ago, America faced a national crisis.** Polio was the *"most frightening public health problem in the world"* causing paralysis and death. No vaccine was known.

\*The announcement came **Apr. 12, 1955 at UofM** from Dr. Salk: *"A vaccine was found."*

\*All over MI, **signs hung in windows: "Thank you, Dr. Salk."**

\*Dr. Salk was hailed as a "miracle worker" and was awarded at the White House.

- **Chiefs Super Bowl Parade.**

\*After a 5 decade drought, Chief fans across the nation gathered in a celebratory parade

**\*The biggest Chiefs fan I know is the New Hope man who plays "Jesus" in the Promise.**

*"I've waited my whole life as a Chiefs fan to see this...**We won! Wow!** Then you wait to see the parade and watch it - I did! The sea of red was **phenomenal** as you see the downtown KC streets lined with die hard, true red members of the Chiefs' Kingdom; the*

*fans going crazy as they parade the sweet sterling silver Lombardi trophy. Even though I realize as a Jesus follower that earthen treasures are fleeting, it is one of the best earthly feelings to see your team that you've routed for over 40 years, finally be **crowned Champions...and that's what I tell Lions' fans.***

This is where we end the Psalms series. **A national celebration** to crown the Lord as the True and Better Chief; it rejoices the **victory is won**; the **military campaign is over**; God is King!

1. **Victory belongs to the Lord,** (v.1-33, select verses)

\*That's what **Ps. 3** says (He wins), and that's why the people of God rejoice in Ps. 68.

• **He Wins!**

v.1 *"God shall arise, his **enemies shall be scattered.**"*

v.14 *"The Almighty **scatters kings** there."*

v.21 *"God will **strike the heads of his enemies.**"*

\*The imagery here is one of **military triumph**; showing "the battle belongs to the Lord."

v.18 *"You **ascended** on high, leading a host of captives in your train and receiving gifts among men."*

\***Famous verse** – quoted in NT to declare that Christ was victorious - defeated the grave, destroyed the works of the devil, rose again, and ascended in triumph to free His people

• **We Rejoice!**

v.3 *"the righteous shall **be glad**; they shall **exult...be jubilant** with joy!"*

v.4 *"**Sing** to God, **sing** praises to his name; lift up **a song** to him...his name is the Lord."*

v.26 *"**Bless God** in the great congregation..."*

v.32 *"O kingdoms of the earth, **sing to God**; **sing praises** to the Lord"*

\*BTW: This is why we **sing and celebrate every Sunday** with songs of "Victory"

*"Oh victory in Jesus, our Savior forever."*

*"The cross meant to kill is our victory."*

*"And as he stands in victory, sins curse has lost its grip on me."*

*"When we all see Jesus, we'll sing and shout the victory!"*

\*Be Confident of this - with all **the uncertainty of politics and elections in America**, this we know for certain: **at the end of history, Christ will be crowned King and His people will rejoice.**

2. **...who is a good Father,** (v.5-20, select verses)

\*The **dominant title for our Lord in NT: "Father"** (A title which speaks to His personal care/love)

\*But in the OT, it is a **RARE GEM** to find the Lord referred to as “Father” – Ps. 68 is one of those

\*Ps. 68 rejoices in God as the **Father** of His people, and celebrates all He **does to protect/love...**

- **He protects the weak. (v.5)**

*“Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.”*

\*This **gorgeous verse** has comforted millions of Christians through the centuries.

\*Some had **amazing fathers; others had lousy ones.** To both, God is **T&B Father.**

\*Some have **lost spouses young/old.** To all, God is the **Protector of widows.**

\*And to anyone who has ever **felt weak/vulnerable,** God is our protector.

\*Even for those whose dads were poor examples, we **rejoice** how the Lord is faithful.

\***Listen to the words one New Hope man sent this week:**

*“I did not meet my dad until I was 12, and in more than 30 years since then our relationship has been more of **distant friends...** I have **never one time heard him say** he loves me, proud of me, or anything that resembles what he thinks of me. Not only am I fearfully and wonderfully made in God’s image, I am **LOVED, CHOSEN, and TREASURED!** But, the part that really brings me completely to Jesus is **He will never leave me or forsake me...** Jesus gave up His life...to give me everything in overflowing abundance that my earthly father just hasn’t. And because of that I have told my dad **that I forgive him and love him....** someday I hope he meets Jesus to!”*

\***This man has one thing to tell dads:** “Never forget how powerful it is when you tell your children two things: “I love you. I’m proud of you.”

- **He comforts the lonely (v.6)**

*“God settles **the solitary in a home;** he leads out the prisoners to prosperity.”*

*NLT: “God **places the lonely in families;** he sets the prisoners free.”*

\***What a great comfort for those who have been isolated at home for 14 weeks.**

\*Some have **loved the isolation...**but others have felt **profound loneliness & depression**

\*One thing that Ps. 68 celebrates, is the way our Lord **comforts when we are lonely.**

\***One NH woman writes how the Lord has comforted her:**

*“I didn’t know what it meant to be a widow, except for **profound loneliness.** I wallowed in my grief for a few months. I prayed to God and told Him I was waiting for the rescue He promised widows. I **prayed for companionship** and a family. He told me I should serve Him and His people...**My first service at New Hope changed everything.** I mentioned to my friend that I wanted to serve...The more I stepped into serving, the more people I met, God was filling my life. My life continues to be **full of new family.** Many New Hope families have reached out and included me...**I have family!** God has **RICHLY** blessed me as a widow. He honors me and I am*

*humbled He calls me His own...And, I get to spend eternity with Him! Woohoo!"*

(Testimony, NH woman)

- **He provides for the needy (v.10)**

*"...in your goodness, O God, **you provided for the needy.**"*

\*Another gorgeous verse to celebrate the way God provides for the needs of His people.

\*And the way He provides is **often through the gifts of His people prompted by Spirit**

\*Allow me to **testify of how God has been so faithful:**

\***Last month, we celebrated 23<sup>rd</sup> anniversary at the Boathouse**, overlooking West Bay

\*All dinner, we **watched a momma bird delivering food to her babies in a vent.**

\*We couldn't see the babies, but every time momma bird came with food, the baby birds would **chirp and squeal with delight. PROVISION!**

\*We reflected – **that is how faithful God has been to us over 23 years.**

\*Difficulties? Of course. Trials? Yes. But through it all: **God has been faithful**

\*He has **provided for everything we needed, exactly when we needed it.**

\*And wouldn't you know it, when it came time to pay our bill...the waitress told us that **two couples from New Hope had paid for our meal!**

\*We felt like two **baby birds**...chirping with thanks **b/c our God provided again**

\***Listen, baby birds**, one reason we rejoice: *"Our God will supply all your needs..."*

- **He carries the weary (v.19)**

*ESV: "Blessed be the Lord, who **daily bears us up.**"*

*NLT: "each day he **carries us** in his arms." KJV: "who daily **loadeth** us with benefits."*

\*What a gorgeous picture of how God **carries and blesses us EVERY SINGLE DAY** with blessing

\***One NH woman was at her weakest 10 years ago when she lost her young husband to cancer**

*"It's hard to believe my dear [husband], father of our children, passed away 10 years ago...I'm pretty certain **I cried every day for at least 18 months**...I recall so very clearly crying profusely one night while holding onto my thin, weak husband...I can't remember what I was crying for, I only know without a doubt **God's gentle arms were wrapped around me.** I couldn't hear Him speak to me, but He did speak to me in Spirit and assured me that He knew my pain because of the pain He endured in the loss of His only Son...**God is faithful** - He heard my cries, dried my tears and **provided me with HIS strength to get up daily**...God provided me with both new and old friends to lean on...He provided me time to pray...He provided me with guidance and counsel in raising my daughters. He taught me that when His children ask, seek and knock - **He is there**...I am still humbled and deeply thankful for THE Holy God who **shows himself daily to take care of fatherless and widows.**"*

\*To every New Hope listener who feeling weary and burdened, know: God is faithful.

\*He **daily bears us up**; Every day he **carries us in his arms**; He **loadeth us with benefits**.

- **He delivers the dead. (v.20)**

*“Our God is a God of salvation, and to God, the Lord, belong deliverances from death.”*

\*This is the ultimate reason for hope and confidence. God has even **defeated the grave**.

\*We are **people of the resurrection**, who rejoice that our Lord has conquered the grave, defeated death and rose victorious.

\*And no matter what we walk through, we are confident: **The Lord will never leave us**.

**\*After last Sunday, one New Hope man wrote about the comfort that Ps. 139 brought:**

*“Psalm 139 was my Grandfather's life verse...I chose to "inherit" the same...I've had an incredibly **hard past week**, truly thought **I wouldn't make it another hour**. Today, you, through the indwelling Holy Spirit...spoke to me. Telling me over and over that it's not about my battle...yet about our God, our Lord and Savior, our King Christ Jesus. He alone **gives me each passing second, minute, hour and every sunrise** that He alone has decided...I fear not the death that awaits, but the peace, glory, love and joy that is mine in His arms...Thanks dude. There is one man who God needed to talk to this day - It was !!”* **(Testimony, Roscommon)**

**3. – He alone is awesome! (v.34-35)**

34 *“Ascribe power to God, whose **majesty** is over Israel, and whose **power** is in the skies. 35 **Awesome is God from his sanctuary**; the God of Israel—he is the one who **gives power and strength** to his people. Blessed be God!”*

\*Ps. 68 ends by **spiking the football in victory** and calling us to declare: GOD IS AWESOME!

\*We say “**awesome**” way too much. We label everything as AWESOME!

*\*Grandmas cookies are awesome.*

*\*My Dad is awesome.*

*\*Tik-Tok is awesome.*

*\*The Governor is awesome.*

*\*The President is awesome.*

\*Here is the truth: **Only God is truly AWESOME!**

\*Who else is **over Israel** and **over all of nations**, governing history with perfect wisdom?

\*Who else has ‘power in the skies’ to create the world and provide for his people?

\*Who else knows every need we have and is able to strengthen us when we are weak?

\*Who else is able to protect every **fatherless child** and every **lonely widow**?

**Action Steps:**

**Parents, reaffirm your love to kids.**

God is father to the fatherless. Dads, we have the great responsibility to display the love of God  
Every child needs to hear two primary things, and they are best heard from dads/moms.

*"I love you."*

*"I'm proud of you."*

**Children, reaffirm your love to dad.**

Is your dad alive? What is one thing you can thank him for?

No matter how good/poor dad is at reflecting the character of God, one way to bless your earthly father is to tell them "Thank You" for the way they loved you, taught you, provided, etc.

**Make the "birds" rejoice.**

*"Here is my government check. Please use it for food for those less fortunate than our family.  
God has blessed me."* (N.H. Family)

\*If God has blessed you, find a need and provide for those who have lack.

**"Loadeth" a widow/single parent with help:**

*"We hope this helps some family in need."*

*(N.H. family; \$2,500 gift to Single Moms)*

**Be Confident: The Lord will Triumph.**

\*Every one of the 14 Psalms has declared: *God is our refuge and strength.*