

This morning we are continuing to go through the life of David. In 2 Samuel 22, the narrative of David's life pauses for one of David's Psalms. In addition to being a king and a warrior, David was a musician, responsible for writing many songs, which are called Psalms in the Bible. The reading from 2 Samuel 22 is also found in Psalm 18, although it is likely adapted there slightly for congregational singing. I'd like to do a big picture view of this Psalm, share three applications, and then give an opportunity for you to share testimonies. The Psalm is made up of 6 parts:

### 1) Heartfelt praise

It begins with heartfelt praise from God:

*David sang to the LORD the words of this song when the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. <sup>2</sup> He said: "The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; <sup>3</sup> my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation. He is my stronghold, my refuge and my savior-- from violent men you save me. <sup>4</sup> I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies.*

Look at all the metaphors David uses for God: God is my rock – a shelter from the storm, and a firm foundation. He is a fortress and deliverer, shield, horn of salvation, refuge and savior. These are essentially many ways of saying that God found him in times of trouble and protected and delivered him.

### 2) Deep despair & a cry of prayer

*<sup>5</sup> "The waves of death swirled about me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me. <sup>6</sup> The cords of the grave coiled around me; the snares of death confronted me. <sup>7</sup> In my distress I called to the LORD; I called out to my God.*

Think back on his life. For 20 years he was on the run for his life from Saul, and later from his son Absalom.

**1 Samuel 20:3** - *But David took an oath and said, "Your father knows very well that I have found favor in your eyes, and he has said to himself, 'Jonathan must not know this or he will be grieved.' Yet as surely as the LORD lives and as you live, there is only a step between me and death."*

David is not just using nice words here, but is speaking from real experience.

### 3) The saving action of God

*From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came to his ears. <sup>8</sup> "The earth trembled and quaked, the foundations of the heavens shook; they trembled because he was angry. <sup>9</sup> Smoke rose from his nostrils; consuming fire came from his mouth, burning coals blazed out of it. <sup>10</sup> He parted the heavens and came down; dark clouds were under his feet. <sup>11</sup> He mounted the cherubim and flew; he soared on the wings of the wind. <sup>12</sup> He made darkness his canopy around him-- the dark rain clouds of the sky. <sup>13</sup> Out of the brightness of his presence bolts of lightning blazed forth. <sup>14</sup> The LORD thundered from heaven; the voice of the Most High resounded. <sup>15</sup> He shot arrows and scattered the enemies, bolts of lightning and routed them. <sup>16</sup> The valleys of the sea were exposed and the foundations of the earth laid bare at the rebuke of the LORD, at the blast of breath from his nostrils. <sup>17</sup> "He reached down from on high and took hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters. <sup>18</sup> He rescued me from my powerful enemy, from my foes, who were too strong for me. <sup>19</sup> They confronted me in the day of my disaster, but the LORD was my support. <sup>20</sup> He brought me out into a spacious place;*

David could have just written "Yahweh intervened on my behalf," but he wants you to see God in all his saving fury.

### 4) David's commitment to the Lord

*he rescued me because he delighted in me. <sup>21</sup> "The LORD has dealt with me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands he has rewarded me. <sup>22</sup> For I have kept the ways of the LORD; I have not done evil by turning from my God. <sup>23</sup> All his laws are before me; I have not turned away from his decrees. <sup>24</sup> I have been blameless before him and have kept myself from sin. <sup>25</sup> The LORD has rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to my cleanness in his sight. <sup>26</sup> "To the faithful you show yourself faithful, to the blameless you show yourself blameless, <sup>27</sup> to the pure you show yourself pure, but to the crooked you show yourself shrewd. <sup>28</sup> You save the humble, but your eyes are on the haughty to bring them low.*

Maybe you are wondering how David can say these words in light of his adultery and murder? Either this was written before that time, or it's not about sinless perfection but about David's general, overall fidelity to God. David may have sinned egregiously, but he was wholeheartedness in his commitment to God.

This is good news for us. David was far from perfect, but he was still a man after God's own heart.

### 5) God's power has given David victory

<sup>29</sup> *You are my lamp, O LORD; the LORD turns my darkness into light.* <sup>30</sup> *With your help I can advance against a troop; with my God I can scale a wall.* <sup>31</sup> *"As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is flawless. He is a shield for all who take refuge in him.* <sup>32</sup> *For who is God besides the LORD? And who is the Rock except our God?* <sup>33</sup> *It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect.* <sup>34</sup> *He makes my feet like the feet of a deer; he enables me to stand on the heights.* <sup>35</sup> *He trains my hands for battle; my arms can bend a bow of bronze.* <sup>36</sup> *You give me your shield of victory; you stoop down to make me great.* <sup>37</sup> *You broaden the path beneath me, so that my ankles do not turn.* <sup>38</sup> *"I pursued my enemies and crushed them; I did not turn back till they were destroyed.* <sup>39</sup> *I crushed them completely, and they could not rise; they fell beneath my feet.* <sup>40</sup> *You armed me with strength for battle; you made my adversaries bow at my feet.* <sup>41</sup> *You made my enemies turn their backs in flight, and I destroyed my foes.* <sup>42</sup> *They cried for help, but there was no one to save them-- to the LORD, but he did not answer.* <sup>43</sup> *I beat them as fine as the dust of the earth; I pounded and trampled them like mud in the streets.* <sup>44</sup> *"You have delivered me from the attacks of my people; you have preserved me as the head of nations. People I did not know are subject to me,* <sup>45</sup> *and foreigners come cringing to me; as soon as they hear me, they obey me.* <sup>46</sup> *They all lose heart; they come trembling from their strongholds.* <sup>47</sup> *"The LORD lives! Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be God, the Rock, my Savior!* <sup>48</sup> *He is the God who avenges me, who puts the nations under me,* <sup>49</sup> *who sets me free from my enemies. You exalted me above my foes; from violent men you rescued me.*

It's not about what David has done on his own, but what he was able to accomplish with the help of the Lord.

### 6) More Heartfelt Praise & testimony

<sup>50</sup> *Therefore I will praise you, O LORD, among the nations; I will sing praises to your name.* <sup>51</sup> *He gives his king great victories; he shows unfailing kindness to his anointed, to David and his descendants forever."*

David ends the Psalm by once again praising God and declaring to everyone how great God is.

Let me share three implications of this passage for us:

### 1) The deeper the pit, the higher the praise

In Luke 7 there is a story of a sinful woman forgiven by Jesus.

**Luke 7:47** - *Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven-- for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little.*

The one who has been forgiven much loves much. In the same way, the deeper the despair, the more difficult the circumstances, the deeper and more heartfelt the praise when God delivers. God will often allow you to go through things to bring greater joy and gratitude. It is no fun to go through them, but when God saves, it brings great joy.

JRR Tolkien coined a word for this: **eucatastrophe** – a sudden joyous turn. As he put it, *“it is the mark of a good fairy-story, of the higher or more complete kind, that however wild its events, however fantastic or terrible the adventures, it can give to child or man that hears it, when the “turn” comes, a catch of the breath, a beat and lifting of the heart, near to (or indeed accompanied by) tears, as keen as that given by any form of literary art, and having a peculiar quality.”* Defeat seems certain, and then all of a sudden victory comes. Gandalf is alive. Darth Vader turns on the emperor. ET makes the bike fly.

We may go through times of despair, but when the eucatastrophe comes, the praise is great.

### 2) We were created to praise and enjoy God

God deserves our praise. God deserves the glory. David recognized that all he did that was good was because of God. C.S. Lewis wrote about the Biblical idea of praise and why God and the Psalmists call on us to praise:

*“But the most obvious fact about praise – whether of God or anything – strangely escaped me. I thought of it in terms of compliment, approval, or the giving of honour. I had never noticed that all enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise unless (sometimes even if) shyness or the fear of boring others is deliberately brought in to check it. The world rings with praise – lovers praising their mistresses, readers their favourite poet, walkers praising the countryside, players praising their favourite game... I had not noticed either that just as men*

*spontaneously praise whatever they value, so they spontaneously urge us to join them in praising it: “Isn’t she lovely? Wasn’t it glorious? Don’t you think that magnificent?” The Psalmists in telling everyone to praise God are doing what all men do when they speak of what they care about.*

Praise is a natural thing – when we enjoy something, we want to praise it. When you feel that someone is beautiful, you want to tell them. If someone has made you proud, you want to tell them. If you read a great book or watch a great movie, you want to praise it to others. When you experience a beautiful sunset, or breathtaking mountain view, or incredible waterfall, you want to praise it, share it with others. When we enjoy something, we naturally want to praise it.

Lewis continues:

*I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation. It is not out of compliment that lovers keep on telling one another how beautiful they are; the delight is incomplete till it is expressed. It is frustrating to have discovered a new author and not to be able to tell anyone how good he is; to come suddenly, at the turn of the road, upon some mountain valley of unexpected grandeur and then to have to keep silent because the people with you care for it no more than for a tin can in the ditch; to hear a good joke and find no one to share it with... The worthier the object, the more intense this delight would be. If it were possible for a created soul fully to “appreciate”, that is to love and delight in, the worthiest object of all, and simultaneously at every moment to give this delight perfect expression, then that soul would be in supreme beatitude.*

When we enjoy something, our delight is incomplete until it is expressed. Ever watch a movie by yourself? See a moving video? What do you want to do? Tell others about it! Post it on Facebook! Express to others how amazing it is and hope that others join you in praising it! Shout it from the rooftops so that others will join in praising and share in the enjoyment! Share it with others so that they can join you in praising it.

Lewis continues:

*It is along these lines that I find it easiest to understand the Christian doctrine that “Heaven” is a state in which angels now, and men hereafter, are perpetually employed in praising God... To see what the doctrine really means, we must suppose ourselves to be in perfect love with God – drunk with, drowned in,*

*dissolved by, that delight which, far from remaining pent up within ourselves as incommunicable, hence hardly tolerable, bliss, flows out from us incessantly again in effortless and perfect expression, our joy no more separable from the praise in which it liberates and utters itself than the brightness a mirror receives is separable from the brightness it sheds. The Scotch catechism says that man's chief end is "to glorify God and enjoy Him forever." But we shall then know that these are the same thing. Fully to enjoy is to glorify. In commanding us to glorify Him, God is inviting us to enjoy Him."*

To discover the most beautiful thing, to be able to perfectly enjoy it and express our enjoyment and share that joy with others – that would be heaven.

Praise the Lord does not mean he needs to be praised, but **rather it's an invitation to enjoy Him**. It is giving expression to our enjoyment of him.

### 3) True worship comes from a personal experience of God's saving power

This Psalm is full of personal relationship and personal experience. David has experienced him as "my shield, my rock, my Savior." It's not just that God died for the sins of the world but that He died for MY sins. It's not just that God rescues and provides, but that He has rescued ME and provided for ME.

Let's spend some time testifying to one another about the God who saves and delivers us from our trouble.