Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption

"I Called. He Heard. And the Earth Rocked and Reeled."

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): Ps. 18; Ps. 138; *Ex. 34:6; Jas. 4:6–7.*

There are moments when life seems to close in around us. The trouble is not somewhere in the distance; it is right in front of us, pressing against us, and we cannot see a way through. Perhaps someone has turned against us, or a burden feels stronger than we are. We pray, but the circumstances still look dark. We wonder whether ADONAI has heard us. David knew that place. He knew what it was to be surrounded by enemies, to be confronted by calamity, and to have nothing left to depend upon but the LORD.

Yet Psalm 18 is not simply David describing how desperate his situation became. It is his testimony of the God who heard him and came to his rescue. David begins with love: *"I love You, ADONAI, my strength"* (Ps. 18:2). He calls the LORD his rock, fortress, deliverer, shield, and stronghold. These are not words for effect. They describe the One David had learned to lean upon. Psalm 138 affirms that the exalted God sees the lowly and gives them strength. The question is whether we will call upon Him and trust Him when everything around us still looks hopeless.

1. I CALLED UPON ADONAI, AND HE HEARD MY CRY (PS. 18:2–7)

David did not pretend that his circumstances were less serious than they were. He described cords of death entangling him, torrents of destruction overwhelming him, and snares of death confronting him. This was desperation. He was in a narrow, constricted place, with powerful enemies and no obvious means of escape. Yet he did not allow the desperation of that moment to determine whom he would trust. He called upon ADONAI, the One worthy of praise. Psalm 18 tells us that his cry came before God, into His ears. The Creator heard a man unable to save himself. David's weakness did not make his prayer insignificant to God.

Sometimes we are tempted to think we must first gather ourselves, become stronger, or figure out what to say before approaching the LORD. But David's example is different. He cried out from the middle of his distress. Psalm 138:3 adds that on the day he called, ADONAI answered and made him bold with strength in his soul. The answer was not only outward. God strengthened the man who was calling. We may not immediately see the solution, but we can come honestly before Him. We can say, "LORD, this is bigger than I am. I cannot carry it or overcome it without You." Our voices need not sound impressive. It is whether we are calling upon the One who truly is our rock.

2. HE CAME TO MY RESCUE, EVEN WHILE IT STILL LOOKED DARK (PS. 18:8–20)

Then David describes something remarkable. The earth rocked and quaked. The foundations of the mountains trembled. ADONAI parted the heavens and came down. He

rode upon a cheruv, soared on the wings of the wind, and made darkness His covering. The LORD moved because He heard His servant. But there is an easily overlooked detail: as God came, darkness still surrounded Him. David could not yet see what ADONAI was doing. The threat still looked real. Yet heaven was not silent, and God was not inactive. The darkness that concealed His coming was not evidence of His absence.

At the moment of His appearing, ADONAI spoke. His voice thundered, and the powers confronting David were scattered. What seemed unmovable was shaken. Then the immense picture becomes wonderfully personal: God reached down from on high, took hold of David, and drew him out of mighty waters. The One whose voice moves mountains reached for one struggling man. David says that the LORD rescued him because He delighted in him. This is the heart of the passage. Our God is not indifferent to the distress of those who belong to Him. We must not confuse what we cannot see with what He is not doing. He hears. He comes near. And His hand is able to reach into places from which we could never pull ourselves out.

3. HE HOLDS ME UP AND GIVES ME STRENGTH TO WALK HIS WAY (PS. 18:21–36)

David's testimony goes further. Even while people stronger than he was pursued him, he did not abandon the ways of ADONAI. He did not use the injustice he suffered as an excuse to become unjust himself. He continued to watch carefully over his steps and keep God's judgments before him. His integrity was not a backdrop for other people to admire. What was visible on the outside was meant to be true on the inside. The LORD saw that. And David's suffering did not mean he had secretly done something wrong. A person can be walking faithfully with ADONAI and still face desperate circumstances. We need to remember this when trouble comes, both in our own lives and in the lives of those around us.

David keeps returning to the source of his strength: “For YOU.” It was ADONAI who saved the lowly, lit his lamp in darkness, and enabled him to face what once seemed impossible. It was God who girded him with strength and made his way straight. It was God's right hand that upheld him. David was not celebrating his own greatness. He was acknowledging the gentleness and strength of the LORD who sustained him. Psalm 138 says that although ADONAI is exalted, He looks upon the lowly; it is the proud who remain at a distance. The way forward, then, is not to convince everyone how strong or righteous we are. It is to humble ourselves before God, remain faithful to His ways, and learn to lean on Him. He is able not only to rescue us from trouble but to establish our feet and strengthen us to continue walking with Him.

CONCLUSION

David's testimony ends in worship. He makes ADONAI known among the nations because he has come to know Him as his rescuer. Psalm 138 opens with that same determination: David praises the LORD with his whole heart, acknowledging His love and faithfulness before the mighty. Enemies and troubles remained. But worship and prayer declared something greater than the circumstances: ADONAI reigns, and His

lovingkindness endures forever. David could say that the LORD would fulfill His purpose for him because he had learned the character of the One holding his life. That confidence can shape our battles. We do not deny the darkness. We refuse to let the darkness twist our realization of who God is.

So where are you today? Are you caught in a place that feels too narrow to escape? Have you been trying to hold yourself up, defend yourself, or persuade others that you are doing what is right? Perhaps fear or bitterness has taken root. Today, bring all of it before ADONAI. Call upon Him, confess what needs to be confessed, and surrender what you cannot control. If you have wandered from His ways, return to Him. If you have never entrusted your life to Yeshua, come to Him in repentance and faith; receive the mercy and salvation you cannot produce for yourself. If you belong to Him but have grown weary, ask Him to make you bold with strength in your soul. The LORD who heard David is still worthy of our trust. Call upon Him. Let Him be your rock. And even before the clouds lift, choose to stand upon His faithfulness.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does David's description of his distress in Ps. 18 help us understand the honesty of biblical prayer?
2. What does the image of ADONAI coming through darkness teach us about seasons when His activity is not yet visible?
3. In what present situation are you relying more on your own ability to manage or defend yourself than on the LORD?
4. How might your response to a difficult person or an unfair circumstance change if you guarded your integrity as David did?
5. How can praise and prayer make ADONAI known to others even before our circumstances change?

CLOSING PRAYER

ADONAI, my rock and my deliverer, thank You that You hear us when we call. You know the trouble that presses against us, the fears we carry, and the places where our strength has failed. Forgive us for leaning on ourselves, for allowing bitterness or pride to turn our hearts away from Your ways, and for measuring Your faithfulness by what we can see. Teach us to trust You in the darkness. Reach into the places from which we cannot rescue ourselves, uphold us with Your right hand, and give us courage and strength in our souls. Make our lives whole before You, faithful on the inside as well as the outside. Through Yeshua our Messiah, let Your lovingkindness be known in our homes, in our communities, and among the nations. We surrender ourselves to You and trust You to accomplish Your purposes.

B'Shem Yeshua, In the name of Yeshua, amen.