

EVANGELICAL BIBLE COLLEGE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



THE PSALMS OF DAVID

Psalms 26 – 31

A VERSE-BY-VERSE STUDY

by

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[BOOK 49-E]

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WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

Professor Simon Greenleaf was one of the most eminent lawyers of all time. His "Laws of Evidence" for many years were accepted by all States in the United States as the standard methodology for evaluating cases. He was teaching law at a university in the United States when one of his students asked Professor Greenleaf if he would apply his "Laws of Evidence" to evaluate an historical figure. When Greenleaf agreed to the project he asked the student who was to be the subject of the review. The student replied that the person to be examined would be Jesus Christ. Professor Greenleaf agreed to undertake the examination of Jesus Christ and as a result, when he had finished the review, Simon Greenleaf personally accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour.

Professor Greenleaf then sent an open letter to all jurists in the United States saying in part "I personally have investigated one called Jesus Christ. I have found the evidence concerning him to be historically accurate. I have also discovered that Jesus Christ is more than a human being, he is either God or nothing and having examined the evidence it is impossible to conclude other than he is God. Having concluded that he is God I have accepted him as my personal Saviour. I urge all members of the legal profession to use the "Laws of Evidence" to investigate the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and if you find that he is wrong expose him as a faker but if not consider him as your Saviour and Lord"

HOW CAN I BE SAVED?

Salvation is available for all members of the human race.

Salvation is the most important undertaking in all of God's universe. The salvation of sinners is never on the basis of God's merely passing over or closing His eyes to sin. God saves sinners on a completely righteous basis consistent with the divine holiness of His character. This is called grace. It relies on God so man cannot work for salvation, neither can he deserve it. We need to realise that the creation of this vast unmeasured universe was far less an undertaking than the working out of God's plan to save sinners.

However the acceptance of God's salvation by the sinner is the most simple thing in all of life. One need not be rich, nor wise, nor educated. Age is no barrier nor the colour of one's skin. The reception of the enormous benefits of God's redemption is based upon the simplest of terms so that there is no one in all this wide universe who need be turned away.

How do I become a Christian?

There is but one simple step divided into three parts. First of all I have to recognise that I am a sinner (Romans 3:23; 6:23; Ezekiel 18:4; John 5:24).

Secondly, realising that if I want a relationship with Almighty God who is perfect, and recognising that I am not perfect, I need to look to the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Saviour (1 Corinthians 15:3; 1 Peter 2:24; Isaiah 53:6; John 3:16).

Thirdly, by the exercise of my own free will I personally receive the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour, believing that He died personally for me and that He is what He claims to be in an individual, personal and living way (John 1:12; 3:36; Acts 16:31; 4:12).

The results of Salvation

The results of this are unbelievably wonderful:

My sins are taken away (John 1:29),

I possess eternal life now (1 John 5:11,12),

I become a new creature in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17),

The Holy Spirit takes up His residence in my life (1 Corinthians 6:19),

And I will never perish (John 10:28-30).

This truthfully is life's greatest transaction. This is the goal of all people; this is the ultimate of our existence. We invite and exhort any reader who has not become a Christian by trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ to follow these simple instructions and be born again eternally into God's family (Matthew 11:28; John 1:12; Acts 4:12; 16:31).

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THE PSALMS OF DAVID

INTRODUCTION

AUTHOR:

The book we have before us was the hymn book of the early church and of Israel beforehand. These Psalms form the finest musical expression of spiritual life, with all its ups and downs, than appears in the literature of any other nation that has ever lived upon the earth. The Psalms were the comfort to my old father as he walked the decks of his warship in World War II, and continued to be his comfort through the even darker days of cardiac caused episodic dementia as his life ebbed away in the Old Folks Home where he finally died full of years at 90. Through the most incredible pressures I have faced over the last eleven years in my own life they have comforted my soul with the same power they did when I was a young university student. I love this book!

I love my brothers in the Lord who wrote these psalms, and there were many authors, and they all testify to the grace, mercy, love, and patience of God with us all. David wrote all the psalms of the first section (or "book") of the collection, and he is a "trophy of grace" if ever there was one. David gives me hope every day, for if he could be forgiven and lifted up to serve again after his great sin, then there is hope for each and every one of us. The "Sons of Korah" later in the book also testify to the grace and mercy of the Lord, for they ought not to even live, given the great sin and judgment that came upon their forefather, and yet the "remnant of grace" survived and they lived on to sing the glory of the Lord who judged their ancestor in justice and righteousness and saved their posterity in loving kindness. King Hezekiah also figures as an author, and he also testifies to the grace and mercy of the Lord under the greatest time of national suffering.

King David was the youngest son of Jesse and ruled Israel from approximately B.C. 1052 - 1012. David learned to play music on the hills around Bethlehem and his skill saved his life several times from the madness of Saul. He was a skilled musician even as a young man (1 Samuel 16:18-23), and as is seen in 1 Chronicles 16:7 and 2 Samuel 23:1, continued writing psalms through to the end of his life. The psalms were his heart felt expression of his walk with God and his honesty with the Lord is at times overwhelming and humbling. The first forty-one psalms are, with a handful of anonymous exceptions, all attributed to David with a number of others scattered throughout the remainder of the book. The entire collection is called after him as he is the greatest of the singers of Israel, and their great king from whom Messiah is to come. It was probably collected into its final form that we see today by Ezra after the return of the Exiles from Babylon, but it had existed in earlier forms right back to the days of David and Solomon and in its five sections formed the song book for the Temple worship services, just as it will again in the Millennial Temple.

In the entire book of Psalms David is specifically credited as author of 73 Psalms, Asaph with 12, the Sons of Korah with 10, Moses with 1, Solomon with 2, Ethan with 1, Heman with 1, and 50 are anonymous.

I thank Brian Huggett, who did the earlier series of volumes on these Genesis Psalms, and I honour him for these works. My Reflections and Application points are the result of my present walk through a deep "valley of the shadow of death" that the Lord has allowed me to walk through this time to 2014. It has been the severity of the trials I have experienced over recent years that has moved me to reflect deeply on these psalms and write these new books for our ministry. I have been encouraged and pray you will be.

PSALMS SECTION ONE

THE GENESIS PSALMS – PSALMS 1 - 41

INTRODUCTION

The Psalms are arranged in five specific books. Book 1 covers Psalms 1 – 41, and is tied to the book of Genesis, book 2 covers Psalms 42-72 and is tied to the book of Exodus, book 3 covers Psalms 73-89, and is tied to the book of Leviticus, book 4 covers Psalms 90 – 106, and is tied to the book of Numbers, and book 5 covers Psalms 107-150, and is tied to the book of Deuteronomy. The book of the Psalms gets into its final form in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah (around 440 BC) when books four and five of the Psalms appear to be added to the earlier collection. The longest Psalm, 119, dates from the time of the Exile to Babylon in the early sixth century, but there are others that may date from the times after the Exiles return in 535 BC, and even some from the days of Ezra and Nehemiah in the fifth century BC.

The dominant name for God used in this section is "Jehovah - JHWH", the holy name of God given to Moses. It is used 277 times in this book of the Psalms, well ahead of the next three sections, with the last section alone getting close with 226 uses of this special name of God. This name of God was never pronounced so do not get into debate about whether

it should be said as “Jehovah” or “Yahweh”, because it was simply breathed through by the readers, or the word “Adonai”, or Lord, used in its place. Other names for God used in this first book of the Psalms are, Elohim 48 times, El 15 times, Adonai 11 times, Alyon 3 times, Adon 2 times, and Eloah once. Refer to the doctrinal study on the names of God below to explore the significance of these names, as all carry important reference to the psalmist’s understanding of the triune God.

Just as Genesis was the book of beginnings, or “first principles” so this section of the Psalms covers doctrinal topics that are the “first principles of faith”. The section begins with the consequences of the Fall of Mankind in the Garden of Eden, where man confronts his daily choices as to what his eternal destiny is to be. This section includes many of the psalms of the Great Rebellion of Absalom where David must face the consequences of his own great sin with Bathsheba that let loose such evil in his own household. This section traces man’s choices and the terrible and gracious consequences of those as they work out in time. David must face the full reality of his life and works, both for good and for evil and bring them to the Lord for solution. 1 Peter 5:5-10. He does and we rejoice in the things we learn about ourselves through our brother David and the things we learn about our great redeemer through his honesty in confronting his sins, fears, doubts and errors.

These five Psalms (26-31) are crucial ones for understanding the person and work of the Lord Jesus and can be called the Psalms of the King’s Character. They give us an insight into the mind, heart, moral standards, and priorities of the king.

Psalm 26	Judge me O Lord – David’s Claim to Integrity
Psalm 27	Whom Shall I Fear? – Faith and Fear
Psalm 28	The Lord is My Rock – Answered Prayer
Psalm 29	Worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness
Psalm 30	Song of the Mature Believer – Deliverance and Gratitude
Psalm 31	My Times are In Thy Hands – Fears dealt with by Casting Our Self upon The Lord

DOCTRINE

CHRIST – FIRST AND SECOND ADVENTS

NOTES

Psalm 26

“Judge me O Lord” – David’s Claim to Integrity

A Psalm of David.

Psalm 26:1

“Judge me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the LORD; *therefore* I shall not slide.”

REFLECTION

We are told by various scriptures to judge ourselves (1Corinthians 4:3-6, 11:28, 2 Corinthians 13:5, Luke 15:18-20, 1John 1:9) and to do that we must measure our thinking and our actions against the perfect Word of God. Even so, with the heart being “*deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked*” we should allow the Holy Spirit to “*...search the heart, try the reins even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings*” (Jeremiah 17:9-10).

1John 3:18-24

18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.

22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

23 And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us”.

David faces this challenge squarely in this Psalm and he is being honest, not arrogant in his assertions about himself as he opens himself to the conviction of the Holy Spirit. He bluntly asks the Lord to vindicate or judge and deal with him on the basis of true morality. David is asking for judgment if he is wrong in his assessment of himself. He is honestly opening himself up to the scrutiny of God. This is a holy demand upon all of us, for unless we stand before the Lord in holiness we are unfit for his service.

We are supposed to be serving the Lord in our “most holy (set apart for God’s glory) faith”. Jude 20. The command of the Lord has always been to “be holy, for He is holy!” Leviticus 11:44-45, 20:26, 1 Peter 1:15-16. We are called to be “set apart” (holy) for God’s service upon the earth. We are only left here upon the earth after our salvation for service and worship; for no other reason. To serve the Lord we must be holy, for only Holy Spirit filled service is bone fide spiritual service; all else is carnality and is filthy rags in God’s sight. Ephesians 1:4, 5:18, Isaiah 64:6.

David is able to state that he has lived and worked in integrity, with a consistent desire to be holy in the service of the Lord. He believes that he has dealt with any sin by confession and so is cleansed by the Lord and is therefore “holy” in God’s sight. Holiness is the sign of a person who has received grace, not lived legalistically in purity! Holiness is a work of the Holy Spirit through confession of sin, and so it is grace through faith, not of works. Ephesians 2:1-9. David is holy only because he has “trusted in the Lord” (expressed faith and obedience through confession) and so he can be confident that he will not slide off the path God has for him through this brief life.

APPLICATION

1. Let us examine ourselves on a regular basis and seriously open ourselves to the scrutiny of the Lord so that we might stand in holiness before him for pure service. The purpose of all scrutiny is not for an exam pass mark, but for certified service that is holy and true. We must be able to stand with holy hands, for any other service is unacceptable.

2. Let us express our faith in the Lord by submission to the Word daily, and seek the Lord’s path through this life, so that we might serve in holiness and passion, and bring glory to the Lord’s name.

DOCTRINES

CHRISTIAN LIFE – CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

SALVATION – JUSTIFICATION

Psalm 26:2

“Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.”

REFLECTION

Psalm 139:23-24

*“23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:
24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”*

David’s cry is repeated and his passion is seen in the words and emotional power behind them. He is serious for he knows that without holiness he cannot please the Lord. He doesn’t want anything to hinder his service and slow down his service for the Lord, for eternally nothing else matters at all. He seeks only to please the Lord, for he understood that nothing else in this life matters at all. Work done in carnality, with unconfessed sin in the life, cannot please God at all. Romans 8:8. Without faith in action, through the filling of the Holy Spirit, it is impossible to please God. Hebrews 11:6.

He calls on the Lord to “try” (test to really see what he is made of) and “prove” (assay him by putting him through the refining fire that will burn away any dross from his pure metal) him. This is a serious call for purity by David, and he recognises that what he is asking for will hurt him greatly, and he may suffer significantly in the refining process. He is prepared to have the things that many men value burned away from his life to achieve what the Lord wants for him. He is ready to have his materialism and his emotionalism burned away and what is left purified. He wants no material goods, nor any emotion or thought that is not in “captivity to Christ”. 2 Corinthians 10:5.

He is determined to serve the Lord and win eternal renown, and he is ready to pay the price required, and that is the stripping away of all human viewpoint “rubbish”. Human viewpoint tells us that we must save for retirement, have a big house and cars and wealth for a “rainy day”, and the best and most powerfully useful friends, and alliances to assist us on our journey through life. Divine Viewpoint says, “Walk with God, do His will, and fulfil his plan for your life, whatever the cost and whatever the apparent loss of material wealth, and leave your welfare in the Lord’s hands alone”!

Matthew 10:34-39

*“34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.
35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.
36 And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.
37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.
38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.
39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.”*

Luke 14:25-33

*“25 And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them,
26 If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.
27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.
28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?
29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,
30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.
31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?
32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassador, and desireth conditions of peace.
33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”*

APPLICATION

1. Let us leave our lives in the Lord’s hands, and let us trust in the Lord to provide for us. Let us bring all our goods and all our thoughts and emotions into captivity to the Father and Christ’s plan for our life.
2. Every thought, every emotion needs to be assayed and tested, and only the things that fit with the Plan of God for us retained in our experience. We are to strip away all things that will slow down or distract us from our service of the Lord. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, 2 Timothy 2:3-10.

DOCTRINES

SALVATION – SANCTIFICATION

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SPIRITUALITY-CARNALITY

Psalm 26:3

“For thy loving kindness is before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth.”

REFLECTION

When we look at the need to strip away all sin, evil thoughts, stupid time wasting emotions, and also all distractions and materialism/emotionalism, and be ready to stand in holy focused athletic service, we can get a bit scared about what it might mean. We can fear that the Lord will ask us to walk away from our house, hobbies, interests, job, and things generally. For some people that may be required; it certainly was for most of the early apostles, but not for all. As they spread out later to witness away from Jerusalem they lived in either rented or owned houses, and they all owned some things, and valued them for their usefulness in their work for the Lord. Matthew 8:20.

The key point the Lord made to them, and to us (and the one that David understands here) are firstly the principle of non-attachment, and secondly the principle of usefulness to the Lord's work. Houses are to be used, but nothing that is left behind at death is to be clung to as if it matters. We are to use things for the Lord's work, but not be attached to them. Things are to be used and then left behind for others. Where is our treasure? What do we really value? Is our value centre in materialism or in eternal realities? We are to be focused upon the things that matter eternally, and that means using all material things for the Lord's work, wearing things out in the Lord's service, but not being attached to anything we leave behind at death.

Matthew 6:19-23

“19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”

The point of application of doctrine is importantly made here; each of us must see what the Lord wants for us, not take any principle as general. The Lord's call is very individual, especially regarding physical and material goods. The Lord called his disciples to forsake all and follow him, and they slept rough, or in billeted homes for the rest of their ministry with him. Matthew 4:19, John 12:26, 21:19-21. The early church however met in “homes”, and that means that while some sold their spare/rental/investment houses and gave to the poor, they all kept the houses they owned to live in, and ministered from them. Acts 2:46, 4:34-37, 12:12-17.

If the Lord asks us to walk away from things it is not because he is being mean spirited and “kill joy” in his attitude to us. All the Lord asks us to do is from his **loving kindness**. Let us keep the Lord's loving kindness before our eyes at all times, so that we do not fear the Lord doing awful things to us, for that is not the Lord's Plan for our life. Job was a very special case in point, and we must not get into a “Job mentality” when we face testing circumstances. If we are asked to walk away from material goods it is because the Lord has something better for us, and the majority will be asked to use their houses for the Lord's work, not sell them and give money away. Let us walk with the Lord's Plan for us, not any materialistic or ascetic system of men.

APPLICATION

1. God's loving kindness is at the heart of all he does with and for us. He seeks our blessing, not our hurt and pain and distress. If we face trial and test there is a purpose in them and we are to seek that, but always focus upon the loving kindness of the Lord, for it will be at the heart of all that occurs and all that we are asked to do.

2. Let us keep the love of the Lord for us to the fore of our mind at all times, and judge the value of all things in accordance with their value in the Lord's work, and to assist the Lord's people. Let us value things according to their usefulness to the Lord's work, and not set any lasting value upon things that we leave behind at death.

DOCTRINES**CHRISTIAN LIFE – FAITH****CHRISTIAN LIFE – FAITH – OVERCOMING BY FAITH**

Psalm 26:4

“I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers.”

REFLECTION

David’s values centred in the Lord’s character and that meant he had no time for, or would put no effort into friendships with people who did not value the Lord and his work. David would not waste time with activities or people that did not advance the eternal plan of God. This mental attitude doesn’t stop hobbies and activities that recharge our batteries after hard work, but it does stop time wasting activities with those who do not value the Lord and his work.

“Vain people” are empty of significance eternally because they never face eternal realities, and hate the very thought of the claims of God over their life. They are empty of significance because they, in their arrogant self centeredness, are doomed for the Lake of Fire, and they achieve nothing of eternal value in their lives, no matter how long they live. These are people who sit and speak badly of God and believers, and fill their conversation with subjects that have no eternal value. They are also people who plot and plan to undermine and insult spiritual things they do not understand.

This is in strong contrast to those who love to speak of the Lord and of matters that have eternal value. Remember that the things of eternal value are the Fruits of the Holy Spirit, and so they are not boring and morally “heavy”, but are joyful and powerful and meaningful. The temptation for all people is to select friends that build us up, rather than erode our values and drag us down into useless, sinful, or even evil behaviours.

Malachi 3:16-17

*“16 Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.
17 And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.”*

APPLICATION

1. “Life is just too short” for evil time wasters. Select your friends and associates from those who value eternal realities, not from people who will waste your days with devious discussion and pointless activities. We are to witness to all we can, but time for genuine and deep fellowship is precious, and it is to be reserved for those who will work with us to the furtherance of God’s kingdom.
2. Do not waste time with those who drag you down. Life is very short, far too short to spend time doing things that do not matter eternally, and talk nonsense with people who do not care that they are on a path to hell. We must spend time with the lost to establish communication and share the Gospel, but we must be careful not to become entrapped in their world, rather than pulling them out of its nonsense. Jude 22-25.

FALSE TEACHERS

The eighteen characteristics of the false teachers – 2 Timothy 3:1 - 5

1. Lovers of self - To be self centred means that everything is interpreted in terms of selfish concerns; it is a moral relativism that centres on the self rather than God or others.
2. Covetous - Lovers of money so that everything has a price and what is of value is what can be measured in dollar terms.
3. Boasters - We would say people like this are "full of hot air"; they have no substance or heart but love to speak great words about themselves.
4. Pride - Arrogance knows no bounds when the opinion of God is ignored and the self is the sole criteria for decision making.
5. Blasphemers - When people think they know better than God they very quickly move on to directly insult God and his words, for they don't think they are bound by the rules that govern those who are, in their eyes, foolish enough to believe in God!
6. Disobedient to parents - At heart a nation's strength is rooted in the strength and respect within the family unit. Where children grow up to despise, disobey, or ignore their parents they will grow up without a healthy sense of discipline.

The society will then suffer as the child who does not respect its own parents will not often respect the life or property of others. This point applies equally to children and parents; parents must live so as to be worthy of respect and children must respect as far as they are able their parents.

7. Unthankful - This term sums up a trait of people who are in evil that often baffles others. Why is it that you can do wonderful things for some people and they will despise you and insult you for the good you have done them, or they will use your very kindness against you? The answer is here. People who get into evil and false doctrine will lose all perspective and have as their character trait an ungratefulness that is destructive and nasty.
8. Unholy - Holiness means to be set apart for God and his service; unholy means the reverse; to be set apart for self and evil rather than God; to be active in the service of the enemy.
9. Without natural affection - No capacity for love is an indication of deeper and more dangerous aspects of a persons nature. When people love only themselves they are incapable of truly loving others.
10. Trucebreakers - When people have morality that is rooted in self interest you can be sure of only one thing with them; that you cannot be sure of them at all. They will be as stable as the wind is! These are people whose word you cannot trust.
11. False accusers - Malicious gossips will abound where-ever self is king. If people will not talk about the Lord and his word to them they will talk about everything and anything else, as if it were important.
12. Incontinent - No self control. People who follow their whims and fancies as if they were truth and righteousness, where-as they are simply lust and desires.
13. Fierce - Brutal men are Satan's men. Gentle men are God's. There is no place in the church for those who will tear another person apart with their words or their hands. We are not to be fierce like wild dogs, but gentle like our Lord. A fierce man is a false brother.
14. Despisers of them that are good – Men are known by the company they keep, and by those they love. No good man will despise good men, but every evil man will. Look at the company others keep and see where their hearts are.
15. Traitors - If a person is dishonourable they will betray you without thought. Evil has no standards other than self-gratification, and betrayal of the good for temporary gain is to be expected from evil men.
16. Heady - Thoughtlessness is another trait of evil men. They do not think about consequences, they are rash and foolish, lacking foresight and concern for others.
17. High-minded - While being rash and foolish themselves they use such terms of others. They do not see any problems with their own behaviour; they are perfect in their own eyes.
18. Pleasure lovers - Their God is their belly (Philippians 3:19). They do things to feel good rather than because they are good, and will be of benefit for them and others.

Psalm 26:5

“I have hated the congregation of evildoers; and will not sit with the wicked.”

REFLECTION

There are groups, gangs, clubs, organisations, and societies in all nations, but no matter what we call the group of people who meet around a common subject, let us make sure that they are godly before we “join” the group. There are groups that recharge our batteries and allow our tiredness to ebb away and bring energy back to us. These groups may not be made up of believers, but the activity is a spiritually neutral one, and we can be there without spiritual compromise, any time wasting, and with possible opportunities for evangelism.

Many clubs and groups we join for relaxation can become evangelistic opportunities once the people get to know and respect us. (That is we have earned the right to speak of the Lord, because the pagans have had opportunity to see our witness and they will hear our words.) Remember the piece of advice of Dr J Vernon McGee, who reminded his people who handed out “tracts” on the streets, that people will only read the tract if they are impressed by the “tracks” you have made around them. Unsaved men want truth, but they want it from a real person, not a hypocrite. So we may “join” a club or other group where there is no spiritual compromise, but there are groups we will never join.

It is alright to hate some groups because they are satanic in their philosophy, attitudes, language, and behaviours. We are to hate evil, and that means we hate the groups that push or even evangelise for evil. We do not hate the people for whom Christ still died (1 John 2:1-2), but we hate what their group stands for, and we separate ourselves from it.

We do not join with or fellowship (sit at table) with, the “wicked”. This term covers those who hate the truth and actively support, encourage and teach evil to all who they can influence for the enemy. We do not have any fellowship with such people. Proverbs 1:8-19, 2:16-22. It does not matter what the “flavour of evil” is that a group is pushing, be it sexual, financial, social, cultural, criminal or religious, we separate ourselves from them.

APPLICATION

1. The biblical doctrine of Separation (BTB) is an important one to understand, for there are evils that cannot be witnessed to for long without their insidious effect destroying and undermining you. We must pull back from some people and groups and witness only from outside and afar, for pure safety’s sake.

2. Fellowship takes up precious time and we do not have it to waste with those who are religious unbelievers who will distract us into legalism, or with pagan evil people who will try to influence us into their evil paths. Let us decide to fellowship with those who build us up in faith, and witness to the rest. Let us identify who is our friend and who is our evangelistic target. Confusion between the two categories destroys witness and undermines true fellowship and stability.

DOCTRINE

EVIL

SEPARATION

Psalm 26:6

“I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O LORD:”

REFLECTION

Worship in the tabernacle involved things that we still see in Moslem Mosques today. There was a formal hand washing ritual to be completed before entry into the temple courtyard to take part in any sacrifices. The hands had to be ritually clean and the clothing correct before you entered the temple/tabernacle courts. People were not just able to “wander in” to worship; they had to make a conscious decision, dress appropriately, wash and prepare to go to worship. It was serious, and it had to be approached with reverence and care. David will circle the altar in worship, but he wants to do it without offence to the Lord or man, and in holiness not flippancy.

In our day we “roll up” to church in all sorts of clothing and in various states of cleanliness. If we look at Paul’s warning to the Corinthians about their abuses in the Communion Service, 1 Corinthians 11:20-34, we need to be far more careful in our services. Paul tells them that their bad behaviours have led to some being placed under the “Sin Unto Death” by the Lord, and some of them have already died! David records a challenge to us here; to be careful, thoughtful, clean and tidy when we approach the worship service and make it a “holy” time, but without hypocrisy!

APPLICATION

1. Let us be sure to worship in spirit and in truth, with clean hands, clean bodies, and clean clothes. Let us make a statement in our worship that tells the world we are taking the Lord’s worship seriously. The message that the service is casual and that God “doesn’t care how we look” is not a biblical one and we must be careful in what we say on this front. It is true that God looks into the heart attitude, but a man who comes to church dirty when he could be clean, and scruffy in dress when he could be tidy, and when he prepares for work more carefully than he prepares for church, then I am sorry if I offend you on this, but I don’t think that man’s heart is right towards the Lord!

2. If we do not value the Lord and value his worship we need to pause and reflect before we enter the church service. Let us be holy friends! Let us give the message that we care about the Lord and his people and his worship.

3. Let us “lift up holy hands”, 1 Timothy 2:8, and that means we have dealt with sin before we worship. Let us not come into the worship service without pausing to reflect upon and examine our lives and confessing any sins. Let us come with clean hands and heart.

DOCTRINE

CLEANSING

CHRISTIAN LIFE – ALTAR OF THE SOUL

Psalm 26:7

“That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works.”

REFLECTION

We are to witness to the transforming power of God’s grace within us. Those who do not sing of what the Lord has done for them have received little from the Lord. Psalm 136:1-3. Let us be challenged again by David’s heart here. He desires with all his heart to “publish” abroad the great things God has done for him. He is filled up with joy and it overflows in thanksgiving to the Lord for his great gifts to him. He desires to list and speak at length of all the great gifts God has given, and the great works he has done for him. Ephesians 5:20, Philipians 4:4-6, 1 Thessalonians 5:18.

APPLICATION

1. Are we as thankful as we should be? Do we give thanks for all that the Lord has given and do we praise Him for all that he has done on our behalf.

2. The fruit of a Holy Spirit filled preacher will always be joy abounding. Be very suspicious of a preacher who does not overflow with song as he speaks of the Lord. We are meant to be transformed people, and indeed we will always be transformed when the Holy Spirit is at work. Let the people of the Lord say so! Let them say so loudly and with the joy that overflows from deep within. If there is hesitancy in worship there is the need for self examination and prayer for something is not right!

DOCTRINE

CHURCH – WORSHIP AND PRAISE

Notes

Psalm 26:8

“LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth.”

REFLECTION

David loved the worship service, and he especially loved the service that was started around the tabernacle he had erected, and would be the fore runner of the later temple services on a larger scale under Solomon. David loved to see and hear and be part of corporate worship after so many years on the run in the wilderness where worship was constrained by space and time. Psalm 27:4-6, 84:1-2, 122:1-4.

I have just returned to write these words after preaching at our local church at the evening service on John Chapter 8. The Holy Spirit revealed lots of new things through the Word to me tonight, and it was a really anointed service with power, joy, and lots of spiritually powerful information being shared with passion. It is a joy to serve the Lord in worship and I share David’s enthusiasm and joy as I reflect on these verses before heading off to sleep. It is joyful indeed to worship the Lord and be a part of a dynamic team of musicians, singers, prayer warriors, tech guys, ushers, and all the team for the evening service. It was a joy from the initial prayer meeting to the last prayer meeting on the stage to give thanks. Truly “I love the habitation of thy house”.

The other “house” of the Lord is our own body. 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 6:19-20. We are urged to live in this present body doing all things, as a priest would, “as unto the Lord”. As we worship in our temple-body here on earth the Lord worships in the heavenly temple, where one day we will also stand. Let us praise the Lord, for he is our rock, our defence, our saviour, and our king and lord over all we have. All we have is his, and to him we dedicate it, as we do our days and our people. *“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands (the Tabernacle), which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us”* (2 Thessalonians 2:4, Hebrews 7:25, 9:24, refer also to Hebrews 10:19-22).

Psalm 62:1-8

“1 Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation.

2 He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved.

3 How long will ye imagine mischief against a man? ye shall be slain all of you: as a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering fence.

4 They only consult to cast him down from his excellency: they delight in lies: they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. Selah.

5 My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.

6 He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved.

7 In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God.

8 Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah.”

APPLICATION

1. Let us rejoice in the habitation of the Lord; both our own bodily temple through our daily witness, and the gathering of the church family in the sanctuary services.

2. Let us ensure that the honour of the Lord is upheld in all we do in our body-temple, and in all we do in our weekly worship services. Let us bring glory to his holy name and let us not be embarrassed about our joy filled service of the Lord in this bodily temple of ours today.

DOCTRINE

TABERNACLE

Psalm 26:9-10

“Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men: In whose hands is mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes.”

REFLECTION

To “gather the soul” was a way the ancients spoke of death. Genesis 25:8, 17, 49:29-33. It is a lovely phrase for death at this time, and even applies now in the Church Age. In the days before the Lord “led captivity captive”, Ephesians 4:8, and took all the saved dead from “Abraham’s Bosom” (also called Paradise) into heaven, they all dwelt in the saved section of Hades, awaiting the Lord’s victory over sin and death. Jesus tells the parable to illustrate this. Luke 16:19-31.

To “be gathered to your people” was a way of saying you have died in peace, surrounded by your family and friends and have been taken by the angels from there to be with your saved ancestors to await the Lord’s victory and your entry then into heaven itself, to be with the Lord forever in his temple. This is why these people wanted to be buried together in significant places so that they were physically together and would finally be raised at the end of time in the best possible company. Genesis 25:7-10, 35:29ff, 49:33-50:13, Job 19:25.

David’s prayer in light of this desire of his to end his life with those he will spend eternity with is understandable, and as we get older ourselves it becomes a matter of tears and serious reflection at times when we feel we may be close to death. David desired to be in the place he loved, his city Jerusalem, surrounded by the people he loved, and who loved him, and by the believing brothers and sisters with whom he would live on in eternity. Like Stephen, the first martyr of the Church we have the promise of the Lord that we will not see death, but that we will see Jesus. John 8:51, Acts 7:51-60.

David does not want to die defeated on some forgotten battlefield surrounded by enemies, nor does he want to be surrounded by crooked courtiers and corrupt businessmen who will gather around his death bed, just to be in an important place to watch the king’s passing. David knows that his death will be important to the nation and hypocrisy and politics could be expected, but he prays for the Lord to minimise it and ensure he dies surrounded by believers who love the Lord as much as David does. As we get older it is a good and understandable prayer. David, like all great leaders, hated corruption, bribery and deceit in government and religion, for he saw that it rots the heart out of business, politics and the church.

APPLICATION

1. Let us hate the company of corrupt men as much as David does. Let us seek the company of good men in life, in our dying and in eternity. To achieve the positive answer to this prayer we must consciously surround ourselves with God’s people now and always.

2. Let us be as heavenly minded as Abraham and David were, for their hope of heaven was a “purifying hope”.

1 John 3:1-3

“1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”

DOCTRINES

SIN – JEALOUSY

SIN – MURDER

Psalm 26:11

“But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity: redeem me, and be merciful unto me.”

REFLECTION

When corruption is the norm and bribery is the “way to get ahead” it is impossible for most to stand against it, but David did, and he acted against this evil whenever he could. He recognised the truth that must grip our heart and hold our behaviours firmly in morality; that we answer to the Lord himself for our decision making and he holds us to account for all things we have done. Romans 14:12, Hebrews 13:17, 1 Peter 4:5.

“As for me”; this indeed is a phrase that should pass our lips at every point of decision. Whatever others do, we will stand like David and walk in integrity before the Lord who is our Saviour, our King, and who will be our Judge!

2 Corinthians 5:9-11.

“9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.”

It is that determination of our Holy Spirit strengthened free will that the Lord delights in seeing from his people. The Lord delights, and there is rejoicing in heaven, when believers choose to serve the Lord in holiness and follow through daily on their choice by holy actions. 2 Corinthians 1:12-14, 1 Thessalonians 2:19, Hebrews 3:6.

As we walk with the Lord in holiness so there can be absolute relaxation in his care and protection, and in the Plan of God for us. As we walk in Holy Spirit’s power, fully armoured with the Lord’s protective equipment, only then are we able to relax in the Lord’s redemption and mercy, whatever is required, in each situation we face.

APPLICATION

1. We will give the Lord our accounts, and He who knows all things will “audit” our accounts before the Judgment Seat and we will be rewarded for those things we have done in the Holy Spirit’s power, and all that is done in sin or human strength alone will be burned and blown away like chaff in the wind. Matthew 3:12, Luke 3:17, 1 Corinthians 3:12-23.

2. Let us focus on Holy Spirit filled living, and so serve the Lord in the path the Spirit guides us into. Let us relax then in his arms, knowing that he will redeem us in local situations, and he will show mercy in situations that get too much for us in our human strength. Let us consciously walk with Him and serve Him in holiness and joy.

DOCTRINES

CHRISTIAN LIFE – WALKING

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SEPARATION

SALVATION – SANCTIFICATION

CHRISTIAN LIFE – OVERCOMER

CHRISTIAN LIFE – FAITH – OVERCOMING BY FAITH

Psalm 26:12

“My foot standeth in an even place: in the congregations will I bless the LORD.”

REFLECTION

When we stand with the Lord we stand in “smoothed places”, for he guides our steps and directs our paths for his glory and the blessing of all who walk with Christ. Psalm 27:11, 40:2, 111:8, Proverbs 10:9, Luke 3:5. The Lord will direct our paths, and though the road he calls us to walk may be “constricted and thorny” at times, (Matthew 7:13-23), it will always be as stable and smooth to the feet as it can be. The Lord wants us to “stand” and fight on stable ground, and it is the blood soaked ground of the Cross. Romans 14:4, 1 Corinthians 16:13, Ephesians 6:11-18, 2 Thessalonians 2:15.

Having stood firmly for the Lord in the private battles we all must fight, we celebrate the victories on the path by gathering together with our fellows and praising the Lord together in heart felt worship and praise. “I will bless the Lord”, David says with passion, and he does indeed in all the psalms in the collection we have, and in all the ones that are now lost, bless the Lord.

APPLICATION

1. Let us kneel before the Lord and bless his holy name in the congregation of the saints. Let us join together and worship the Lord as we ought, passionately and often.
2. The Lord will make our foot steps smooth beneath the soles of our feet. Let us trust the Lord for our foot fall and just strongly advance into the plans that the Lord has for us with confidence. Let us advance into the light of the Word on our path ahead and not worry about the stability of the rock beneath our feet.

DOCTRINE**BIBLE – BIBLE AND THE BELIEVER**

Psalm 27

Whom Shall I Fear? – Faith and Fear in the Mature Believer's Life

A Psalm of David.

Psalm 27:1

“The LORD *is* my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD *is* the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?”

REFLECTION

“The LORD *is* my light and my salvation.” In the dark places we must walk in leadership roles in this world it is vital that we are stabilised in the Lord's light and power to save. In all leadership roles I have met devious and malicious people, mostly those without ability to truly lead in a biblical manner, and without any scruples about knocking over those who have abilities and Holy Spirit gifting. Psalm 84:11, Isaiah 60:1-3.

It is in the path of the Lord that there is peace of mind in the midst of the assaults of evil men and women. God indeed is our salvation alone. Mature believers do not trust in men, but in the Lord's power alone, for the Lord alone can save and deliver us from evil, in any of its forms. Psalm 3:8, 18:2, 62:2-6.

“Whom shall I fear?” When the heart and mind is stabilised in the character, power and plan of God, then and then alone is there security in time and eternally for that believer. Note the question David cries aloud here. “Whom” shall I fear? It is personal in the Angelic Conflict and it always will be until it is over altogether. We have an enemy, and that enemy hates us with a passion that is equal to our love for the Lord. James 4:7-10, 1 Peter 5:8-11.

“The LORD *is* the strength of my life.” The rocky fortress of God's protection is around about the believer at all times, but we need to practice the presence of the Lord to be aware of it. All too often those who should know better wander through their days without being aware of the Lord's presence and without moment by moment communication with the Lord through prayer. Isaiah 45:22-25, Romans 8:28-31.

There is a sense of awe at God's abundant grace, that should be the believer's daily focus. There is also a *peace that passeth all understanding, and it will be realised and he/she will “love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength...”*. Mark 12:30, Hebrews 13:5-6.

APPLICATION

1. Let us ensure that we “turn the light on” through applied study of the Word every day, and walk in the light of the Lord through the dark places of this world. In the light of the Word of Truth there is no danger from fear.
2. The Lord is our strength and tower, and we need to “fly to him for safety” in fellowship. It is in fellowship with the Lord that fear is banished, no other way. Let us draw near in prayer often through each day.

Notes

Psalm 27:2

“When the wicked, *even* mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.”

REFLECTION

The “wicked” are the people sold out to Satan and his demonic thinking and emotionalism. These evil (Hebrew Ra-a) people are truly “spoilors” of others lives and make all things corrupt and empty of eternal meaning. I am always amazed at the malice and stupidity of evil people, for they gain nothing from their hate filled assaults on others, and yet they don't seem to notice and simply continue to blame others for their problems. Adolf Hitler's last will is an amazing example of this. He rants about others letting him down right until the end, and never sees that it was him all along. I personally love Isaiah's description of the entry of such men into hell. Isaiah 14:5-11.

David uses violent language to describe the hatred and malice of the evil men who have attacked him, and notes that they have threatened to “eat him”, and yet they have all stumbled and fallen over. It is a very funny thing when a thug stumbles, totters and falls over. These men spoke like giants and died like weeds, and that is always the way for those who attack God and God’s men.

I remember the pictures of Saddam Hussein’s commandoes before the Gulf War in 1990. These men were shown biting the heads off kittens to prove their toughness! When we saw the pictures I said to my men, who were tough, “well at least now we know who the true pussies are”. These Iraqi toughs were all killed or surrendered – they were pathetic! All evil men are pathetic as they face defeat or death. As we face the evil men of the ISIS group in Iraq and Syria as I revise these words in 2015, their fate will be the same, and unless they meet Jesus as their Saviour they will join all other evil men in Hell. Isaiah 14:9-11.

Many of David’s victories were from a position of relative weakness, which made these victories obviously ‘of the LORD’, yet David, knowing his frailty, was conscious that in every case it was the LORD that *giveth the victory* (Psalm 18) see also Psalm 98:1; John 16:33; Romans 8:37; 1Corinthians 15:57. It is the Lord alone who gives the victories in this life, and the man who recognises this prospers. Those who trust in their strength trust in a mirage! Ecclesiastes 9:11.

APPLICATION

1. Do not fear the wicked, for they are chaff to God’s wind and will be blown away in his judgment. Fear only the judgment of the Lord and walk with him for there is power and safety there alone.
2. All evil men will fall into hell and before that they will fall off their “high horse” of arrogance. It is just a matter of time and opportunity for the Lord. Trust in the Lord and pray for the downfall of the wicked, but pray that they might fall to the foot of the Cross, rather than into hell.

DOCTRINES

CHRISTIAN LIFE – ENEMY

MILITARY FORCES

Psalm 27:3

“Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.”

REFLECTION

It is never about numbers in any battle and the greatest generals always discount the “numbers game”, for it is the quality of the training and morale of the troops, how they are handled, the nature of the ground they fight over, and the quality and efficiency of their supply train that really determines battle outcomes. The best armies have been beaten by deficiencies in any of these factors, but the biggest armies of history have mostly been defeated because they were on “the wrong side of history”. By this phrase we mean that they were fighting not just against men but against God’s will and purpose. Philippians 1:28. Evil will not prevail – the Lord will rule this planet, even though great evil is yet to unfold.

David is able to say with confidence and mental clarity, “my heart shall not fear”. Some people say they are not scared in certain situations, but that is just because they are too stupid to recognise the dangers. David realised the full extent of the enemy’s strength, but he also understood the full extent of their spiritual weakness and he saw, quite rightly, that this was the decisive issue for all who fought him. David knew he could be beaten, and he knew how he would always be beaten; all he had to do was walk away from God and God would use the enemy to discipline him! Isaiah 8:11-13.

David was confident in “this” truth; that God was with him and the enemy were at that point defeated, and so was his physical fear within, for his heart was stabilized in the love of God for him. It was just a matter of time for the extent of the defeat of the evil ones to unfold in the arena of men. It is always the fear of the Lord that is to be our source of concern, for if we fear the Lord we need never fear men for long. Romans 8:28-37, 2 Corinthians 5:6-11.

Isaiah 41:9-16

“Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away.

10 Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

11 Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish.

12 Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought.

13 For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.

14 Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

15 Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff.

16 Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in the LORD, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel."

APPLICATION

1. Our confidence in this life is not with power, money, fame, alliances, but with the Lord alone, and with Him alone we are safe and secure. Let us affirm the Lord's power to keep and guard us in all things.
2. It is not the numbers of the enemy forces that may encircle us; it is the power of the Lord that we rest upon. Let us rest upon the power and majesty of the Lord, for he is our defender.

DOCTRINE

FEAR

Psalm 27:4

"One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple."

REFLECTION

There is just "one thing" that David desired above all else in this life, and it is that he might spend all his days in vital and powerful fellowship with the Lord his God. Christians are exhorted to have the same mental attitude as David (Hebrews 4:11; 2 Peter 1:10, 3:14). We are to have confidence in the Lord, and rest in his power to keep us as we walk his path through this life. We may not know much but we all know how the Lord can keep us on his own path as long as we remain upon it. Philippians 3:13ff.

David's desire is powerfully expressed, "That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life." David sought fellowship with the Lord, expressed in his day in the connection between the believer and God in the tabernacle sacrifices.

Psalm 84:10-12

"10 For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

12 O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee."

David fell into gross sin and yet he is still referred to as "a man after the LORD's own heart" (Act 13:22; see also 1Samuel 13:14; 1Kings 15:3, 1Kings 15:5), which must give encouragement to those of us who have fallen from the grace standard of living into some sinful pattern at any point. David faced his sins and dealt with them at the "Throne of Grace" and found forgiveness there, and we can all find that same forgiveness. We have the great promises of God's Word regarding forgiveness. Psalm 103:10-18, 1 John 1:5-10.

"To behold the beauty of the LORD." The greatness of the fellowship of the Lord is his holy character and the beauty of his love and care over us. The more we know of the Character of God the more we can know of the security of his love in which we live and have our part to play in the plan of God. Let us focus upon the beauty of the Lord, for in his character there is hope, and there is a focus for our lives.

To "inquire" is to seek knowledge, David longed to spend his time and learn of God. He longed to learn more of God and to understand more of the Lord's wonderful nature and amazing plan for his own and other people's life. David was most excited about the promise made to him about the Lord making a "house" from his descendants. 2 Samuel 7:8-21.

APPLICATION

1. Let us be more hungry than we are presently for sweet fellowship with the Lord that deepens our love of Jesus for who he is and what he has done for us. Let us draw near to our Saviour and learn more of Him and his love for us.
2. Do you desire the fellowship of the Lord in worship believer? It is this fellowship that the Lord desires us to seek and find in every service we attend. Let us seek to discover this every time we meet together as a church.

Psalm 27:5

“For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.”

REFLECTION

The times of trouble will certainly come to us, and we have the Lord's Word on that, but we have his encouragement with his warning.

John 16:33

“33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

David's assurance is that in the time of trouble he will be hidden in the “pavilion” of the Lord. This is the booth or tent of the king when he was on campaign, and only the most trusted and respected of his companions would enter it. It was the place of intimate fellowship and deep discussion and David seeks this level of intimacy with the Lord in his “campaigns” in the Angelic Conflict and with evil men. 1 John 4:4.

God will “hide” us from danger and protect us from evil. We are the Lord's servants and it is the Lord's responsibility to do this, for in the spiritual realm we cannot even see the dangers and only the Lord is able to take actions to deal with them. We are safe with the one who knows history in advance also. We are “set up upon the rock” of God's plan, for it will always work out in time. We are secure in the plan of God as it rests on God's Character, not our abilities and powers. Psalm 40:2, 61:2.

Habakkuk 3:16-19

“16 When I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble: when he cometh up unto the people, he will invade them with his troops.

17 Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls:

18 Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

19 The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places.”

APPLICATION

1. “Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world”. 1 John 4:4. We are on the winning side and we need to rest secure in the provisions of the Lord for us on the road he has called us to walk. Whenever there is a need for a rest and a secure place to rest, the Lord will provide that for us in deep fellowship with Him.

2. Let us sing the song of Habakkuk more often than we do. Let us remember that the Lord is our strength and shield and fellowship with Him will stabilise us in all ways.

DOCTRINES**GOD – SHEKINAH GLORY****CHRIST – ROCK: CHRIST AS THE ROCK****Psalm 27:6**

“And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD.”

REFLECTION

There is absolute confidence on David's part that he will be lifted up in victory over his enemies and this mental attitude is based upon his earlier assessment of the character and plan of God and his part in it. He knows that he will be exulted in the end, even though he has been “cast down” in the middle of life! With the believer nothing is over until the end, for we can all rise again as the Lord prospers.

Psalm 42:5 -11, 43:3-5

“42:5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.

6 O my God, my soul is cast down within me:

9 I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

10 As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?

11 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

43:3 O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.

4 Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God.

5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."

When we are thankful, how do we show that to the Lord? David is excited about the protection he has received and he sings about it with joy in his heart. In my childhood we used to sing a crazy little song that went, "If you're happy and you know it clap your hands..." It was a happy little song that expressed joy in the Lord and life generally and was very 70s in that. It did however express something that we need to, for the people of the Lord need to "say so". We all need to express our feelings a lot more than we do. David literally overflows in his emotions, and he is loved by the Lord for this.

APPLICATION

1. Let us overflow a lot more than we do in our church services. Let us express the Lord's power on our behalf in joy and shout the glory of His name for all to hear and affirm our praise. Praise is meant to be contagious and so we need to announce the Lord's victories so that we can celebrate them with those who love him also.

2. We will be "lifted up" above our enemies; it is just a matter of time. Let us praise the Lord, in the midst of the battlefield for the victory that is certain to come. Let us praise him now in advance of the victory being seen. Hebrews 11:1.

DOCTRINES

CHURCH – WORSHIP AND PRAISE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – BLESSING OF THE BELIEVER

Psalm 27:7

"Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me."

REFLECTION

This prayer is a part of most of the psalms, but I never tire of meditating upon it, for in its very repetition is the reminder to us all that the Lord never tires of us asking Him to hear, when we are assured that he does always hear. Psalm 130:2-4, 143:1-2. As we get flattened by pressures it is easy to feel depressed and stay down, not feeling heard or understood, and yet the Lord hears our thoughts before they are even spoken aloud. Romans 8:26-28.

When I cry aloud the Lord hears my heart and my words and if there is any difference between them the Lord answers the deepest needs of my spirit. The Lord has mercy because it is his nature to have mercy, and he answers our deepest needs because he made us and he knows us well, having walked with us and died for our sins. Hebrews 4:15-16.

APPLICATION

1. We are loved, and we are heard by the one who loved us so much that while we were yet his enemies he gave himself for us.

2. The Lord hears our heart, and hears our voiced petitions. He has mercy, because that is who he is, and we may depend upon his answers because his answers to our prayers reflect his character not our worthiness.

DOCTRINE

MERCY

Psalm 27:8

“When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.”

REFLECTION

Psalm 105:4 states, “Seek the Lord and his strength, Seek his face evermore”. David has responded to the command to seek the Lord, from the days of Abraham, through to Moses, and to his own day, and he is ready willing and able to seek the Lord on his knees daily at prayer. Moses in Deuteronomy had given the order to the Israelites to “seek the Lord”, and it was in the context of prophetic warning, even specific warning of the Babylonian Exile and the later Roman Exile that she is just emerging from. Read the words which challenged David daily as he meditated upon the Law of Moses. Deuteronomy 4:23-40, 10:12-22, 20:1-4, 28:1-6, 15-20, 30:1-3, 31:1-6, 32:1-4.

Read one of the songs (early Psalms) of Moses here – **Deuteronomy 32:1-4, 45-47, 33:26-29.**

“32:1 Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.

2 My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass:

3 Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God.

4 He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.

45 And Moses made an end of speaking all these words to all Israel:

46 And he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law.

47 For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life: and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land, whither ye go over Jordan to possess it.

33:26 There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky.

27 The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them.

28 Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew.

29 Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places.”

APPLICATION

1. It is the deliberate act of will daily to seek the Lord’s face that he seeks from us. It is daily that we are to rise and seek his fellowship through prayer. Let us rise and pray, or even begin our prayers even as sleep drops from our eyes in bed in the early hours of the morning. Let us pray and draw near to the Lord God before we do anything else.

2. What God says for us to do, we do, and we do it with joy, and so we receive joy. Let us recall those last words of C H Spurgeon, “Believe more, pray more, and so receive more.”

Psalm 27:9

“Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.”

REFLECTION

David’s prayer is earnest because he knows his sinfulness and his worthiness for judgment. He reminds himself that he is deserving of nothing other than judgment by a holy God, and having dealt with his sinfulness he prays for mercy in grace. This is ever to be our model, never claiming things of the Lord before we bow in child like humility before the Lord. The arrogance of the modern so called “prosperity gospel” people is to be fled from, for it has no model in scripture except from the Scribes and Pharisees! Let us choose our company carefully. With David and the publican we are in good company.

Luke 18:11-17

“10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

*15 And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them.
 16 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.
 17 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein."*

We are deserving of the anger of God directed at our sinfulness and slackness, but we may ask the Lord for forgiveness and expect confidently that the humble prayer of the sinner will always be forgiven, and the Lord will not hide his face from us. Psalm 66:18, Isaiah 54:8, 64:6-7, Ezekiel 39:23-24.

We must work hard in sin and evil not to be heard by God, for only persistence in sin or evil stops the Lord hearing us.

Isaiah 59:1-4

*"1 Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:
 2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.
 3 For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness.
 4 None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity."*

Confession of sin, Psalm 51:1ff, 103:10-17, 1 John 1:9, always restores us and then we have the Lord's promise that he will never leave his child to claim. Matthew 28:18-20, 2 Timothy 2:11-15.

APPLICATION

1. Let us take our models for behaviour carefully and seek to be like the great women and men of scripture, and flee from all examples that are evil and arrogant with it. Let us be child like in our faith.
2. Let us be sure to deal with all sin and evil thoughts quickly before the Lord with thorough confession, lest any prayer be hindered and any discipline we may be facing be prolonged. Let us clear away by confession of sin anything that stops the Lord blessing us.

Psalm 27:10

"When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up."

REFLECTION

Isaiah sums this up powerfully three hundred years after David, noting that although it is possible for a mother to forget her nursing child, *"yet will I not forget thee"* (Isaiah 49:15). Moses had begun this reflection for all Israelites to meditate upon, when he referred to the Lord as the "rock of our salvation", and reminded the people that always, at all times, and in all places, "underneath are the everlasting arms" of the God who loves his own. Deuteronomy 32:15, 33:27-29.

Repeat the words of David to yourself right now as you sit with the truth of this verse believer. Though the world forsake me, the LORD will never forsake me but will "asaph" gather me up from wherever I have strayed away, and will receive me to himself in joy. (Genesis 28:15; Deuteronomy 31:8; 1Samuel 12:22; Psalm 37:28, see also Isaiah 40:11.)

The day comes for all of us who live long when our parents forsake us in death, leaving us alone upon the earth. While this is the natural order of things since the Fall of Mankind, it is still a sadness and a reminder of the cost of Adam and Eve's fall. We will often, even as older people, think about "sharing a news item with mum or dad", and then remember they are no longer a phone call away. They are however, if believers, interested observers from heaven in our activities that bring glory to the Lord's holy name.

We are not "forsaken" by the godly dead, for the context of Hebrews Chapters 11-12 would appear to indicate that the saints of old look on to our lives even today and are cheering our spiritual work on to victory from the stands of heaven. This is certainly the plain sense of these chapters, for the writer speaks of the great heroes of the past and then immediately states that they are looking on at our spiritual work today. This makes sense to me, and I take great encouragement from this as I think of godly parents, grandparents and mentors who I see in the great amphitheatre of the heavens cheering me on as I walk in the Holy Spirit's power, and under his direction serve the Lord.

Hebrews 11:39 – 12:3

*"11:39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:
 40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."*

CHAPTER 12

*1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,
 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."

APPLICATION

1. We are never forsaken by the Lord, for we are his blood bought children and it is impossible for the Lord to turn away from his own in Christ. We are kept, guided and directed in our steps and we are to be blessed forever. There will be severe tribulation down here at times, but we are asked to look up constantly and draw strength from the throne of grace and the knowledge of the saints of old cheering us onwards.

2. Those who loved the Lord and pressed onwards to victory cheer us onwards to victory this day. Draw comfort from the presence of all who went before you believer, and forge forward on the path the Lord has called you to walk in the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit.

Psalm 27:11

"Teach me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies."

REFLECTION

There is one path for each of us to walk, one furrow to plough in this life before the Lord. We are called to plough the Lord's field for our life, not any other person's field. We are called to plough, to work until we are called home to heaven, and we are warned that to turn away from the path of the Lord for us is to turn from blessing to cursing. We are called to whole hearted service and worship, not to be distracted from the task in any way at all.

Luke 9:59-62.

"59 And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

60 Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

61 And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

62 And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

The Lord must truly "teach us" to walk according to his plan for our life. The Holy Spirit will do so within us. John 14:16-21, 15:26-27, 16:8-15. The Holy Spirit, through the holy Word of God will lead us along the straight paths that bring us to glory. We are to receive the Word with meekness and apply it in passion into the fabric of our daily life. James 1:21.

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word" (Psalm 119:9).

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11).

"O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.

Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me.

I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.

I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts" (Psalm 119:97-100).

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105). Read also Psalm 19:7-14.

It is only on God's path that the enemy need not be feared. The enemy is around us all the time in this present world, and the place of safety is with the Lord's power to guide every step of the way. If we walk God's path, we walk with God's protection around us; with his wall of fire around about us. 2 Kings 6:17.

APPLICATION

1. We are protected on the path the Lord has called us to walk upon. We are protected by the Lord in all things as we walk obediently before Him. Let us commit to the Lord's path and receive his protection, blessing, guidance and fellowship as we walk through the enemies of our soul.

2. The Word of God is our guide, and the power of God's Holy Spirit is our provider on the way. Let us advance into the ranks of the enemy and do the work we are called to do.

DOCTRINE

BIBLE – WORD OF GOD – HEBREWS 4:12

"For the Word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Psalm 27:12

“Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.”

REFLECTION

“Deliver me not”. This is a prayer to offer up to the Lord whenever you are facing the malice of the enemy. The Lord delights in answering this, and delights in our passing this issue over to Him for action. Many will say, “But surely this is so obvious that you don’t have to speak about such things to the Lord”. This gets to the heart of prayer itself, for indeed it is God’s delight to deliver you from the enemies of truth and righteousness, but He wants you to be an active part of the process through prayer. Seek the Lord over all matters and commit your path and protection to the Lord on the way and delight with Him in his deliverance of your soul, and the delivery of the enemy to judgment. Psalm 35:24-28, 38:16-22, 41:10-12.

“False witnesses”. It will always surprise you the lengths to which the enemy will at times go to discredit you. When we forget the Lord’s warnings regarding the enemy we can be quite depressed about the assaults of the enemy upon our integrity. In John 2:24-25, John reminds us that the Lord “didn’t trust himself to men, for he knew what was in men”. When we forget what is “in men” we are likely to get hurt or saddened by the evils we confront. Satan hates us and his people will hate us; we need to relax with the truth and then arm ourselves against the enemy. John 15:18ff, Ephesians 6:10-18.

People will lie about us openly and boldly. Evil People will launch assassinations upon our reputation and they will do it with viciousness that betrays their origins through their “family likeness”. John 8:44-47. When such things happen let us relax in the Lord’s arms and seek his remedy, not the remedy of pagan courts. 1 Corinthians 6:5-11. God does such a better job of protecting us than any court of man, and when the Lord judges the evil people he does a very thorough job of it! Hebrews 10:30-31, 12:28-29.

“They breathe out cruelty.” What is inside a person will always come out in time. Matthew 15:10-11, Luke 6:45. People can be deceitful and evil and their evil be hidden from us for a time, but the evil will always come out, it is just a matter of time. I always advise people to apply Jesus words in **Matthew 7:13-23**. He states that by their fruit men may be known, and fruit takes around six months to set and form to full ripeness, and in the psychological world that is about the time to wait and watch a person to really see what is in their heart, for by six months it will be visible on the outside.

Few people can hide evil longer than six months from a person who is watching their life. The Lord’s advice, when taken seriously, has protected many people from business and marital partners whose bizarre and evil behaviours were not seen until around the six month point. Jesus words keep us safe. Let us not be trusting where the Lord never trusted anyone without clear fruit in their life. If the fruit is evil then the person is evil influenced, or actually belongs to the enemy.

Galatians 5:19-23

*“19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,
20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,
21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.
22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,
23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.
24 And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”*

APPLICATION

1. Do not be deceived by evil men and women; watch them for long enough to ensure you know them by their fruits. Do not be too quick to trust or open up to people that you have not vetted thoroughly. Let us be careful fruit inspectors of other’s lives and withhold trust from any with evil fruit in their past and present, for by their fruit their heart is known. Believers are warned about evil men and we are fools if we trust untested men and women when the Lord never did without clear fruit of righteousness.

2. Be ready for malicious attack if you serve the Lord. The enemy’s hatred is severe and consistent towards us, but the Lord’s loving kindness is more consistent and more powerful. We are in the Lord’s hands and need to rest in his power and protection. Let us commit ourselves daily into his holy and powerful care.

DOCTRINES**GOD – DIVINE GUIDANCE – THE WILL OF GOD****EVIL**

Psalm 27:13

“I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.”

REFLECTION

For many of us under great pressures at times it seems as if we might fall over unless the Lord delivers us. It is not the expectation of eternal deliverance, but of the Lord’s deliverance in time we seek (the land of the living). We know that heaven is wonderful, and it is not that which we seek in deliverance, but deliverance right here on the earth so that all might see the victory of the Lord over evil men.

Psalm 116:3-16

*“3 The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.
 4 Then called I upon the name of the LORD; O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.
 5 Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful.
 6 The LORD preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me.
 7 Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.
 8 For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.
 9 I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living.
 10 I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted:
 11 I said in my haste, All men are liars.
 12 What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me?
 13 I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD.
 14 I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people.
 15 Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.
 16 O LORD, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds.”*

Faith steps out to engage the enemy in the battle we are called to, but not with fear, but in expectation of the Lord’s loving kindness and protection. Hebrews 11:1ff. We are to walk into the battles we face, assured that this is indeed the Lord’s battle and confident in his protection to achieve all he desires of us in what he has called us to.

APPLICATION

1. Our death is precious in the sight of the Lord, but our life is also precious to the Lord, and he seeks for us to glorify the Lord in the land of the living before we join him in heaven. Let us leave our lives in the Lord’s hands for joyful service before we enter heaven in joy.
2. At times we may feel that we are ready to faint under the pressures we face, but if we cast ourselves upon the Lord we will be kept by him to bring glory to Him in and through our lives and finally our death. Let us advance and trust the Lord with his clear orders.

DOCTRINES

KINGDOM

KINGDOM – MILLENNIAL KINGDOM

Psalm 27:14

“Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.”

REFLECTION

THE LORD’S ORDER TO US, IF WE DOUBT WHERE WE ARE TO GO, is clearly stated **“wait upon the LORD”**. This order is found in Isaiah 40:31 also, where the exhortation, and assurance, expressed by David is seen in a most picturesque way; *“But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”*

We are called to await orders many times in our lives. Be wary of those who always know exactly what they are to do, for the Lord will often make his servants wait patiently and prayerfully until he makes his purposes clear. Psalm 27:14, 37:7-9, 62:5, 130:5, Proverbs 20:22. We are called to rest upon the Lord’s Plan, not make our own plans and seek to serve the Lord down the paths we would prefer to walk. A great idea is just your idea, and until the Lord has made it clear that it is to be walked in, then we had better pause and reflect upon it and wait prayerfully for God’s confirmation.

Habakkuk 2:3-4

“3 For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

4 Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

5 Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine, he is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people.”

“Be of good courage” as you wait upon the Lord’s clear orders, and stand fully armoured while you wait for the Lord’s directions. Soldiers are often called to stand and wait for further orders, and they are to stand in ranks, ready to fight at a minutes notice and await those orders arrival and be ready for instant obedience when they come.

God’s promise, as we stand ready to move, still awaiting orders, is that he will strengthen us for the coming battle. The battle is coming, for the world is a battlefield, and it is just where and who we move forward against. Until the orders arrive we are to receive the ministries of the Holy Spirit and so be strengthened. The “waiting upon the Lord” is active, it is not “deck chair” waiting, but active sword drill and knee drill while we wait. I am presently “waiting for orders” about where we are to live and what we are to do to earn money as doors appear to be closing around us. As I wait for orders I am writing these books for the glory of the Lord.

As I seek guidance I say “Amen” with my computer and prepare material for pastors, and take every opportunity to preach and teach locally that I receive, but will not accept “great ideas and opportunities” that require serious commitment to overseas work until the Lord’s orders are clear as to where I am to go and what I am to do here. I am cautious because I do not want to board a plane and fly off to “serve” unless I am the one who should be on that plane.

APPLICATION

1. Let us not be flippant regarding guidance, but seek the clear orders of the Lord and obey only the orders that are clearly received. Any step ahead of the Lord is a dangerous and potentially fatal step.

2. Let us wait actively upon the Lord’s orders. Let us be busy in what we are doing and seek through prayer the clarity that God alone can give in situations.

DOCTRINE**PROMISES****Notes**

Psalm 28

The Lord is My Rock – Answered Prayer

A Psalm of David

Psalm 28:1

“Unto thee will I cry, O LORD my rock; be not silent to me: lest, [if] thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit.”

REFLECTION

“Unto thee will I cry, O Lord my rock”. There is only one who hears and answers prayer and that is the Lord, the rock of our salvation. The Lord is indeed our rock of stability in this evil world and he is the rock who strengthens us. There is no stability for mankind in the turbulent seas of this world except upon the rock who is Christ. David sees the Lord as his rock many times in the Psalms and it is good for us to have this image firmly fixed in our own mind. Psalms 18:2, 31:2-3, 62:2-6, 89:26, 92:15, 94:22.

“Be not silent to me”. It is the Lord’s answer to prayer that we seek in all things. No other answer will suffice, but his answer will always be sufficient and direct us in the path we are to walk. As we wait this is a prayer that is helpful to utter to the Lord, for waiting for a clear answer is often stressful and the silence can be deafening at times. Wait upon the Lord, for the Lord truly answers; it is just his timing, not our own.

“I will become like those that go down into the pit”. The fear and misery of the unbelieving dead is for eternity (Matthew 25:46; 2Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 21:8), and yet the despair we sometimes will experience as we wait for the Lord’s answers to prayer can be like a living death. Despair can grip our heart as we wait upon the Lord and it is vital that we rest upon the promises of the Lord’s Word and so stabilise our feet on the rock again. We can feel very bad indeed as we wait for clear guidance, and I look at the last eight weeks in our lives and I really see David’s point on this. As money ebbs away and there is no clear direction forward we need to really hold onto faith and hope.

APPLICATION

1. Do not be embarrassed about reminding the Lord that you are waiting for his answer to a specific prayer, for the Lord wants dialogue over issues not just “pray and forget”. Let us come before the Lord with thanksgiving and persistence in our requests.
2. The Lord is our rock and we need to climb up on that rock at times and seek the shelter and comfort of the stability of God’s Character and Plan in order to be safe and secure. As the tempests rage around us the Rock of Christ is our safe place in the eye of the storm. In prayer cast yourself on the Lord.

DOCTRINE

HOPE

Psalm 28:2

“Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle.”

REFLECTION

“Hear the voice of my supplications”. When we ask the Lord it is wise to pause and really think, do we want the Lord to do exactly what we are asking in this prayer? Prayer is often too casually made and not thought through. David thinks and asks the Lord to hear fully his prayers and answer them precisely. Both his petition and desire are covered in this request, for the Lord seeks the Lord’s total and complete solution to the problem he has laid before Him. 1 Peter 5:5-10.

“When I lift up of my hands towards thy holy place”. Posture in prayer varies from culture to culture, but this gives us an indication of David’s prayer posture as he makes this request. This is an indication of his standing, head bowed with arms outstretched in front of him palms upwards, and that as he makes this request he lifts up his outstretched arms towards the tabernacle and the Holy of Holies within it. He is visually passing over his worry to the Lord and as he makes his request he lifts his upwards facing hands to the tabernacle where the Lord dwelt to answer prayers.

David was visually illustrating his heart attitude and actual request process in his prayer posture, and this is helpful for us to see here and think ourselves about our posture in prayer. The Jewish posture of prostration was also used in times where humility and total dependence upon the Lord was wanted to be illustrated. The posture that David has in this psalm is a good one for church prayers, as we stand, arms to our sides but pointing forwards, palms of the hands facing upwards.

This standing prayer posture illustrates our heart attitude and expectation; we are passing over our burdens to the Lord and expect to receive his blessing. Our palms are open and face upwards illustrating that we are about to pass over issues, and then we expect to receive answers. We have also, through confession of sin before we make any requests, ensured that our hands are clean before the Lord. 1 Timothy 2:8.

APPLICATION

1. Let us be deliberate about our prayer posture and our requests, so that we seriously pass over issues and seriously expect the answers to come through.
2. Let us act in prayer in a way that illustrates to all around our expectation of the Lord’s response.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – PRAYER

Psalm 28:3

“Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief [i/s] in their hearts.”

REFLECTION

David does not want to be dealt with by the Lord in association with any of the wicked in his society. He wants a clear separation between himself and these evil people who surround him. He is determined to be different to these people and he wants the Lord to treat him as different. We can compromise with evil people to keep the peace and end up sharing their fate. It is crucial that we have a visible difference between us and the world! Numbers 16:21, 2 Corinthians 6:17, Hebrews 7:26.

David does not want to be gathered up for judgment with those who habitually work mischief and evil in society. We can get far too cosy with evil men and wonder why we pick up divine discipline with them. David wanted a clear distance between him and evil men, and he didn’t want to share in their works, their rewards, or their destiny. Jude 20-25.

APPLICATION

1. Jude warns us to “hate the filthy things” of the pagans around us, and we need to make a clear separation between ourselves and evil people. If we wish to share their fate we can draw near such people, but if we stand for God, then let us do so with powerful testimony to the truth.
2. Many people speak “peace” but there is no peace in their hearts, only the devious desire to destroy any who trust them. Let us not be fooled by evil men and women, nor believe their lies and deception. Jeremiah 6:14, 8:11-14.

DOCTRINE

SIN – OLD SIN NATURE – FRUIT OF THE OLD SIN NATURE

Psalm 28:4

“Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours: give them after the work of their hands; render to them their desert.”

REFLECTION

David seeks absolute justice from the Lord for those who work evil. He wants them to get exactly what they give, so that they cannot complain about any injustice in their treatment. Matthew 5:7, James 2:13. For those who show no mercy, no mercy will be shown, but for the merciful there will be mercy shown. Each person must face the consequences of their own actions and accept their choices produce the outcomes that they have selected.

Each and every member of Mankind will one day stand before the judgment seat of Christ to receive the reward for their deeds upon the earth. All who have done evil will receive the evil they have done. Revelation 20:10-15. It is of interest that the evil ones who come before the Great White Throne Judgment are all there because they have chosen to side with evil against Good and they are judged for their works. They have decided that the work of Christ upon the Cross was not for them, and they have despised it as worth nothing, and so they are judged on the basis of their own works to see if their works do indeed measure up to that of Jesus for them.

Unsaved mankind will receive exactly what they want; eternity without God. They will receive the right reward for their evil rejection of everything Jesus did for them. There is a payment to be made for all evil deeds. The bible records that the wages of sin is death, and it is indeed, eternal death separated from the love of God, but that is exactly what the unbeliever has chosen.

Romans 2:5-11

“5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:

8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,

9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;

10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:

11 For there is no respect of persons with God.”

APPLICATION

1. The devil always pays his wages, and his wages is death. Let us warn the lost of their peril and do so bluntly and openly. There is no peace for the wicked, and the enemy of man is determined to punish mankind to the ultimate degree. Pagans must realise the truth, and we must leave no man without excuse before the Great White Throne.

2. Those who oppose the truth will reap their reward, and receive all that God has for those who reject Him and want no part in eternity. They have no choice at that point, for they have eternal life, it is just eternal judgment. Let us tell the truth to the lost believer and leave none without excuse before the Lord.

Psalm 28:5

“Because they regard not the works of the LORD, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up.”

REFLECTION

The enemies of the truth consider themselves above the laws of God but they are not. All men must be obedient to the Lord's Law or pay the penalty; there is no room for arrogance in the presence of the Lord God. They do not consider the creator of the universe to be worthy of their attention and so must expect to answer for such arrogant evil.

They do not consider the works of creation and explain away the mind behind the universe and so they will be broken down in their arrogance. They aim to build themselves up and magnify their importance in the sight of other creatures, but all who mock the creator must pay for such impiety. Psalm 14:1, 53:1.

The Lord has one word for the fool who ignores the reality of being a creature; that word is “death”, for no fool may ignore or avoid this reality.

Luke 12:15-25

“15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

17 *And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?*
 18 *And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.*
 19 *And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.*
 20 *But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?*
 21 *So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.*
 22 *And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.*
 23 *The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.*
 24 *Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?*
 25 *And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?"*

APPLICATION

1. The Lord always will have the last word to all men, for none can select their time of death, except by suicide, and even then they must stand before Him one second later. None can avoid that appointment. Let the Word of God be known.
2. The Lord will destroy the works of men. Nothing will last the stressors of time and space; all decays in this fallen world, and all will be judged by God in the end. The greatest of men is a pee wee potentate, and in the end all their great work will be destroyed and they will be sent to the Lake of Fire.

DOCTRINE

JUSTICE

Psalm 28:6-7

“Blessed [be] the LORD, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications. The LORD [is] my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.”

REFLECTION

The great thing about believing prayer, offered up in the filling of the Holy Spirit, is that it is always going to be answered and bring grace, mercy and joy to us. David expresses his thankfulness in the answers received here. God’s answers are intelligent answers, drawn from the eternal plan for our life that was developed before time began, so its provisions are perfect, for every fact in the creation is taken into account in the Plan of God. At times we forget that we are part of an eternal plan and that the Lord has every detail in his hands, but when prayers are answered we see and rejoice with renewed freshness. In prayer time touches eternity and connects to God’s Plan for us, and it is for blessing.

Psalm 31:21-24

*“21 Blessed be the LORD: for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city.
 22 For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.
 23 O love the LORD, all ye his saints: for the LORD preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.
 24 Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.”*

Even though we know the character of God, and the truths about the plan of God, we will still feel passionately fearful and worried at times, for our human nature needs certainties we can see, and the doctrines can only be seen on the pages of scripture. As we take them and apply them into the fabric of our lives we are strengthened by the Holy Spirit, but it is only as we see the answers to prayer unfold before our eyes and we can “touch” the answers that we can truly relax into the absolute truth of the doctrines. We “knew” them, and we believed them, but now we have them in our soul as tested and proven “wisdom”. David’s prayers have been “earnest” and passionate, and his joy is equally passionate.

David now sees that the Lord has been his armour of protection in the crisis he has been through, keeping him together and strong under the pressures of the events, and bringing him through alive to the place of victory. The tested and tried God of scripture “comes through” with prayer requests and settles our life upon the new foundation we require as each crisis unfolds. We trusted in the Lord and we were delivered, and so we know that our trust was in a secure place. The secure place for the believer is the holy character and biblical promises of God.

As the believer sees that their prayers are answered they will jump for joy and rejoice greatly. It is a time of overflowing power when we see the answers to long awaited and deeply significant prayers. It is joy abounding to see the Lord answer with clarity and certainty that enables you to rejoice, but also to re-set your direction for the next years in your life. David has many crises in his kingship, and he fails to trust some times, but he always returns to the Lord, is forgiven through confession and is restored to see prayers answered again. Do not fear that a past sin will stop the grace of God, for nothing stops the grace and mercy of God except unfaced and unconfessed sin!

Psalm 66:18-20

*“18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:
19 But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.
20 Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.”*

APPLICATION

1. Let us rejoice before the Lord in the full joy of our heart, for he hears us and he answers us in exactly the right time and with exactly what we need. Our prayers connect us with the eternal plan of God from before time was made, and so the provisions we lock into by believing prayer have been perfectly prepared for everything the Lord knew we would need in time. Let us rejoice as we receive his bounty in his time. The Lord is never “late” although we panic at times about timing!
2. Let us clear away any sin that hinders the Lord’s answers to our prayers, and let us with clean hands and pure heart await the Lord’s answers and his renewed direction for our life.

DOCTRINE

MUSIC

Psalm 28:8

“The LORD [is] their strength, and he [is] the saving strength of his anointed. Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.”

REFLECTION

For the believer the Lord is our strength in crises. I have found myself reflecting upon this fact again and again over the years when such great pressures have washed around and over me at times, and wondered aloud to my family, “I don’t see how any unbeliever could ever have gone through this”. It is only the certainty of God’s answers to prayer that have kept me sane through these things for “I know whom I have believed and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day!” 2 Timothy 1:12. The Lord alone is our strength, for his character, his plan, and his power, are certain to deliver us and bring us through to glory.

His presence is the “saving strength” of his anointed. We are in Christ Jesus the “anointed” of the Lord, set apart (holy) to serve and bring glory to Him forever. Our position is far more wonderful than under pressures we may think it to be. When the storms of life buffet us and knock the wind out of our lungs we can be exhausted in our human strength, but it is at these times of great distress that we need to draw upon our spiritual strength in the indwelling anointing of the Holy Spirit.

It is in these terrible times that we need to draw closer to the Word of Life and draw strength from the Lord’s Word, and it is in these terrible times that I have studied the EBCWA books and drawn spiritual strength, and then written others. With all human hope and strength gone I have written all these books, and that is why the Holy Spirit has been able to achieve the impossible with me through all these hard years.

We are the Lord’s inheritance, and knowing this, will he ever cast away his inheritance? We are under the “much more” care of the Lord. Romans 5:9-20, 2 Corinthians 3:9-11, 1 Peter 1:17ff. The Lord will always bless his people, for that is his nature and character and he can do nothing else to those in fellowship with Him. Blessing comes mainly through “feeding them” upon the Word of God.

It is in feeding the people with the truths of scripture that the Lord’s blessing is seen most clearly, for it is the enlivening of the doctrines of the Word by the Holy Spirit’s teaching ministry that brings the most joy to God’s people. As we take in the Word we are “lifted up” in our spirits and are in the right place to receive answers to prayer and direction for service.

APPLICATION

1. The Lord alone is our strength and shield, and when we cling to Him alone we can draw the strength we need to fight and win the battles that are raging around us and are still to come. Our physical exhaustion is an irrelevance, for it is the power of the Holy Spirit in which we are to stand, not the power of our Old Sin Nature area of strength. Often the

debilitating stress we go through in life is God's only way to remove our trust in the flesh! Let us cast away all confidence in the flesh and cling to the anointing of the Holy Spirit alone, for in spiritual power we can move mountains, but in our flesh the mole hills will always beat us. Philippians 3:3-4.

2. Let us position ourselves for the Lord's work within and through us, and we do that by confession of sin, feeding on the Word, and allowing the Holy Spirit free way with us to serve and bless Him in and through the fabric of our daily lives.

DOCTRINES

CHRISTIAN LIFE – BLESSED IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST

CHRISTIAN LIFE – BLESSING OF THE BELIEVER

CHRISTIAN LIFE – CAPACITY FOR LIFE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SPIRITUALITY-CARNALITY

Notes

Psalm 29

Worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness

A Psalm of David.

"It seems to be the general opinion of commentators that this Psalm is meant to express the glory of God as heard in the pealing thunder of a destructive storm. This may well be true, for David has used the wonder of nature to bring man to a true perspective of God's knowledge and power (Psalm 8:1-9, Psalm 19) and in Psalm 18 he records how the power of a terrible storm awoke him to the power of God and the insignificance of his own troubles.

There is however another and more immense concept regards the "*voice of the LORD*". It too stems from a commotion within the elements, and has as its foundation, a belief in cosmic disturbances, both past and future. It is suggested that these cosmic disturbances were the trigger to God's devastating judgments, judgments such as the universal flood of Noah's time, the plagues of Egypt at the Passover and the destruction of the Egyptian host in the collapsing waters of the Red Sea and the terror of Mt. Sinai with all its descriptive phraseology. This phraseology is generally passed over as "poetic" by many, rather than descriptive of actual events, yet surely God is able to manipulate his creation, including the planetary host and their accompanying comets, to fulfil his will. If we believe the Bible to be true and accurate in all it relates, we must at least look at Exodus 14:29, Exodus 19:16-18; Joshua 10:11; Psalm 46:6; Ezekiel 38:22; Revelation 16:18, Revelation 16:21, Revelation 8:7 with an open mind.

It would seem to the present writer that these events are too graphic to be poetic and in fact, tally with one's imaginings of what cosmic gravitational interactions and their accompanying geological disasters would be.

Be this as it may, it is highly probable that the majestic sound of rolling thunder prompted David to remember God's sovereign power, as it was displayed in such passages as Exodus 19:16-18 and in his own life." (Brian Huggett's Introduction to his chapter on this wonderful psalm).

Psalm 29:1-2

"Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength. Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness."

REFLECTION

Ascribe to the Lord words aloud that correctly describe his majesty and glory. Cry aloud in worship accurately telling all who attend the service what it is you believe about the Lord's majesty. In worship when we sing a song its words must be correct, and when we publicly pray every word must be weighed and be an accurate reflection of bible doctrine. It is a danger when we are called the "sons of the mighty" that we start to believe our own publicity. When we have had great victories it is easy to believe we are "strong" in our own might, rather than ascribing to God alone the true source of our strength and survival. Psalm 2:10-12, 68:31-34, 96:7-9.

When I look at my life in the Armed Forces and later on missionary journeys through Africa I stand amazed that I survived at all from some situations, and yet the Lord brought me through them all. Ascribe greatness to our God, for he is great and his power can be trusted to bring us through every situation he leads us into! Sing to the Lord's name "glory and strength" for in the Lord alone there is both, and in abundance. Like David, I rejoice in the power, majesty, and plan of the Lord for my life. I ought not to have survived at all, and yet in his grace, mercy and love I have come through with rejoicing. It is with rejoicing that we are to continue now and serve Him forever. 1 Chronicles 16:28-29.

Worship and praise are always to reflect the truth about God's Character, His Person, His Power, and His Plan! It is being rightly related to these realities that stabilises our life and strengthens and empowers our worship and praise. It is all about Him, and as we honour Him we draw strength and power within, for the Holy Spirit will empower the soul and spirit of every man or woman that correctly ascribes glory to the Lord.

Psalm 96:11-13

"11 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof.

12 Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice

13 Before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth."

Psalm 113:3-6

"3 From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the LORD's name is to be praised.

4 The LORD is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens.

5 Who is like unto the LORD our God, who dwells on high,

6 Who humbles himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!"

Psalm 145:3-7

*"3 Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable.
4 One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts.
5 I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works.
6 And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts: and I will declare thy greatness.
7 They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness.
8 The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy."*

APPLICATION

1 Let the people of the Lord tell the truth about their Lord and God, for he is to be honoured and magnified in all his works on our behalf. The Lord upholds and strengthens us in all things. Let us bring glory to his name and honour his plan and purpose for our life.

2. Let us be very careful when men call us "mighty" for we are mighty in the Lord alone and when we forget that we enter into a pride and self satisfaction that is a millimetre away from disaster. In the strength of the Lord alone we are strong and let us praise his holy name for that fact.

DOCTRINE

CHURCH – WORSHIP AND PRAISE

Psalm 29:3

"The voice of the LORD [is] upon the waters: the God of glory thunders: the LORD [is] upon many waters."

REFLECTION

David will now echo the language of Genesis chapter one in his description of the creative power of God upon the waters and in nature itself. God's voice was expressed and the world came into being, and the thought of mankind now is of the "big bang" theory, and yet the Bible has always taught that it is "the silent breath" of God that created all things, without noise and tumult necessarily at all. Genesis 1-2.

"The voice of the LORD" in 1Kings 19:11-13 is a 'still small voice', that is, Elijah hears the words of God quietly and yet powerfully from within his own soul, and Job also tells of a time when in the *silence* he heard a voice (Job 4:16) and he knew it to be the voice of God. In Exodus 24:15-17, Moses describes the time when the LORD spoke to them face to face from out of the midst of the fire as they camped by the "Mount of God", Mt Horeb in the Arabian Peninsula. They saw and heard then very dramatic evidence of the power of God openly displayed upon that mountain. Deuteronomy 10. The Lord may speak in the noisy power of great tumult, but also in the still of the storm deeply into the heart. Let us listen for the Lord's answers to prayer and not be so busy telling the Lord how he is to speak that we miss his speaking!

Jeremiah also speaks of "*a tumult (hamon) of waters in the heavens when he (God) uttered (his) voice*" (Jeremiah 51:16). This is the same imagery as David uses here and reminds us that the prophets all experience the same things and we are in good company when these things are part of our experience also. The Lord wants us to draw close to Him and be open to Him.

"The God of glory thundered." At times the Lord needs to rivet us to the spot in holy fear. When that is needed that is what the Lord will do and do powerfully. We need to stand in awe before the Lord's creative and judging power. The Lord can build up and he can cast down, and we stand in his grace alone. Let us banish all thoughts of arrogance and self centeredness, for it is in the Lord alone that we have strength and certainty. Psalm 104:3.

"The LORD [is] upon many waters." The Lord's power is seen upon the great waters. When we think of the power of the Lord the great oceans are the best image for all who have sailed the seas of the world. The power of great surging waves is awesome and immediately powerful to the mind and body. You physically "feel" the power of a 90 foot high wave as it surges past you or breaks over your ship. You feel the concussion of the ocean as it breaks around you and it is that deep power that David speaks of here. David was no sailor, but he had sat by the sea and realised its power as it broke upon the shore, and for all of us who are sailors we rejoice in the power of God, but with our knees knocking together at times. That is the right way to be when we stand before the Lord our God.

Psalm 93:1-5

*"1 The LORD reigns, he is clothed with majesty; the LORD is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself: the world also is established, that it cannot be moved.
2 Thy throne is established of old: thou art from everlasting."*

3 *The floods have lifted up, O LORD, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves.*
 4 *The LORD on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea.*
 5 *Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness becomes your house, O LORD, for ever"*

APPLICATION

1. The awesome power of God is to be sat before in humility and with holy worship. The Lord's power is awesome and we need to bow before his creative and destructive power and rest in his plan with far more certainty than we do under pressures. Let us step back from our problems and see the greater power of the awesome God who is our Saviour!
2. God speaks in the tumult and in the still small voice of the silence after the storm. Let us be silent before our Lord, not gabble away with prayers when the Lord calls us to silence and humility of quiet waiting upon the Lord. Don't ever fall into the false Pentecostal trap of trying to "psych yourself" into prayerfulness by gabbling away in tongues; just sit quietly before the Lord and hear his still small voice, for you are not heard by your "much speaking", but by your heart's quietness before the Lord.

Note

Having served for many years in Pentecostal churches I have no problem with people speaking in tongues around me, but I have great concern for those who use this emotional experience to "get ready" for prayer when the Bible makes it clear that we are to sit in silence before the Lord. Let us be sure we are able to still our mind, not agitate it in worship, and let us correctly label all artificial agitation or "worship preparation" that is not silent as "fake". Let us not use psychological experiences and make them appear spiritual, and so miss the real spiritual experience the Lord has for us. Let us not follow after and magnify feelings when the Lord wants us to hear his Word and his still quiet voice within.

Notes

Psalm 29:4-5

"The voice of the LORD [is] powerful; the voice of the LORD [is] full of majesty. The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars; yea, the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon."

REFLECTION

When the Lord speaks into nature it is with power and majesty and strength which brings men to their knees. When men hear the sounds of battle or the fierce storms on the great oceans there are few atheists about. God is the definition of "powerful" and when we forget that fact fear enters our heart. Let us glimpse the majesty of the Lord again this day and stabilise ourselves in his strength. It is God who snaps the great trees like match sticks in a storm.

APPLICATION

1. It is good to meditate upon the destructive power of a great storm and when you see the trees split into matchwood reflect upon the power of God who is behind the powers of nature and who made this world. Do not be distracted into worship of nature, but humbly bow before the one who made all things for his glory and will fold it all up one day and put it away, replacing it with another creation. 2 Peter 3:10-18.

Notes

Psalm 29:6

“He makes them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.”

REFLECTION

When you sit watching great trees in a storm it is indeed beautiful to watch the great tops of the trees dance like graceful dancers in a great ballet. There is a joy in the movement of great tree tops and David catches this joy in his pastoral image of the calf leaping for joy. God makes the trees to dance to illustrate how we need to dance, and he makes the great trees to strongly bend and flex like the great bulls of the Syrian farming country. The great Aurochs' bones have been found by archaeologists and they were indeed great bulls of majestic power, but they are but a pale reflection of the power of God.

APPLICATION

1. Whatever the image of power that helps you to visualise the majesty and power of God, use it to reflect upon how great is your God. Hold the thought of God's power and you will be kept from despair and worry in times of crisis. There is no power that stands against our God. Let us rest in his everlasting arms and await his deliverance from our present distress. All things will be seen to have been done for his glory! Hallelujah!

Psalm 29:7-8

“The voice of the LORD divideth the flames of fire. The voice of the LORD shaketh the wilderness; the LORD shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.”

REFLECTION

The “flames of fire” referred to here are best seen as forked lightning, as that has the “spear like” aspect that is carried in the Hebrew words. In various places the lightning takes on quite a different aspect, and in certain areas in the south of Israel the lightning will strike the ground with lethal force to any animal and person close to the strike zone. The area around Kadesh is one of the areas that David frequented in his days on the run from Saul and he would have seen and heard the violence and danger of lightning and thunder as it rolled over the hills there and kindled fires in the scrub and killed animals.

David would have seen lightning half way down to earth suddenly fork in two different directions apparently at random. He would have heard the unpredictable rolls of thunder and felt the concussion of the thunder in his chest as it boomed overhead. The ground would shake and the pressure waves would bounce off the rock faces. Storms in this area are fierce and almost personal in their power and danger. David is expressing the awesomeness of the wilderness storms and he recognises that at any time he or others could have been killed. Truly he has walked with God and has been in God's hands throughout.

APPLICATION

1. When we feel the awesome power of nature in a storm let us pause and reflect upon the power of God and the insignificance of man, and the total reliance we have on the Lord for protection and guidance as we walk through the storms of this life.

Psalm 29:99

“The voice of the LORD makes the hinds to calve, and discovers the forests: and in his temple doth every one speak of [his] glory.”

REFLECTION

The picture of the Lord directing the birthing process of the wild deer is a strange concept to us, but to the ancients this was a way of saying that even the secret things of nature are under God's direction and control. The wild deer were a mystery to the ancient peoples, and in the days before wild life cameramen who would lie in the open for months at a time to get the film footage of the birth, life and death of the wild deer, little was known.

The great forests were places of mystery and darkness and fear to most who lived as pastoralists, and so the reference to the forests is also a reminder that the hidden things of this world are open to God and are all known to him. It is that reminder that to man things are hidden, but to God things are all well known. We need to be reminded that we know very little of the events of this world, and while some of us are really interested in nature, we can only know a little in our brief life time.

These references were David's way of reminding us that heaven will be great, for at least then we can get to know how God put the world together and actually understand things. I am particularly looking forward to the Millennium, for then I will get the chance for 1000 years to explore this world as it was intended to be! God's knowledge is perfect, for He made this earth, but we can only even glimpse a few details.

David ends the verse by reminding us of the correct response to these facts about nature, and that is worship. In heaven there is nothing other than worship, for in heaven there is perfect knowledge and all see the truth, and the truth is even more awesome than we can even realise here and now.

APPLICATION

1. Let us worship the holy awesomeness of the Lord our God, the creator and Saviour of our soul. Let us be excited about nature, and praise the Lord our God for the greatness of what he has given us.

Psalm 29:10

“The LORD sits upon the flood; yes indeed, the LORD sits King for ever.”

REFLECTION

To sit was the prerogative of the king, all else stood in an oriental court. The Lord presided over the floods that covered the earth at the creation, and then in the days of Noah, and the Lord rules over the seas now. The Lord is king forever, and no “prince of this world” will exert any influence over nature that he is not allowed to exert. Satan is a deceiver, but he is also deceived, for he has no power to initiate anything that interferes with the creation. He will try to destroy the earth during the Great Tribulation period, but he will have no chance to do such things. He will fail. We are under the protection and rulership of the King, and there is only one King, and there has only ever been one King!

“Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. If God is for us, who can be against us, and who is there that can separate us from the love of Christ? No one. In all things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us”. (Romans 8:31-39).

APPLICATION

1. He is the King of all kings and Lord of all lords, and there is no other with the power to change history and bring this Age to its end. The Lord our God rules. Praise Him in all ways and at all times. He is our Lord and our Saviour.

Psalm 29:11

“The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace.”

REFLECTION

Man gives the Lord the honour and respect (“fear of the Lord”) of correct worship, but God will always give to mankind far more than we ever deserve or expect. God gives those who worship Him strength and power to achieve all that the plan of God calls for them to achieve. The Lord also then gives to all who worship him the peace of mind and heart that settles the thinking and the emotions. The Lord blesses his people with peace, and it is peace in the soul that man needs most clearly. It is only the Lord who can give peace. 2Thessalonians 3:16.

Numbers 6:24-26

“24 The LORD bless thee, and keep thee:

25 The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:

26 The LORD lift up the light of his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.”

Isaiah 9:6-7

“6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”

APPLICATION

1. There is peace no-where else in this world and the next, other than in the arms of the one who died for us all. It is in Jesus that there is peace; all else is temporary and deceitful. Let us praise Him for his peace that passes understanding, for it comes from the source of the limitless love of God for us.

Notes

Psalm 30

Song of the Mature Believer – Deliverance and Gratitude

A Psalm [and] Song [at] the dedication of the house of David.

REFLECTION

What is “the house of David” referred to in this psalm. It is believed by some to be his home, mentioned in 2 Samuel 5:11, and its re-dedication to be after the Absalom rebellion and his defilement of David’s home and family. 2 Samuel 16:20-23, 20:3. There would be a formal rededication of the palace, but it is hard to think of this psalm being for that personal purpose, when it is clearly written to be sung with musicians and singers in the tabernacle court that David had erected for the Ark.

Does it refer to the Temple, which, because David had so much input into its design and the supply of much of its construction materials, is referred to as the ‘house of David’. In 1Chronicles 22:1 David refers to “*the threshing floor of Ornan*” as being “*the house of the LORD God*”; he knew that this was the place the Temple should be built and in his mind it became an accomplished fact, therefore he wrote this Psalm for the dedication of the “house of the LORD God”.

“1 Chronicles 21 (also 2 Samuel 24) records the event that prompted the selection of this particular threshing floor, and when we read that account, it is easy to see why David wrote vss. 6 & 7, for they strongly suggest his recovery from the arrogance of self-sufficiency (in numbering the people) and recognition of God’s providence. This Psalm is a natural sequel to that dreadful time of condemnation and judgment, and to David’s joy in the task of preparing a house for his God.” (Brian Huggett, from his introduction to this Psalm.)

2 Samuel 22 – A Companion Psalm to the One Below – From a Similar Time Frame

2 And he said, The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer;

3 The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; you save me from violence.

4 I will call on the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.

5 When the waves of death compassed me, the floods of ungodly men made me afraid;

6 The sorrows of hell compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me;

7 In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried to my God: and he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry did enter into his ears.....

17 He sent from above, he took me; he drew me out of many waters;

18 He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them that hated me: for they were too strong for me.

19 They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the LORD was my stay.

20 He brought me forth also into a large place: he delivered me, because he delighted in me.....

29 For thou art my lamp, O LORD: and the LORD will lighten my darkness.

30 For by thee I have run through a troop: by my God have I leaped over a wall.

31 As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all them that trust in him.

32 For who is God, save the LORD? and who is a rock, save our God?

33 God is my strength and power: and he makes my way perfect.

34 He makes my feet like hinds’ feet: and sets me upon my high places.

35 He teaches my hands to war; so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.

36 Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy gentleness hath made me great.

37 Thou hast enlarged my steps under me; so that my feet did not slip.....

47 The LORD lives; and blessed be my rock; and exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation.

48 It is God that avenges me, and that brings down the people under me.

49 And that brings me forth from mine enemies: thou also hast lifted me up on high above them that rose up against me: thou hast delivered me from the violent man.

50 Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the heathen, and I will sing praises unto thy name.

51 He is the tower of salvation for his king: and shows mercy to his anointed, unto David, and to his seed for evermore.”

APPLICATION

1. It is good to reflect upon the care of the Lord over us in the past and his mercy and grace that is renewed every morning, and to give thanks for the Lord’s Unbounded Love. The Lord is our strength and guide in all things. He is our strength indeed, and the only one who can deliver and bring us through to final victory.

Psalm 30:1

“I will extol thee, O LORD; for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.”

REFLECTION

It is a good thing to “extol” (raise up the Lord’s holy name and honour his majesty) the Lord God our Creator and Saviour. The Lord has lifted us up to honour, glory and praise, and so we repay that debt with praise and honour ourselves. As we are lifted up we give thanks, for the Lord has strengthened us and brought us to powerful service whereby we bring glory to His Name. The Lord has strengthened, empowered and guided us so that our service is able to be as it is, and the Lord has dealt with our enemies and brought them all to their knees. We stand in the Lord’s power and plan alone.

Psalm 34:3-11

*“3 O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.
 4 I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.
 5 They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.
 6 This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.
 7 The angel of the LORD encamps round about them that fear him, and delivers them.
 8 O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusts in him.
 9 O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him.
 10 The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing.
 11 Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD.”*

Even the greatest king of all in the Gentile world, Nebuchadnezzar (the head of gold of the Gentiles) came to the place where he said what David did. It is the Lord alone who lifts man up to rule and be great.

Daniel 4:34-37

*“34 And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that lives for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation:
 35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?
 36 At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me.
 37 Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.”*

APPLICATION

1. The Lord alone protects us and lifts us up to any form of rulership in this life. Let us humbly place ourselves under the will of the Lord and rest with Him alone. Let us praise Him and honour his holy name in all we do.
2. Let us extol the Lord and cry aloud of his glory and grace.

DOCTRINE

NEBUCHADNEZZAR – PRIDE

Psalm 30:2-3

“O LORD my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me. O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.”

REFLECTION

To pray with passion we need to have a real relationship with the Lord our God. In many places in Africa where I have ministered the local church will always ask a visiting preacher to pray, for in his prayer they can see his spiritual life immediately. It is a good test for any person, for platitudes filled prayers mean hypocrisy most times, and a prayer that has no passionate love for the Lord in it betrays the coldness of the heart of the man speaking. Psalm 107:1-10.

David cried to the Lord with all his heart pleading for the Lord's answers to prayer on his behalf and the Lord heard and healed his deep distress and solved the problems that David laid before Him. The Lord "stitched David back together" and so in the situation he faced, he was not killed and did not go down into the grave and end his ministry and service in defeat. David had pleaded with the Lord for life and the Lord granted him life when he could have been killed and he is more than grateful, he is thankful for grace received and conscious of the great responsibility he has to fulfil all the Lord desires of him now. He lives to serve. Psalm 28:1ff, 51:1ff.

Psalm 103:1-5

*"1 Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.
2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:
3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;
4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;
5 Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.
21 Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.
22 Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the LORD, O my soul."*

APPLICATION

1. Our life is in the Lord's hands and we look to Him alone for final healing in sickness and after injury. The doctors may do their best, and we can mostly trust in them, but our life is in the Lord's hands. If we are lifted up it is for a holy purpose and we need to be focused in our service and determined in our time management.
2. We will not "go down to death" one second before we are supposed to in the Lord's service, for our days are in his hands. Psalm 68:20, 116:15, Jeremiah 15:1, 24:4-7.

DOCTRINE

HELL AND HADES

Psalm 30:4

"Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness."

REFLECTION

O let us sing unto the Lord in the joy of our salvation. Psalm 32:11, 97:12, 103:20-22, 135:19-21, 148:14, 149:1. The angels sing constantly "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of Hosts". Revelation 4:8. We need to get into the habit of praise and worship for the Lord is to be honoured. Every moment we remember who He truly is we need to bow within and give thanks for his grace towards us. Hebrews 4:14-16.

Psalm 33:1-4

*"1 Rejoice in the LORD, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright.
2 Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings.
3 Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise.
4 For the word of the LORD is right; and all his works are done in truth."*

We are his "saints" (set apart ones through the blood of Christ shed for us) and as such we have received the greatest blessings for time and eternity and so it is right and proper that we lift up our voice in praise and honour to his majesty. He is holy and we are to be holy to serve Him. That means being consciously "set apart" from the cares of this world daily so that we may focus our energy and service upon the Lord for the glory of God and the honour of his holy name. 1 Corinthians 3:17, Ephesians 1:4, 5:27, 1 Timothy 2:8, 2 Timothy 1:9.

1 Peter 1:12-19

*"12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.
13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;
14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:
15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;
16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.
17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:
18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;
19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:"*

APPLICATION

1. Sing believer, give thanks to the Lord, and remember his holiness.
2. Be holy for the Lord your God calls you to holiness.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SEPARATION

Psalm 30:5

“For his anger [*endureth but*] a moment; in his favour [*is*] life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy [*cometh*] in the morning.”

REFLECTION

This verse is indeed a precious promise in times of trouble, for it recalls the holy plan of God that is prepared from eternity past, and in which we have absolute security for today and forever. The divine discipline that we can receive at times of persistent sinfulness will disappear as soon as we confess our sins. The Lord’s “strange work” is judgment of his own, for his desire is to save and bless us. Isaiah 28:21, Hebrews 12:5-15, 2 Peter 3:9.

God’s delight in us is such that his desire for us is “life” and life more abundantly! John 10:10-17, 14:6. God simply does not give us spiritual blessings in a limited way; he always does things for us “abundantly”. Ephesians 3:20, Titus 3:6, 2 Peter 1:11. We must daily praise the holy name of the Lord and honour his name and character for his abundant blessings. His blessing upon us is life forevermore.

Weeping at times will go through the night, and will not be a sign of being out of fellowship, but simply a sign of the “great grief” you are carrying through that night. The late Dr Viktor Frankl has a great saying relating to this. He survived Auschwitz but all his family did not. He says, “There are certain things, if they happen to you and you don’t lose your mind, it is only because you didn’t have a mind to lose.” Weeping may endure all the night, but the dawn of hope always rises in the Lord’s Plan for your life. Psalm 6:6-9, 56:8-11, 59:16, 126:5-6, Isaiah 38:3-5.

Joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, Galatians 5:22, and so even after great pressures the Spirit of God will bring the fruit through in the life of the one who leans totally upon the arms of Almighty God. The best wine grows in the toughest soils, and so the best fruit comes from those who grow their lives in the midst of great affliction. The day dawns in joy for the believer who trusts in the Lord with all their might. Psalm 62:2, Lamentations 3:23.

APPLICATION

1. “Hang in there” believer, right through the dark night of the soul, for the dawn of the Lord’s answer to your earnest prayer comes. The dawn always comes, and the Lord always answers.
2. Rejoice in the Lord for he is mighty to save, and he always delivers us into heaven with rejoicing.

DOCTRINES

JUSTICE

MERCY

Psalm 30:6

“And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.”

REFLECTION

The mentality here is a dangerous one, for we stand in the Lord’s power and grace only. It is never the greatness of our physical assets that delivers us, but the greatness of the God who holds us with his everlasting arms. Jesus told a parable about this as recorded in Luke’s Gospel.

Luke 12:16-21.

*“16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:
17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?
18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.
19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.
20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?
21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”*

Our attitude towards things is a good indication of our spiritual growth and status. Those who are rightly related to the Lord and eternity have no desires for the things of the flesh, or the riches of this life, for they see all things as temporary and they realise that the only things of value are the things done for God.

James has harsh words for those who value riches above honest dealings with their fellow man and forget that the Lord is coming for them all one day. It is a dangerous thing to value riches, for then you can slip in your other values and treat all men as if they are means to your ends, rather than the blood bought sinners they are. 2 Peter 3:9, 1 John 2:1-2.

James 5:1-8

*“1 Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.
2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth eaten.
3 Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.
4 Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, cries: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.
5 Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.
6 Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.
7 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waits for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.
8 Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draws nigh.”*

Let us be challenged by the Lord regarding our attitude to things, for they are the mere “details of life” and the Lord has them in hand as a part of his “battlefield provisions” for our life here in time.

Luke 12:22-34

*“22 And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.
23 The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.
24 Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?
25 And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?
26 If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?
27 Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.
28 If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?
29 And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.
30 For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knows that ye have need of these things.
31 But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.
32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.
33 Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that fails not, where no thief approaches, neither moth corrupts.
34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”*

APPLICATION

1. Where is your heart today believer? Do you rest in the Lord's value system, or have you been seduced by the world's assessments of wealth and power? Let us ensure our heart is resting in the Lord's values and that all our energy and effort goes into his service and things that bring glory to Him alone.
2. Do not trust your heart in fleeting riches, for the wind of financial crisis blows all "wealth" away in a moment. Rest your life in the arms of the Lord, for in his provisions there is security indeed.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Psalm 30:7

"LORD, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, [and] I was troubled."

REFLECTION

It is by the Lord that we are able to "stand like a mountain" amongst the paganism that surrounds us at times here. It is God's delight to bless his children, and his favour/pleasure/goodwill that we stand within as his children. If we sin and fail to confront it we are cut from fellowship while we harbour the sin, but once it is confessed we are restored to fellowship. Psalm 66:18, Psalm 103:10-18, Revelation 3:19-20.

We stand strong in the Lord's strength alone. In the midst of the devil's world there is no other strength than that which the Lord provides. Psalm 102:10, 104:29, 143:7. We must remember that the holiness of the Lord cannot look upon sin and so if we cherish sin we cannot be cherished by the Lord; we can only be disciplined by Him. He can only show his love by discipline, for the sooner we confess the sooner we can be blessed, and so the Lord's hand is upon us to punish to get our attention and bring us to our knees for our good. God seeks our good at all times, for we are here to bless his name and bring praise and honour to him in holy service and sin stops that. Let us deal with anything that hinders blessing. Hezekiah's prayer when he was ill unto death is a good one to reflect upon here, as there are echoes of David's thoughts in this prayer.

Isaiah 38:14-20

"14 Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail with looking upward: O LORD, I am oppressed; undertake for me.

15 What shall I say? he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it: I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul.

16 O LORD, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit: so wilt thou recover me, and make me to live.

17 Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.

18 For the grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.

19 The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth.

20 The LORD was ready to save me: therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the LORD."

APPLICATION

1. The Lord lifts up our soul and body from death. We must take all things to the Lord in prayer, for he hears and restores our soul.
2. Let us not be troubled in sins, but restored in confession, for in holiness we stand like a mountain before our enemies, but if we stay in sin we will shake like a jellyfish! Let us select strength, and act as the soldiers we are called to be. 1 Corinthians 16:13.

DOCTRINES

HOLY SPIRIT – COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

HOLY SPIRIT – MINISTRY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

HOLY SPIRIT – FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Psalm 30:8-11

“I cried to thee, O LORD; and unto the LORD I made supplication. What profit [is there] in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth? Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me: LORD, be thou my helper.”

REFLECTION

We can get quite down and depressed over serious issues, and being overwhelmed at times is not a sign of lack of faith, it may just reflect a very powerful stressor. Crying out to the Lord is a sign of distress, but also of the toughness of the battles we may be called to fight. Men cry out to each other in a fire fight, to express distress, but also to give encouragement and strengthen each other in the battle. Cry out to the Lord, for he hears and will answer the cry of his children. Psalm 34:6, 77:1-3, 130:1-2.

It is appropriate that we “make supplication” to the Lord, seeking his favour, and seeking a favour from him. This can be a good prayer to make, and with a smile make it to the Lord: “Lord I seek a favour of You”. The Lord delights in this sort of prayer and loves to answer us with favour and blessing. Keep remembering the principle, that prayer is not battling down God’s righteous reluctance, but tapping into God’s gracious benevolence. God seeks to bless us; ask for his grace and spiritual power and you will never be disappointed. 1 Corinthians 12:7-11.

Philippians 4:6-9

*“6. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.
 7. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.
 8. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.
 9. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.”*

There is no benefit in our death to no purpose. If our blood falls to the ground without any point there is no glory for the Lord in that, and the Lord will not let it happen, for everything about our life is to bring him glory, and he has a plan to ensure it does. As we walk in his plan we will not face death one second before we are due to meet him face to face. David learned, as we all must also, to rest in the Lord’s care and protection. David wants to spend his last days proclaiming God’s truth, and praising God’s name, and he cannot do that when dead!

David seeks the mercy of the Lord and the grace of the Lord in deliverance from the present distress and the transforming of the pressure he faces into reason for praise and honour to the Lord. The Lord alone is his helper and he seeks no other glory than that which God gives. He does not seek the battle glory of men, for he doesn’t want to waste his life in a battle that does not need to be fought, nor does he want to be a millimetre out of God’s will, for that is the place of death, where blood falls to the earth to no eternal purpose. 1 Kings 22:34-37.

APPLICATION

1. The Lord is our helper, and he delights in our requests for help and power to be applied into situations. Let us brace ourselves into the battle we must fight, and seek the Lord’s power directly into the battlefield. Let us see the power of God applied into the situations we face, for he will destroy the enemy and bring glory to his holy name in the process. Let us walk in expectation of the power of the Lord being readily and freely available to us.
2. Let us be unashamed of our cries aloud to the Lord in any distress. Let us seek the Lord’s direct involvement in every step we take and every blow we direct at the enemy. Let us be the soldiers we are called to be. We are his men and women and we have a battle to win, and so let us advance into each day seeking the Lord’s work to be done that day to his glory!

DOCTRINES

CHRISTIAN LIFE – PRAYER

PSALM 51 – FORGIVENESS AND RESTORATION

Psalm 30:11

“Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness”

REFLECTION

After confession of sin there comes a *peace that passes all understanding* (Philippians 4:7; Hebrews 12:11). It is a peace that the world cannot know, for the world does not know the Lord of peace, and the world will not bow before him and accept his forgiveness. The biggest challenge for mankind is the acceptance of their “sinner” status and their need to bow before their creator and accept his salvation gift. David has done this, and then has repeated this year after year as he faces sin and confesses things that need to be set aside in his life.

Isaiah testifies that the LORD will keep in perfect peace, those who trust in him; whose mind rests on him (Isaiah 26:3). It is the stability of the believer who rests upon the Word that David knows through this prayer. We trust the Lord because we know his character and his Word and we know it can be depended upon. Isaiah 61:1-3, Jeremiah 31:3.

David took his mourning to the Lord and he has been transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit, from mourning into joy, for that is what the Holy Spirit will always do. The fruit of the Old Sin Nature is always transformed into the fruit of the Holy Spirit by the presence of God in a problem area of our life. If we are not transformed by the presence of the Holy Spirit there is a sin block in our soul! Joy is God’s gift in the midst of pressure. God’s Joy is not “happy clappy” superficial emotion, it is the deep peace and satisfaction of a life now grounded on the rock that is Christ.

Psalm 126:1-5

“1 When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.

2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them.

3 The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.

4 Turn again our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the south.

5 They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.”

APPLICATION

1. Let us in our prayers allow the Holy Spirit to wrap us around with gladness and restore our soul in deep joy. We do this by waiting upon the Lord in quiet prayer and calm study of the Word of God. Let us wait upon the Lord.
2. The Fruit of the Holy Spirit is the sign of a life on track, and the fruit of the Old Sin Nature is the sign of a life off track. Let us allow the Holy Spirit free rein with our life and bring us to the place of dancing and joy.

DOCTRINE

PEACE

Psalm 30:12

“To the end that [my] glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.”

REFLECTION

David was in the plan of God for his life, and he rightly anticipated being able to give thanks to the LORD God forever, for eternity. We are all, like David, in Christ Jesus, in the Plan of God for our lives and the purpose of that plan is that we might give the Lord glory forever. David’s joy is to praise the Lord and his great pleasure each and every day is to sing praises to his God. Psalm 13:6.

APPLICATION

1. Let us ensure that our joy is to worship and praise the Lord who made us and saved us.
2. Let us remember every day to thank God, praise God and glory in all God has done for us, and let us remember that we will be worshipping forever and so practise now is useful.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – THANKFULNESS

Psalm 31

My Times are In Thy Hands – Fears dealt with by Casting Our Self upon The Lord

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David.

There are those who ascribe this Psalm to Jeremiah, citing similarity of language as their reason. It is more probable that Jeremiah was influenced by David's writings, for, as the son of a priest (Jeremiah 1:1), he would have known the scriptures and the liturgy of Temple worship and David's psalms would have made up a large portion of that liturgy at least.

It is best to accept the records of the ancients than impose our own limited and quite often biased literary scholarship upon God's Word.

David is speaking of past and present troubles, yet underlying them all are expressions of faith and trust; thanksgiving and petition, and an overall encouragement to others, including present day saints.

(Introduction by Brian Huggett)

Psalm 31:1

"In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness."

REFLECTION

In the Lord alone does David place his trust. Where do you place your trust believer? This is the challenge to us as we walk down the path of life. As we face difficult things, do we rest upon the arms of the Lord alone, or do we trust those we consider powerful men? David has learned in the wilderness years that it is the Lord alone he can trust, that men are fickle and fame fleeting and alliances only as strong as the character of those who have made them. God alone has dependable character and power to uphold us in troubled times. Psalm 25:2, Isaiah 49:23, Romans 5:5.

Psalm 22:2-5

"2 O my God, I cry in the day time, but you (appear to) hear not; and in the night season, and am not silent.

3 But thou art holy, O thou that inhabits the praises of Israel.

4 Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.

5 They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded."

David's concern about being "ashamed" is not narcissistic concern about his "reputation" but about his witness and the reputation of God. David cares not for his own fate, but for his witness before his people, his family and the pagans around who watch what God is doing with him. It is this that we each need to challenge ourselves over, and as I reflect upon my own situation over these last ten weeks I have realised that the issue is God's reputation not my own as I am being squeezed by financial and business pressure, for if I fall people will understand, for many have fallen around me.

The real issue is not me falling over financially or professionally, it is the Lord's reputation before my family and friends, for they see that the Lord has to this point guided and protected and upheld me, and if I fall there will be a loss of faith for many. David saw this in his own life and appeals to the Lord, not for himself but for all those who look at him as God's man. This perspective places the right emphasis in prayer, for it is not about ourselves, it is always about our role before the Lord and before men. The only real issue is what we are here for, and the Lord's provisions to ensure it occurs with glory and blessing.

The issue is not my personal fate, but the fate of my witness, and the results of my successful completion of the role for the Lord before men. I have come to personal terms with losing all my money surprisingly easily, just as David had to in the Great Rebellion, and I am relaxed about it, and I see David was in the same place. I now see that he, like myself in recent weeks, (through these early Psalms), identifies that the issue is not us as individuals but God's Plan, God's purpose for us, and God's provisions for us to achieve his purpose. It is seeing that we can relax into God's provisions and have faith in his purposes. We can place ourselves firmly in God's hands with 100% confidence in daily prayer.

Psalm 71:1-4

"1 In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion.

2 Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape: incline your ear unto me, and save me.

3 Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me; for thou art my rock and my fortress.

4 Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.

5 For thou art my hope, O Lord GOD: thou art my trust from my youth."

APPLICATION

1. Let us relax into the Plan of God for our life, for it is perfect, and has been from eternity past, and is associated with God's perfect provision for us. Our prayers are to focus upon connecting with God's provisions to achieve God's purposes.

2. It is not about any losses we might go through in this life, for all losses will be amply compensated for in heaven, but the reputation of the Lord that should centre our prayers. We are here to bring glory to the Lord and it is the Lord's reputation that matters, not our own.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – FAITH – OVERCOMING BY FAITH

CHRISTIAN LIFE – APPROACHING GOD – HEBREWS 10:19-22

Psalm 31:2-3

"Bow down your ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me. For thou [art] my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me."

REFLECTION

To ask the Lord to "bow down his ear" seems to our mind a little insulting, but to the ancients it was a humble way of asking for help. It was asking a great person to bow down to hear the petition of a poor and unworthy person. David is being humble and respectful in this request. He is at the end of his coping power and asks for help "speedily", because he doesn't think he can last much longer. I have often felt like this over recent years, and yet the truth of 1 Corinthians 10:13 has been proved again and again; the Lord has kept me and brought me through. David knows that the Lord is his help and his fortress, and he will be brought through to victory, for it is God's battlefield, not his own.

1 Corinthians 10:12-13

"12 Wherefore let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

God is David's "rock in the storms of life", his "strongly defended fortress" to flee to in times of trouble. God's Plan and Character is the fortress, and it is this fact that I am starting to see at the ten week point in my own present time of great crisis. As we face great pressure we seek the comfort of God's certainties; those certainties are His Holy Character and His Eternal Plan! We are safe within His Plan and His Person. Deuteronomy 33:27. Within God's Plan there are great certainties and Paul captures some of them in Romans Chapter 8. We can depend upon the person, the power and the plan of God, for as he called us, so he will lead, empower and deliver us on the way.

Romans 8:28-39

"28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies.

34 Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 *As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*
 37 *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*
 38 *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,*
 39 *Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

In Romans 8:38-39 Paul reminds us just what a refuge our God is, and when we believe his word it is transformed in us, into conviction and assurance, for *"faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God"* (Romans 10:17). This conviction brings the *perfect peace* and the *renewed strength* of Isaiah 26:3 & 40:31. God becomes our refuge, **a house of defence** in which we are **saved** – *yasha*; are free, are safe. God also becomes our guide and leader, and we are taught, led and guided through the testing time to bring glory to His name. It is His Plan, and so it is his power in which we are to walk through it, and his glory that we achieve, and his blessings which are poured upon us.

APPLICATION

1. Let us flee to the rock of our salvation, the great fortress of our help. Our fortress is the character and plan of God. We have absolute dependability in the everlasting arms of Jesus will for us.
2. God will guide, lead, direct our path, and bring us through our path in life with power, and to the glory of his holy name. Praise his holy name as you commit your ways to the Lord and accept his prayerful guidance to walk through until you find the victory he has for you.

DOCTRINE

DELIVERANCE

Psalm 31:4

"Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for thou [art] my strength."

REFLECTION

There are always nets laid for us by the enemy and given his cunning and deceit we will often not spot them until we are well in the "kill zone", but even then the Lord will guide us out of the traps laid and the enemy will be unable to spring them upon us. Psalm 25:15, 35:7, 57:6, 124:7. The enemy hates us and seeks to kill us like a rodent, but it is he who is the rat, and in his cunning he is caught himself and will be judged fully and finally. Satan's days are numbered, but ours in Christ Jesus are eternal. Revelation 20:1-15.

God "pulls us out" of trouble that the enemy has made for us, and will even deliver us again and again from trouble we lay for ourselves! David discovered this again and again in both meanings of this verse. The Lord alone is our strength in the Angelic Conflict for we are always going to be "outplayed" by demonic forces as they are smarter than us in the natural realm, but in Christ, with the Holy Spirit within us, we are superior to them when God's power is flowing unhindered through us. This is why the filling of the Holy Spirit is so important in this world, for if the power of God flows through us we have the means to escape all situations the enemy "springs" upon us. Ephesians 5:18

2 Corinthians 12:9-10

"9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.
10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."

APPLICATION

1. The Lord's grace is always sufficient for us; draw close to his grace and mercy in prayer right now and experience his keeping power.
2. The Lord will draw us from the nets of the enemy again and again, all we must do is walk where he directs and do so in the filling of the Holy Spirit. Let us ensure right now that there is nothing within us that will hinder the Holy Spirit's work.

Psalm 31:5

“Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.”

REFLECTION

Our Lord would use these very words at the end of his sacrifice on the Cross. Luke 23:46. This must be our prayer as we advance into the battles of the Angelic Conflict that we are called to fight. We commit our spirit to the Lord’s care and rest assured in his guaranteed eternal life. Matthew 19:29, John 3:16. If the Lord has given us eternal life, then we relax about the thought of death, for the Lord has already given us its defeat in our case. We focus on service, for death cannot harm us in any way. John 8:51, Acts 7:50ff.

We can relax about death because the Lord has “redeemed” us through his finished and successful work on the Cross. The Lord has paid the price to set us free from the chains of sin and death, and so we can focus all energy on the task he has left us to do, for there are no fear or lust based distractions that cannot be batted away in the filling of the Holy Spirit. It is the “TRUTH of the Word” that stabilises us and enables us to focus forward, for we know these things on the basis of his revelation to us in the Word. Psalm 138:2.

Deuteronomy 32:3-4

“3 Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God.

4 He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.”

2 Timothy 2:12-15

“12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:

13 If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

14 Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.

15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

APPLICATION

1. Commit your soul and spirit into the Lord’s care this day, for life and witness or death and glory, and then throw yourself into the day’s toils in the Lord’s and Holy Spirit’s power.
2. It is the truth of the Word that stabilises and assures us, for it is the TRUTH. Let it loose in your life every day through systematic and thorough study of it and application of it.

DOCTRINES

BIBLE – INERRANCY

BIBLE – INSPIRATION

Psalm 31:6

“I have hated them that regard lying vanities: but I trust in the LORD.”

REFLECTION

It is not wrong to hate evil, and to despise those who lie. Those who do not hate evil will end up burying the innocent. It is important to get our morality absolutely clear in our mind and stand for truth, and never stand by when lies are proclaimed as if they are truth. This very morning Barack Obama, the American President has come out in support of Homosexual and Lesbian marriages and has placed pressures upon other nations to approve them.

Our own New Zealand Prime Minister, John Key, who is Jewish and ought to know his Old Testament at least, but does not, has come out in support of Obama and served notice to our country that he will support legalization of marriage for the homosexual community. The real issue is not that our society is becoming more pagan by the day, for that is obvious, but that believers in the Bible will find themselves called criminals for refusing to conduct such marriages.

As the satanic policy of confusion of morality expands we can expect more and more challenges like David faced daily. Do not make the mistake of thinking that Satan has had an original idea over the last few thousand years, for he doesn’t

need to do new things, for the old things work so well. There has always been the “homosexual lobby” and they hate the bible and those who stand for it. What is our attitude towards those who hate the truth and spread lies?

Do we stand with David in this verse? Have we a consistent policy of hating liars and those who spread evil viewpoints or cannot we say this with David? The lies of Satan are “gone with the wind” in the end, for they are empty of eternal significance and a transitory expression of rebellious man’s hatred of God. Do we see evil policies that way, or have we succumbed to the philosophy of this world that compromises with evil and calls it tolerance?

David is, as king, very intolerant of evil, for he knows that it will undermine and destroy his society if it is left to prosper amongst the vulnerable. We may hate the sin and we must, while still speaking the truth of the Gospel aloud. Remember the people David speaks of here have already rejected the biblical truth, and are standing actively against it, and so while prayer may still be offered for their souls, John 16:8-11, we must adopt David’s approach to them or be out of step with God’s viewpoint. Evil must be opposed openly and the truth must be told to confront the lies of the enemy.

Romans 1:20-24

“20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things.

24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:”

Psalm 96:7-10

“7 Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength.

8 Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts.

9 O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth.

10 Say among the heathen that the LORD reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously.”

APPLICATION

1. We face increasing challenges from politicians and from the supporters of satanic viewpoints, and must select our company. Are we with the Lord or are we with the enemy? We lost this battle, and homosexual and lesbian marriage is now legal in our nation and euthanasia is being debated for legalization in 2016. The enemy has moved fast!

2. What do we love, and what do we hate? To love goodness you must hate evil, or you open goodness to destruction. Do not be fooled believer, those who hate nothing value nothing, and those who love much hate all that would destroy love.

DOCTRINE

BLASPHEMY

Psalm 31:7

“I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities;”

REFLECTION

In the midst of the assaults of evil and the lies of deceitful men David strengthens himself by and in worship. This is a major challenge to us all, for it is in worship that we will find our strength. Worship and praise will achieve great things in the soul and in society, “To give beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness”. Isaiah 61:3.

As we rejoice in the mercy of the Lord in the midst of pressures we are reminded that it is in his mercy that we live at all and that we are able to do what we do each day. The Lord has “considered” our trouble and tribulation, for he understands every aspect of it and every reason for it and behind it, and he knows what he wants to bring through it. God knows our soul in the worst places, and it is in the worst places that we also really get to know ourselves.

The Lord wants us to be 100% ourselves, as we have been made to be, and that means coming to terms with the reality of suffering as well as prosperity. The Lord is walking with us through this all, and wants us to learn of his love in all the various places of life. Matthew 28:20.

Isaiah 43

"1 But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.

2 When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

3 For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.

4 Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.....

10 Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.

11 I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour.

12 I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God.

13 Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?"

APPLICATION

1. The throne of grace and mercy is open to our requests and the One who sits upon it is our Saviour and Lord, and he delights in giving us his blessings and guidance to come through all the troubles that come on the path of life. Remember it is his path, not our own, and so he provides on the path.

2. The Lord wants us to walk with Him in all the places he calls us to walk, and for each of us there is a different path to walk. In all our paths the Lord is with us, understands, encourages and strengthens on the journey.

DOCTRINES

CHRISTIAN LIFE – CAPACITY FOR LIFE

CHRISTIAN LIFE – SUFFERING

Notes

Psalms 31:8

“And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy: thou hast set my feet in a large room.”

REFLECTION

When we are “given over to” the enemy we can be very scared indeed unless we realise that if this has happened then the Lord has a purpose for it. David was in close quarters with the enemy, and to all other people’s eyes in the hands of the enemy. He however saw it differently for he saw that it was the Lord who had delivered him into the enemy’s hands and so he was looking for God’s purposes.

He realised that he was still in danger and he had to get every decision right, but he saw God’s hands and so is now looking for what the Lord is doing, rather than working out his next move on the basis of what the enemy are doing. He is looking in the right direction, which is the upwards glance! We must not judge situations on the assessment of men, but on the divine viewpoint, for the Lord may do things quite differently to us!

Isaiah 55:6-9

"6 Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:

7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

In my own battlefield at present the enemy forces have delivered their evil and malice by letter to me, and I am now very calm, for I see that the battle is indeed the Lord's now, and like David I am looking to see what God is doing, for it may be that he is seeking opportunity to judge these evil men and I am just a part of the rationale for that. My job, like David's is to step back and keep looking for what the Lord is actually doing, rather than what appears to be happening at present.

Like David I have discovered that the worst the enemy has done to date has actually freed me of any upset, for I now see their evil and can target my prayers more successfully, and like David I find myself, not trapped by their malice, but actually on good "fighting ground" – in a broad place, and roomy place, perfect for combat on my terms..... "Fear not, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." Exodus 14:13.

APPLICATION

1. Do not look at the enemy to get perspective, look to the Lord and seek what he is doing in each situation you face, for the Lord may be achieving things by way of your "capture" that will open up the greater victory later.
2. "The battle isn't over, until it's over". Keep in prayer and keep calm before the Lord, for the Lord is playing the enemy like a flute and they will sing his tune, not their own in the end. The Lord is on the throne; wait and see the Lord win the victory.

DOCTRINE

GRACE

Psalm 31:9

"Have mercy upon me, O LORD, for I am in trouble: mine eye is consumed with grief, [yea], my soul and my belly."

REFLECTION

At times the surge of the battle around us creates great distress for us and serious upset for our soul. We are in great trouble and we can feel flat, depressed, sad, and a whole host of flattening emotions. I have faced this very thing over recent weeks, with incredible heaviness and sadness within through the spiritual battles we are facing. It is a debilitating feeling to awaken with each morning, or have surge through you at a random time in an afternoon, but it is not a simple "depression", but a spiritual reflection of the great battle that is presently surging around us. It lifts after bible study, prayer and worship, but will surge back a day or so later, for the battle remains "hot".

As we face these things we need to daily come before the Lord and seek the Lord's mercy, for that is what he gives us in his answer to prayer. We are in war and so the powerful and flattening emotions are to be expected at times, but like David we need to quickly take them to the Lord and so deal with them with worship. Something can be "normal" on a battlefield, but still be passed over each day to our Commanding Officer for his remedy. All powerful emotions that will otherwise draw us downwards need to be passed over for remedy. Psalm 6:7, 88:9.

Psalm 6:1-3

*"1 O LORD, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.
2 Have mercy upon me, O LORD; for I am weak: O LORD, heal me; for my bones are vexed.
3 My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O LORD, how long?"*

Grief is powerful and produces strong chemicals in the body, creating "hot" tears that are high in the stress hormone cortisol and the steroid can irritate the skin and cause the skin below the eye to swell and the eyes to redden and be sore. The stomach and the bowel can have aches and pains, and the bowels especially can "loosen" or tighten and cause great discomfort and embarrassment. The whole body is involved in grief based stress.

Psalm 38:3-10

*"3 There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin.
4 For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.
5 My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness.
6 I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long.
7 For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease: and there is no soundness in my flesh.
8 I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.
9 Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee.
10 My heart panteth, my strength faileth me: as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me."*

The Angelic Conflict centres in the demonic and angelic world, but as it touches men it brings great sadness with it, for men and women who have rejected the Gospel become our sworn enemies and their malice and hatred is amazing to behold at times. We can, as we have seen above, hate the evil ones, but within seconds we will also find ourselves

overwhelmed by the sadness of their evil and their eternal fate because of it. I hate the evils being done by our enemies, for I see the hurt caused by them to many good people, but I also feel deep sadness for the innocent victims and even for the final fate of these evil men, for they are under God's judgment, and that is a terrible thing. Hebrews 10:30-31, 12:29.

APPLICATION

1. We will be in deep psychological and physical pain at times in our battles here on the earth, and the Lord wants us to take that pain to Him and share it, for he will take it off us and replace it, through worship, with joy in Him. Worship believer, worship!
2. The whole body is affected by grief based stress, and it is not a sign of weakness, but of humanity. Take these things to God before they deepen in your body and cause lasting problems. Release them to the Lord in prayer. 1 Peter 5:5-10. Let go of all bodily tension through prayer and worship and physical relaxation, and rest upon the Lord for solution to the causes of the stress/grief.

DOCTRINE

SOUL AND HUMAN SPIRIT

Psalm 31:10

“For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed.”

REFLECTION

David acknowledges his own and Adam's sin when he faces his grief and stress. We are to remember both causes of pain and distress, for this world was not made to be or cause pain. Adam's Fall releases pain, distress and grief into a perfect world, and we are to remember as we suffer for any reason, that all suffering is temporary, for it will be swept away when Satan is. Genesis 3:14-23, Revelation 20-22. David releases his joint pain, his lethargy and heaviness to the Lord. He recognises the source of some, but leaves it all with the Lord.

David recognises the legacy of his own sinfulness and the legacy of Adam's Fall, and takes them both to the Lord seeking relief. Whether we have caused our own misery, by individual sin, or we are simply receiving part of the curse upon the world, we are to take our suffering to the Lord. We are to tell the Lord how we feel and share it with Him. This is important, for if suffering comes it needs to be "sat with" long enough to learn all we are meant to from its presence. We learn a great deal as we "sit with" our pain and talk to the Lord about it.

Romans 8:16-28

- 16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:*
- 17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*
- 18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*
- 19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.*
- 20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope,*
- 21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*
- 22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.*
- 23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*
- 24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?*
- 25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.*
- 26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*
- 27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*
- 28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose "*

APPLICATION

1. Praise God that we don't have to acknowledge and take personal responsibility for all our stress/grief and pain, nor identify the source of each "bit", we simply pass it all over to the Lord. We are responsible for some of our suffering,

but the Lord doesn't want us to grovel, do psycho-analysis to identify its origin, he simply wants us to confess what sin we know, and he will cover the rest, and lift our burdens. 1 John 1:9.

2. The soul may ache and the bones and joints ache and the body may feel like lead, but we can look up and worship and as we praise the Lord our Saviour we will be lifted up by our deliverer. Praise His Holy Name, and praise Him often. The antidote to spiritual depression is always centred in worship and praise.

Psalm 31:11

“I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without fled from me.”

REFLECTION

We know our condition is bad when our enemies are embarrassed before us and flee from us. We are totally isolated when all who see us slink away and do not greet us. I have seen this with myself in a time of great sickness and pressure, and to my shame, I must identify that I have “fled” from the company of acquaintances who were in misery at the time, and I decided in my own heart that they were just “too depressing” to speak with. When we are “down” we can be a real drain on the energy and positivity of others around us.

We don't know at what point this was in David's life, but the most obvious candidate is after the affair with Bathsheba, and the second candidate would be in the years before the Great Rebellion of Absalom for David's depressive disorder was severe at that time, to the point that trusted old advisers turned away from him in disgust. His behaviours and their psychological and stress-grief related consequences made his behaviour and mental attitude disgraceful to many. His behaviour may also have had elements that created fear in the ancient world, and the same happens today still; when a mentally ill person is not just shunned by others but is genuinely feared by some.

APPLICATION

1. We can sink into a depressive disorder with consequential behaviours that offends others, embarrasses many, and creates loathing and fear in some. No matter how bad we appear to others, the Lord can lift us up and restore our soul and body. David is restored and his kingdom is recovered with his energy's return.
2. However others react to our “disordered state”, we will receive a hearing from the Lord, and will be restored to usefulness and full spiritual power again. Let us draw near to the blood soaked ground of the Cross and restore our spirit with forgiveness and grace which with the Lord is truly renewed every morning. Psalm 103:5, Lamentations 3:23.

Psalm 31:12-13

“I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel. For I have heard the slander of many: fear [was] on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life.”

REFLECTION

When we get old, sick or are seriously injured people will speak of us as if we are not in the room! I have had people treat me as if I was already dead and started speaking as if I was gone. David clearly describes here the baffling behaviours of some who start to make their plans as if we won't be there to see them! These people treat the older or ill person as if they are useless and “good for nothing”. I have seen brilliant men and women who cannot get any work, even voluntary work in their community, because those around them in power are young and vigorous and do not even see the older person's skills.

The Lord greatly blessed me in my childhood acquaintances, for I had men and women around me who challenged all the accepted norms, and especially showed me the grave error of the “throw away” and “retirement” culture we have moved into today. I saw especially one older and very ill man whose brilliance as an engineer was amazing. He always looked like he would die later in that day with asthma, and yet for year after year he invented engineering solutions to major manufacturing problems in factories, developing complex machinery to achieve results for the owners and shareholders.

In the world of business and politics today the same plots laid against David are laid against the older and the ill, no matter what their efficiency and effectiveness in the workplace. I regularly see older people in my practise for stress and grief who have been “retired”, made redundant, or simply fired after a coup by younger people. We see all the time wisdom being stripped out of organisations, and we see these organisations later fail as a result, but the ruthless people who eliminated the older people are by then gone with their “bonuses” for saving money in the short term.

APPLICATION

1. Christian managers beware of stripping away the wisdom in any company you have stewardship over. Be very cautious about getting rid of people by reason of age or by some “illness”, for their intelligence may be the gold resource that prospers the company. Depressed people can often be the lateral thinkers that save you later, and the older person may have the wisdom that is crucial for some decisions. Be wary, and remember David, and then remember Churchill, who at age 67 takes charge of the war against Hitler and in God’s grace defeats the tyrant.

2. David was plotted against by men who were once “good”, and still were in their own eyes. Many turned on David and betrayed him, and they did so for the same reasons people use in business “coups” against leadership today. Be very careful when you topple leadership in business, for unless it is tyranny you will lose your way. In the church never ever topple leadership, for the Lord’s anointed is to be removed by the Lord, lest the people be judged. Satan alone is behind coups in churches. David had learned this in the days of his battles against Saul, and we are fools indeed if we forget it. The Lord removes his anointed leaders and will replace them with his called men; always let the Lord judge lest you get in the way and end up judged yourself!

DOCTRINE**ANGELS – SATANIC ATTACK ON BELIEVERS****Psalm 31:14**

“But I trusted in thee, O LORD: I said, Thou *[art]* my God.”

REFLECTION

David had confidence and dumped his problems upon the Lord, trusting in God’s protection, not plotting himself. David recognised that when facing evil plots by deceived, stupid, and evil men, that the only real protection is in the Lord’s plan for his life. He trusted the Lord and handed his problems over to the Lord. Psalm 55:22, 1 Peter 5:5-10.

Psalm 138:6-8

6 Though the LORD be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knows afar off.

7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me.

8 The LORD will perfect that which concerns me: thy mercy, O LORD, endures for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands.”

Note the way David expresses his trust in the Lord. I said, “Thou art my God”. This is the mental attitude of the soldier and the official of the king; they are simply affirming their relationship with their King. They are saying, “You alone Lord are our King, and you alone Lord give the orders, and we have one task, and that is to obey”. Let us affirm this truth and trust in the one who is indeed giving the orders and directing the battle. Psalm 16:1-2.

Psalm 18:1-3

1 I will love thee, O LORD, my strength.

2 The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.

3 I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.”

APPLICATION

1. When faced with impossible situations we either panic or trust in the God whose plan we are part of. Let us express our trust in the character and plan of God.

2. We are under orders and we are to take them from the Lord and advance in faith in his ability to empower us all the way through to the victory he promises. He is our God and he has the power to bring us through. Isaiah 50:2, 59:1.

Psalm 31:15

“My times [are] in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.”

REFLECTION

My life and every detail of every day of my life is in the hands of the Lord. He is able to deliver us through battle, or through death, but one day we enter his eternal kingdom in power and majesty. He is “able” and he will deliver us and in eternity when we look back we will not be amazed at anything except our inability to trust and obey and receive more blessing. We ought not be amazed at the deliverance of the Lord for the Lord is in the deliverance business.

Psalm 71:7-16

“7 I am as a wonder unto many; but thou art my strong refuge.

8 Let my mouth be filled with thy praise and with thy honour all the day.

9 Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth.

10 For mine enemies speak against me; and they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together,

11 Saying, God hath forsaken him: persecute and take him; for there is none to deliver him.

12 O God, be not far from me: O my God, make haste for my help.

13 Let them be confounded and consumed that are adversaries to my soul; let them be covered with reproach and dishonour that seek my hurt.

14 But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more.

15 My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof.

16 I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.”

If we live our life according to the will of God, our prayers for deliverance will be in conformity to his will whether we live or die, for his will is to glorify himself in our life, and in our death. Psalm 68:20, 72:14, 116:15. David firmly and finally places himself in the hands of the Lord for power and purpose as he advances, for all he lives for is the Lord’s will and so he relaxed into the Lord’s purposes in this situation and seeks the Lord’s way through.

Jeremiah 15:19-21

“19 Therefore thus saith the LORD, If thou return, then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before me: and if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth: let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them.

20 And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brasen wall: and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee: for I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee, saith the LORD.

21 And I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible.”

APPLICATION

1. When we face great pressures, even unto death itself, we are to affirm that we remain at all times, in the Lord’s hands, for we are his servants. All who oppose us oppose the Lord if we walk with Him. Trust in Him, and recognise the truth that your days are in the Lord’s hands. We will not leave this earth one second “early”, for there is no early or late with God’s Plan; all is exactly on time.

2. Let us trust the Lord for deliverance, for this is his specialty and he always delivers his people.

DOCTRINE**CHRISTIAN LIFE – STABILITY****Psalm 31:16**

“Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: save me for thy mercies' sake.”

REFLECTION

It is this deep desire that we feel under great pressure, for nothing soothes the soul like the light of the Word and the light of the Saviour’s presence in the soul and spirit. We sing these words and rightly so, for the Saviour’s face is our joy and our safety in times of trouble. When under great pressure it is the close presence of the Lord that keeps us focused and secure. Psalm 67:1, 80:3, Daniel 9:17.

When we ask for safety and deliverance let us remember from what basis it is that we make our request. We ask for all things from the Lord on the basis of his character, not our deserving. We ask on the basis of his mercy, and for his glory, and for the blessing of his church. “It is not of him that runneth, nor him that willeth, but of God who shows mercy”. Romans 9:15.

Ephesians 1:3-9

“3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:”

APPLICATION

1. God’s light in and through the Word is sought by all who value a safe path through this world, but the cheering light of his inner presence is sought by all who love Him. Let us seek his inner light through close fellowship with Him.

2. As we pray let us remember that the rock upon which we stand securely to make requests is the blood soaked ground of the Cross. We can appeal to the Lord’s mercy and grace every time, for it is on this ground he always meets us.

DOCTRINE

CLEANSING

Psalm 31:17

“Let me not be ashamed, O LORD; for I have called upon thee: let the wicked be ashamed, [and] let them be silent in the grave.”

REFLECTION

The one thing that we all desire in the Lord’s service is the glory of the Lord, and the one thing we all fear is making the Lord ashamed of us by our bad behaviour. We fear being, as Paul expressed it a “castaway” pot, no longer useful for the assigned purpose in the Lord’s work.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

“24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”

Paul’s desire, expressed in trustful and passionate prayer, has been to bring glory to the Lord in all he does and to bring no shame to the Lord’s name. His equally passionate desire is to see the enemy of the Cross ashamed and debased in the eyes of all, and brought down to the grave, now silent in death. He wants their evil over permanently and he wants their rebellion against the Lord and assaults upon God’s servants terminated.

Psalm 25:1-6

“1 Unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul.

2 O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.

3 Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.

4 Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths.

5 Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.

6 Remember, O LORD, thy tender mercies and thy loving kindness; for they have been ever of old.”

APPLICATION

1. Let us beware of being “castaways” through our rebellion against the will and path of God for us. The path may be very tough at times, but it is the Lord’s path and so let us square our shoulders and “quit ourselves like soldiers and be strong!”

2. Let us focus upon the will of the Lord for us and commit to the path he desires us to walk, no matter how impossible it appears from our place and time. Let us trust the Lord and advance into his plan, and commit the enemy by our prayers to their own grave, and not be distracted by their malice.

DOCTRINE**HELL AND HADES****Psalm 31:18**

“Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.”

REFLECTION

The enemy will lie and can be expected to lie, for they follow the father of liars, Satan himself. Expect nothing of the enemy that their father will not do, and expect everything from them that he does! They will not show consistent love, mercy, nor tell truth, even when such things would benefit them. They are baffling because they are totally self absorbed and see nothing of the truth of any situation. The enemy will always be contemptuous of the righteous and will launch verbal and other assaults upon them, but they will be defeated in time, for they have declared war upon God in their evil, and they lack the wisdom to realise what that means.

As my friend and colleague Brian Huggett notes, “Spurgeon’s comment on this is so complete as to be worthy of quotation: -

“The sin of slanderers lies partly in the matter of their speech; “they speak grievous things;” things cutting deep into the feelings of good men, and wounding them sorely in that tender place - their reputations. The sin is further enhanced by the manner of their speech; they speak proudly and contemptuously; they talk as if they themselves were the cream of society, and the righteous the mere scum of vulgarity. Proud thoughts of self are generally attended by debasing estimates of others. The more room we take up ourselves, the less we can afford our neighbours. What wickedness it is that unworthy characters should always be the loudest in railing at good men! They have no power to appreciate moral worth of which they are utterly destitute, and yet they have the effrontery to mount the judgment seat, and judge the men compared with whom they are as so much draft. Holy indignation may well prompt us to desire anything, which may rid the world of such unbearable impertinence and detestable arrogance.”

“These six [things] doth the LORD hate: yea, seven [are] an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness [that] speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.” (Proverbs 6:16-19)

APPLICATION

1. When the enemy acts as Satan would act, rejoice believer, for now you have your prayer target fully identified. Commit such people to the Lord for judgment and advance into your task knowing that the Lord will deal with them and to them as is required to enable you to complete your work.
2. “Evil men will wax worse and worse”. 2 Timothy 3:13. Do not be distracted to weep and wail over the evil around you; recognise that this is simply the nature of the present battlefield and that these evil men and women are the enemies of the Lord of Glory, and so commit them in prayer to the Lord for dealing with them as he wills. Keep your focus on the battle ahead of you and wield the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

DOCTRINE**SIN – SINS OF THE TONGUE****Psalm 31:19**

“[Oh] how great [is] thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; [which] thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!”

REFLECTION

In the midst of the battlefield against evil people we can start to think that they are “mighty” and “great” in power and resources, and so we lose our perspective on the greatness of the Lord. It is the Lord who is great, not the enemy. The Lord has a storehouse of resources for his soldiers that through prayer they gain access to for present use. The storehouses of the Lord are full and contain all we need. Knowing this, let us advance into the work with joy and confidence and so through faith, by grace, we will receive the provisions of the Lord and find the victory that we seek to his glory.

God has resources for all those who reverence him (fear of the Lord) and obey his will for them and advance with faith into the path they are called to walk. God has a systematic plan and well planned resources, for the Lord knows all the facts about this world and all that will happen in it and so his provision is perfect. God has everything we need and he will deliver it in the face of the enemy, right in front of them. God is not hindered in any way by the evils of men. His loving kindness to us is great indeed. Psalm 145:7-10.

Psalm 36:7-10

“7 How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.

8 They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.

9 For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.

10 O continue thy loving kindness unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart.”

2 Corinthians 5:5-11

“5 Now he that hath wrought us for the self same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.”

APPLICATION

1. “Every day will I bless you, and I will praise your name for ever and ever.” Psalm 145:2. It is God who is great, not the evil men who mock and assault us. Let us praise His Holy Name.

2. Let us consciously walk in the “fear of the Lord” and serve him with reverence and walk in faith before our God. Let us trust Him, not our own plans and the advice of well meaning friends, but simply trust the Lord and walk in the Spirit into the paths that the Lord has called us to.

Psalm 31:20

“Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.”

REFLECTION

As we serve the Lord we can relax about the assaults of others upon us, for they declare war upon God not just us, if we walk obediently to the Lord. The Lord “hides” us in his care, with a wall of fire around us, even as we are apparently exposed to the assaults of the enemy. David pictures the Lord’s protection as a “tent” of the Lord’s making around us as we walk through life and that is a good picture for our age, when we speak of being in a “protective bubble”.

I have seen this several times in my own ministry when I have been the target of wicked verbal abuse and innuendo by evil fake pastors. I have just relaxed and kept my focus upon the Lord’s service and these wicked men continued their lies, but in God’s time and in God’s way they were both unhinged by death or direct judgment. Hebrews 10:30-31, 12:29.

The Lord does such a better job of protecting us than we can ever do ourselves. **2 Kings 6:15-17**

“15 And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?

16 And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.

17 And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.”

APPLICATION

1. Relax and serve the Lord with all energy focused on the task before you, with prayer for protection, for the Lord sets up his tabernacle around you when you do his work and you will be safe while obedient.

2. God does such a better job of protecting us than we can ever do. Let us deliberately commit our path to the Lord and serve him without any distraction related to our own protection. We trust the Lord's wall of fire and we advance into service. Let us do so this day and every day of our life.

Psalm 31:21

"Blessed [be] the LORD: for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city."

REFLECTION

David builds the picture of the Lord's protective tabernacle around the saint here. He pictures the Lord's protection as even more than the "strong tower" of other psalms. Psalm 18:2, 61:3, 144:2. He sees that the Lord's hand over us and his arms around us are like the mighty walls of a gigantic and impregnable fortress. He sees that the Lord's kindness towards us is extra-ordinary in its scope and power. We are loved and protected beyond measure by God our Lord.

Proverbs 3:1-8

*"1 My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:
 2 For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.
 3 Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:
 4 So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.
 5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.
 6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.
 7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.
 8 It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones."*

Let us remember the "logic of grace" and live it daily in praise and glory to the Lord Jesus who gave himself for us and every day renews his grace, mercy and love towards us in our place of need.

Romans 5:8-11

*"8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.
 10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.
 11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."*

APPLICATION

1. Let us relax in his loving care and commit all our ways to Him. Let us walk in the light of his presence and the reality of the logic of grace.
2. Let us always remember that his loving kindness is "huge". We are under the "much more" care of the Lord, and that the one who died for our sins while we were his enemies, will do much more for us now as his friends.

DOCTRINE

GRACE

Notes

Psalm 31:22

“For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.”

REFLECTION

It is easy to feel “cut off” on the battlefields of life, for the enemy is hot and the wounds we get may make us feel bereft at times. In our haste we can forget that his promises remain true, even if we must wait for them to be fully received at times. A hasty prayer, even when wrongful in casting aspersions on the Lord’s lack of care for us will still be heard and we will be comforted, but we will also be corrected. The Lord does not “cut off” his obedient servants, and even the disobedient are not “cut off” even though they may be disciplined for a time. 1 Corinthians 10:13, 2 Timothy 2:12-15, Hebrews 12:5-15.

Even when we get the truth wrong and blame the Lord for our suffering, and even complain to Him about it, he still hears our pain and answers our deep anguish with deliverance. God hears, because God made us and understands that we are “dust” and our logic is at times very “dusty”. When we shout out to the Lord, even if it is passionate despair, and represents a lack of faith, we are still heard, for his nature determines his answers to us, not our “correctness”.

Psalm 103:13-18

13 Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.

14 For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.

15 As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.

16 For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.

17 But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children’s children;

18 To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.”

APPLICATION

1. Praise God that he deals with us on the basis of his character, not our deserving. Give thanks to Him this day for his great grace and loving kindness.
2. The Lord knows we are dust and deals with us in grace, mercy and love. Give him thanks and praise this day for who he is, and how he deals with us.

DOCTRINES**CHRISTIAN LIFE – PRAYER****MERCY****Notes****Psalm 31:23**

“O love the LORD, all ye his saints: [for] the LORD preserves the faithful, and plentifully rewards the proud doer.”

REFLECTION

David’s heart felt cry here is to be our banner as pastors in all our church meetings, for at some point in every meeting we should cry out to the Lord’s people, “O love the Lord and love one another!” John 10:27-30, 15:12-17, 1 John 4:18-21. All who are the Lord’s saints ought to be open and constant in their love for the Lord and their praise for his great gifts towards us all. We leave the enemy in the Lord’s hands, and rest secure in his protective shield around us.

“Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord GOD” (Ezekiel 22:31).

The Lord guards us round about and protects us from evil flowing from all assaults that the enemy may launch. We will be attacked and we will pick up wounds, for we are in battle, but we are protected and kept by the Lord who loves us. We will be kept to the very end of the battle and we will be rewarded eternally for every victory won in the filling of the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 3:10-17. The enemy will also receive full “wages” and “rewards” for their evils and we can relax with the Lord’s justice and timing in these matters. Romans 6:23, 2 Peter 2:15.

APPLICATION

1. Leave the enemy to the Lord; he does such a better job with them than you could do.
2. Love the Lord and express that love often. His love is to be rejoiced in daily.

DOCTRINES

JUDGMENT – FOUR GENERATION CURSE

JUDGMENT – GREAT WHITE THRONE

Psalm 31:24

“Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.”

REFLECTION

We need this encouragement as we face longer battles in the Angelic Conflict. As I have battled for ten long years in a particular battle I have drawn strength from the Lord’s Word alone, and as the conflict has moved to high gear in the last eight to ten weeks I have rejoiced in these studies in the Psalms. I have needed to hear daily the “call to arms” and the Commanding Officer’s orders to be of “good courage”. This is the call to strength of character under pressure. 1 Corinthians 16:13, James 5:1-12.

As we stand firm and resolute, claiming the promises of the Word of God, we can depend upon the strength of the Lord wrapping around us to support our stand. Firstly we take our stand and then the support and resources arrive. Note this order and live it believer! Let us take our stand in full armour each and every day. “Stand!” Ephesians 6:10-18.

The Lord’s promise is that he will strengthen the heart as we take our stand upon the truths of the Word. Our mind and our emotion will be stabilised in the truth of the Word, for faith in the Word alone makes us free of worry and fear. John 4:23, 10:10, 14:6.

All who wait upon the Lord can draw upon the strength he gives them. Our “hope”, our confidence and our trust needs to rest secure in the Lord alone. Romans 15:12-13, 1 Peter 1:18-25.

Psalm 146:1-5

- “1 Praise ye the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul.*
- 2 While I live will I praise the LORD: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.*
- 3 Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.*
- 4 His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.*
- 5 Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God”*

APPLICATION

1. Let us wait upon the Lord for deliverance and rest secure in his plan for our life. When tempted to jump into a logical solution let us pause and reflect upon the Lord’s path and wait for Him.
2. Be soldier like in your behaviour for the Lord will strengthen you as you take your stand upon the truth of the Word. Stand upon his truth and rest in his provisions.

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