

EVANGELICAL BIBLE COLLEGE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



THE PSALMS OF DAVID.

Psalms 32 – 36

A VERSE-BY-VERSE STUDY

by

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[BOOK 49-F]

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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 (I 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 (I 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 (I 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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For further information contact Dr Peter Moses at PO Box 163 Armadale WA 6992 or email Brian Huggett brianhuggett@bigpond.com.au

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THE PSALMS OF DAVID

INTRODUCTION

AUTHOR:

David was the youngest son of Jesse and ruled Israel from B.C. 1052 - 1012. He was a skilled musician even as a young man (1Samuel 16:18-23), and as is seen in 1Chronicles 16:7 and 2Samuel 23:1, continued writing psalms through to the end of his life. The first forty-one psalms are all attributed to David with a number of others scattered throughout the remainder of the book.

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 at this time in 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 (32-36) are Psalms that continue the theme of worship, as our response to God’s forgiveness and mercy. The King continues his theme from earlier Psalms and gives advice on worship in relation to forgiveness and deliverance.

Psalm 32	Blessedness and Forgiveness
Psalm 33	Rejoicing in the Lord’s Glorious Attributes
Psalm 34	Praise For God’s Providential Care of the Righteous
Psalm 35	Deliverance from The Malice of Evil Men
Psalm 36	The Wickedness of Evil men – Contrasted to the Steadfast Love of God For Us

DOCTRINE

CHRIST: FIRST AND SECOND ADVENTS

Psalm 32:1

Blessedness and Forgiveness

A Psalm of David, Maschil.

The Apostle Paul, under inspiration, attributes this psalm to David and reminds us of its purpose which is to have us celebrate God's love towards us more often than we do.

"Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, [Saying], Blessed [are] they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed [is] the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Romans 4:6-8).

Mas'kiyl means *instructive*, that is, this is a *didactic* (or teaching) poem and this subtitle is ascribed to this psalm because it seems *"calculated to give the highest instruction relative to the guilt of sin and the blessedness of pardon, justification and sanctification"* (Clarke).

David wants all believers to learn from his experience and celebrate the blessing of God through received forgiveness. The word *maschil* has been prefixed to the psalm, most likely by those who later compiled his psalms as a "flag" to draw our attention to the important doctrines embedded within its words.

Psalm 32:1

"Blessed [is he whose] transgression [is] forgiven, [whose] sin [is] covered."

REFLECTION

True happiness is only experienced by those who have absolute security regarding sin, death, and eternity. All other happiness is fleeting, for the thought of death and the guilt regarding sin overwhelms it in time. In this present world the spectre of sin and death casts the shadow over everything that people distract themselves with on their journey through time. Satan's plan is to try to keep people distracted until they fall into hell, but the Holy Spirit will try with all men and women to bring them to knowledge of the truth, so that their choice for evil is deliberate, and the alternative is known. John 3:16-36, 16:8-11, Acts 4:12.

Psalm 1:1-3

"1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

4 The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away."

Blessed is the person who knows they are forgiven alone; there is blessing no-where else, only deception. There is no peace to the wicked. Isaiah 57:20-21. When we know that our sin is covered by the blood of Christ we have peace with our maker and judge, for we know that we stand now on hallowed ground, rather than standing in the filthy rags of sin upon the dirty ground of our own pathetic self righteousness. Isaiah 43:25, 44:22, Romans 4:6-8.

Isaiah 64:1-7

"1 Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence,

2 As when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence!

3 When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence.

4 For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.

5 Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways: behold, thou art wroth; for we have sinned: in those is continuance, and we shall be saved.

6 But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

APPLICATION

1. We praise God that this is the "visited planet" as C S Lewis referred to it. We thank God that He had a Plan for Redemption and that we have been brought to the foot of the Cross where there is forgiveness, total covering of sin, and total acceptance in and through the work of Christ on our behalf.

2. He took our sins away, removing from us the penalty and the guilt, and so through Him we have peace with God, and we have a life freed from guilt, and able to enjoy happiness that goes on forever. Let us praise him for his unspeakable gift. 2 Corinthians 9:15.

Psalm 32:2

“Blessed [is] the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit [there is] no guile.”

REFLECTION

Adam’s sin opened the door of the curse of sin and death onto all mankind, and each of us are born into this world with the imputed sin of Adam debited to our “account”, and we quickly add to it by personal sins. Was God unfair in debiting this sin of our father to us? Was he fair in ensuring that each person born by man inherits also an Old Sin Nature with its inherited strengths and weaknesses?

The answer is spelled out very systematically by Paul in Romans Chapters 5-7, where he identifies that because God imputed the consequences of Adam’s sins to all his descendants, just so he is able to impute the righteousness of the Last Adam (Jesus) to all who become his children by faith. In Adam we all enter the human race and enter condemnation, but in Christ we enter new ground, blood soaked ground, and we are forgiven and entered into a new place in the heavenlies and are without condemnation ever again. Romans 8:1-2.

There are two blessings in this verse; the first by our new position through faith, the second by the works of the Holy Spirit within us through obedience. Imputation of the work of Jesus upon the Cross to all who by faith accept him as their Saviour and Lord removed the imputation of Adam’s sin completely. Imputation of the righteousness of Christ upon all believers makes them without condemnation forever before the Lord. What God gives us cannot be removed by any other power.

We build upon this foundation as we walk in the power and production of the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 3:12-17, 6:15, Ephesians 5:18, 6:14-18. The result of walking in the Holy Spirit’s power is that we become people in whom there is “no guile”. In Christ Jesus all the deceit, treachery, and moral slackness associated with our past life is removed and replaced by the works and fruit of the Holy Spirit. The evidence of the Holy Spirit’s presence is the fruit of the Holy Spirit, and if the fruit is not there, then that person is not saved at all. If the Holy Spirit is not there in the life and work, then that person is “none of his”. Romans 8:9, James 2:14-26.

APPLICATION

1. The double imputation of sin and the of righteousness opens the door to eternal blessing to mankind, and so the curse upon man through Adam’s sin is permanently removed from all who come to the Cross through faith. Let us praise the Lord for our great salvation, so perfectly planned and executed.

2. Let us walk in the Holy Spirit’s power each and every day, and so bring the glory to the Lord that we are here upon the earth to achieve in order to honour his name forever. Let us fulfill our destiny before the Lord and praise His holy name and bring honour to him through our walking and working in the Holy Spirit’s power alone.

DOCTRINE

SALVATION: JUSTIFICATION

Psalm 32:3-4

“When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.”

REFLECTION

It is a foolish thing to hold back worship and praise from the one to whom it is due and there is a cost for the believer of not worshipping as we ought, and that is the shriveling of the soul within. Our very bones will ache and scream at us within if we become malnourished physically. Aches and pains, as we saw in the earlier psalms, are often the result of internalized stress, but also malnourishment will create problems. Our bones and joints will “roar” at us if we get this physically wrong. We become “dried up like a potsherd”. Psalm 22:15.

Let us use this analogy of the physical body and bones. All arthritis and joint problems are worse when nutrition is not optimal and special things added in to remedy any problem. I was in great pain with arthritis in my fingers every winter and then received good nutritional advice regarding this and started taking the right food for the healing of the joints and the pain was gone; the "roaring stopped". I simply take the glucosamine with chondroitin and the pain is gone and the mobility of the joints returned, but I must keep taking it to keep my joints from becoming "dry and heavy" as David puts it here. This forms a good analogy to David, for he identifies that unless we regularly worship and praise our soul shrivels up and we become spiritually dry and we ache with spiritual distress.

I know David's feeling each night as my "open hand" ached and woke me with its "roaring" pain whenever I tried to bend a finger. By doing what I was advised the pain was removed and the mobility returned to the finger joints and I could sleep through the night without the pain waking me and the hands feeling like lead.

Just so worship softens and moistens the spirit and restores our spiritual mobility to give the Gospel message because it now flows through us without hindrance. Worship cleans out the spiritual channels and blessing flows both ways. We are left here upon the earth to be fresh fruit, not dried fruit! We are to be a refreshment to all, with the Holy Spirit moistened fruit bringing joy and peace to all we meet. Romans 15:32, 1 Corinthians 16:18, 2 Timothy 1:16.

APPLICATION

1. Let us be a refreshment to the saints. We will refresh others as we are daily refreshed by worship and praise ourselves. Let us worship the Lord often and powerfully and so let the Holy Spirit have his way with us within.
2. We will experience physical aches and pains as we grow older, some of which we can heal, and others which we cannot, but in the spiritual realm we can bring healing to all the aches we experience. Let us today open our lives to the ministries of the Holy Spirit and bring moisture and freshness to the Lord's people in power through worship.

Psalm 32:5

"I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah."

REFLECTION

There is no healing for the sick person until they tell their doctor what is happening to them after they leave the surgery! We cannot be healed unless we acknowledge we are sick and need the physician! Jesus noted that it was the sick who needed a physician, and they would come to the one who genuinely was able to heal. He was there to heal the spiritually sick and all who came to him were both physically and spiritually healed. Matthew 9:11-13. The rich and powerful, and arrogant man who came to pray in the temple was not heard by God for he felt comfortable in his self righteousness, but the sinner was heard in his humility as he prayed for mercy.

Luke 18:9-14

*"9 And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:
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."*

David acknowledges his sin and asks for forgiveness, and so receives it fully and completely. It is the act of will that opens the door to forgiveness; the absolute determination to face sin and bring it before the Lord and forsake it. David says, "I will confess my transgressions". He is determined to confront his own sin and so he will resolve the stain of sin, but those who hide behind self righteousness will never confront the truth, nor remove the stain of their sins. They will end up dying in their sins. John 8:24, Romans 8:13.

Psalm 51:1-4

*"1 Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.
2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.
3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.
4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest."*

Psalm 103:10-17.

"10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.

12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

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;"

APPLICATION

1. The great sadness of the death of the lost is that they did not need to die in sins that the Lord had solved and removed forever, if only they had accepted his work on their behalf. Let us get this message across to the lost for there is no hope for those who reject the only hope.

2. Let us praise him for forgiveness, and let us deal with sin quickly and thoroughly. Let us not hesitate to deal with sin. We need to confront sin and resolve it or it will overwhelm us and destroy our ministry and witness.

Psalm 32:6

"For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him."

REFLECTION

For all the things mentioned so far in the psalm David identifies that the godly ought to be praying daily. We are too slack with prayer and too distracted by the things of this world from the things that are eternal. All who would be "godly" before the Lord their Saviour need to be challenged by David's words here and praise the Lord far more than we do.

When may the "Lord be found"? The Lord may be found by all who humbly come before him, and confess their sins, and determine to walk in the Holy Spirit's power. All who seek the Lord will find him, and all who come to the Lord will find abundance of pardon in him. The Lord will always abundantly pardon. We have his Word upon this. Exodus 34:9, Nehemiah 9:17, Isaiah 55:7, Jeremiah 33:8.

Great pressures will come at times and they may feel like they will "flow over us", but the Lord will control all things for his glory and work all things out for his glory, and that means the waters will not sweep us away. We will be tested and tried sorely at times, but always under the Lord's final approval and direction, for we are his and we are here to bring glory to his name, and nothing will happen that is not able to be turned to glory! Romans 8:28-39. This promise cannot fail for the Spirit filled believer or the Lord loses his reputation and his glory is lost. He will never permit this to occur. Matthew 7:24-29.

APPLICATION

1. Let us pray our way to peace and calm each day in this battlefield we walk through, for without prayer and worship we will not mentally survive the day. Let us deal with all we meet in and through prayer and worship, for the Lord alone can guide us safely through this present world.

2. The Lord is our protector and our shield from evil. Let us get our spiritual armour on daily and hold our shield high and rest in the shadow of his presence. Ephesians 6:10-18.

DOCTRINE

SIN: SIN UNTO DEATH

Psalm 32:7

“Thou [art] my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.”

REFLECTION

The Lord alone is our “hiding place” from evil men. There is protection no-where else. The Lord alone has the power and the omniscience to guard us and protect us in all ways required. We wear our spiritual armour, but the Lord is our wall of fire as Elisha and his servant discovered. 2 Kings 6:17, Jeremiah 36:26, Acts 12.

We are encompassed about with God’s protective walls of fire, but much more than that, we are guarded by the angelic host and the direct power of God over us and around us. The enemy cannot harm us beyond the boundaries the Lord sets. Job 1-2. There is blessing in all things for the believer and there is a reason for all things. Exodus 15:1-3. We are surrounded by the songs of the angels which celebrate the Lord’s power around us, and we are invited to join in with their songs of praise and worship, for we are protected people. Revelation 7:9-12, 15:2-4.

APPLICATION

1. God’s power is not “shortened” in any way, and it is over and around us to protect us and keep us. Isaiah 50:2, 59:1. God keeps, God guards, and God guides us. Our task today believer is to hear with words and obey his commands. Let us commit to obediently walking in the Spirit this day. John 15:7-17.

2. Let us join the angels in their songs of praise, for we are delivered by the Lord. Let the Lord’s people say so! Let us praise the Lord in advance of the deliverance arriving, rejoicing by faith. Hebrews 11:1ff. Let us praise the Lord for his guardianship over us. We are his and we live to bring glory to his name and he ensures we are delivered to praise his name.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE: FAITH – OVERCOMING BY FAITH
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Psalm 32:8

“I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.”

REFLECTION

God’s Word to us is for education. All that occurs is for our education and instruction in order that we might be more effective servants of the Lord. The Lord will pour out all the information and advice we need on the path through this life. Our task is to pay attention to the instruction of the Lord and obey his commands. Proverbs 4:1-13, 8:10-11, 2 Timothy 3:16.

Proverbs 1:1-8

*“1 The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel;
 2 To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding;
 3 To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity;
 4 To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.
 5 A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:
 6 To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.
 7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.
 8 My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother:”*

The Lord’s promise to us is that he will guide us with a look from his eye, but that presupposes that we are close enough to see his look in our direction. The challenge is to draw closer and closer to the Lord and hold our closeness and keep our eyes upon Jesus. Titus 2:13, 2 Peter 3:12, Jude 21.

Hebrews 12:1-3

*“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. The Lord delights in our instruction and in passing on the information we need to apply into daily life, but we must be paying attention to the Lord and looking to him.
2. Let us draw closer to the Lord and hear his words and speak directly to Him about our problems and questions. All the issues we have he will resolve at the throne of his mercy and grace, but we must attend his court daily and remain there through each day in constant unbroken fellowship. Power and information is available to all who are positioned in fellowship with Him. Let us be in prayerfulness! 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, Philippians 4:4ff.

DOCTRINE

GOD: COMFORT FOR BELIEVERS

Psalm 32:9

“Be ye not as the horse, [or] as the mule, [which] have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.”

REFLECTION

It is appropriate that we consider the closeness that we need to the Lord, for we are to be face to face with Jesus, not like the horse or mule, for the Lord does not “ride us” and abuse us, he walks with us. We are not treated as inferiors but as his children and members of the Royal Family of heaven at that! John 15:15-17, Titus 2:14, 1 Peter 2:9. God wants us “near” not afar off from him. Jeremiah 23:23-24.

Clarke writes, *“They (horses and mules) will only act by force and constraint; be not like them; give a willing service to your Maker. “They have no understanding;” you have a rational soul, to be guided and influenced by reason. The service of your God is a reasonable service; act, therefore, as a rational being. The horse and the mule are turned with difficulty; they must be constrained with bit and bridle. Do not be like them; do not oblige your Maker to have continual recourse to afflictions, trials, and severe dispensations of providence, to keep you in the way, or to recover you after you have gone out of it.”*

James 4:7-10

- “7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.
 8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.
 9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.
 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.”*

APPLICATION

1. Let us pray with passionate closeness to the Lord our God. Let us draw close to the Lord and speak to Him about everything, for all things matter to the Lord. Nothing is “small” or “large” to God about us, for all is simply space and time, and from God’s perspective in eternity all is solved already, it’s just that we are yet to see it.
2. We are not animals and are not to treat ourselves or others as if they are “beasts of burden” to be dumped upon. Let us deal with others as the Lord deals with us, and walk alongside our brethren.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE: DISCIPLINE OF BELIEVERS

CHRISTIAN LIFE: SUFFERING

Psalm 32:10

“Many sorrows [shall be] to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about.”

REFLECTION

There are only two paths in this life. Matthew 7:13-23. There is but one path that is the path of blessing and that is the Lord's path and it is where he wishes us to be. Mercy will always surround us in the Lord's work and way. In fact I delight in telling my students that if mercy, grace and truth are not “abounding” something is wrong, pause, pray and seek the Lord's guidance. The throne of Jesus is a throne of grace, and we are to boldly come to it to worship and praise Him. Psalm 57:1, Hebrews 4:16, 10:19ff,

We will feel sorrow at times of real grief, and there is a “godly sorrow” for sins that have hurt others, and such sorrows are legitimate and helpful, as they underline the need for repentance, or they remind us that we live in a fallen world. Either way our sorrows are helpful if they drive us to our knees. For the believer we have a place to flee to in sorrow, a place of refuge in the Saviour's arms. For the wicked there is no such place to flee, for they are alone in their atheism and self centeredness. Proverbs 10:7, 28, 11:5-11, 13:9, 21, 15:29.

APPLICATION

1. Let us express our trust in the Lord, and sing and pray about our faith in the Lord, for in Him alone we have our trust. It is the Lord who delivers us. Let us announce to the world in whom is our expectation, for the Lord will not desert us.

2. We may have sorrows but we have the place to flee to and leave them, but the wicked lack any hope and any place for deliverance. Let us celebrate our deliverance in advance and express our faith in the one who will lift us up.

DOCTRINE**MERCY****Psalm 32:11**

“Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all [ye that are] upright in heart.”

REFLECTION

The order is a strong one; rejoice in the Lord! It is repeated through scripture and it is to be obeyed; rejoice in the Lord, for the Lord has done all things needed for us to live and have joy. Psalm 33:1, 68:3. There is no joy in legalism, nor in religious play acting, but there is joy in God's grace and mercy, for through his grace we are declared righteous, and in the power of the Holy Spirit we can walk uprightly. God does the work and we respond to that work in the Holy Spirit's power, and we get the benefits and we rejoice in the Lord. As the old movie script says, “It doesn't get any better than this!” Let us praise the Lord for the greatness of his grace.

Philippians 3:1-3, 4:4-7

“1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.

2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.

3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”

“4:4 Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.

5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

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 passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

APPLICATION

1. Rejoice in the Lord and in all he has done for us, is doing, and will do, world without end! We are blessed beyond measure and the Lord's people ought to praise aloud and sing to his glory every day. Let us praise His Name.

Psalm 33

Rejoicing in the Lord's Glorious Attributes

Stability of mind in times of great pressure is centered in the soul of the person. It is what they believe and depend upon that will give them stability and strength. What we rest upon in the core of our spirit is what will keep us safe under pressure, and David rested upon the certainties of God's Holy Character. He could depend upon the one who had called him and was assured by the character of God that he would be kept until he had completed his job upon the earth. Psalm 68:20, 116:15. It is good, like David, to rejoice in who God is, for then there is the expectation as to what He is able to do, and we rest more in his power than, rather than trusting our own limited resources.

Psalm 33:1

“Rejoice in the LORD, O ye righteous: [for] praise is comely for the upright.”

REFLECTION

The order is direct and passionate again; rejoice in the Lord! Psalm 32:11, 97:12, Jeremiah 9:23-24, Philippians 3:1, 4:4. David knows that all we can do when we face this world's uncertainties is centre our lives in the certain truth of God's love and care over us all. In difficulty, in fear, in worry, in sadness, and in doubt, we can always rejoice in the certainty of the Lord's holy and dependable character and draw strength in and from our worship.

Those who have received the righteousness of the Lord as a grace gift need to thank the Lord for the blessing received and praise his name for what we could never have in our own strength. We stand before the throne of grace in absolute awe and thankfulness, and so let us express our joy and praise in worship that acknowledges the Lord's mercy and love. All worship and praise is “comely”; it is appropriate and proper for God's people. Psalm 50:12-15, 80:1-3.

APPLICATION

1. “Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice!” There is no time when it is not right to rejoice in the Lord. After a night of deep depression through incredible financial pressures I have arisen to this study in the Psalms and as I type these words worship rises in my soul and spirit and the depression slips away. It is in rejoicing in the Lord that we defeat the evils that have afflicted us and the pressures that have flattened our mood. Let us rejoice.
2. It is right and proper for the righteous to rejoice in the Lord, for we have no other ground for security or for joy; He is our joy and our strong tower, let us rejoice in Him.

DOCTRINE

CHURCH: WORSHIP AND PRAISE

Psalm 33:2-3

“Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery [and] an instrument of ten strings. Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise.”

REFLECTION

There is a time for reflection and quiet before the Lord, and I still believe that all church services need to begin in peaceful contemplation of the Lord and silence before Him, but if they get noisy later that is fine, for joy is supposed to be abounding amongst the Lord's people. As his grace has been unlimited, so our praise needs to be abounding. We are to reflect back what we have received. Our song should be a “new song”, quite different from our pagan days.

David describes the instruments of the choir of the tabernacle services and they are more akin to the modern bands that play in Pentecostal churches than the organs of the cathedrals. Instruments are neither “spiritual” nor “carnal”, they are just makers of music or noise; the difference is in the skilfulness of their playing. If we are to have music let it be good music. The church service is not the time for “amateur hour” with wrong notes and poor playing by people who need another year in their back room before taking the stage.

I am not being mean and spiteful in my comments here, for the service music must not get in the way of the spirit of worship. That means it must not be so dominant as to stop people being able to think, nor so self centred and ego-

centric by the musicians that everyone is looking at them, nor so badly played that no-one can sing properly to the tune, for there isn't a clear one. If the trumpet call is sounded, the note must be clear so that the army know what to do!

All worship music must open the door to worship and praise, not open the door to narcissism, chaos, or embarrassment. Let the musicians be careful to practise well and let the singers practise well, so that there is no bad music to distract the worshipper from the words sung and the doctrines to be contemplated. Worship is about the Lord and nothing must come between the worshipper and their worship of the Lord.

Psalm 150:1-6

"1 Praise ye the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power.

2 Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness.

3 Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp.

4 Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs.

5 Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals.

6 Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD."

APPLICATION

1. Let the musicians and singers practise well so that there is a sound in the service that aids worship, never distracts from the Lord, and always focuses the attention of the people on the Lord. Practise until the music is a seamless flow in the service, never a jarring chaos of sound.

2. Let us be careful of quality in all we do in the services that honour the Lord, for poor quality is a shame to the Lord. Do not let pious people speak of the "widows mite" in talent and let poorly prepared people embarrass themselves and the Lord. Only allow music and song that is "skilful" to be played and so bring glory to the Lord, never embarrassment.

Psalm 33:4

"For the word of the LORD [is] right; and all his works [are done] in truth."

REFLECTION

God's words to us are clear and righteous, and all that we do in worship should reflect this. Psalm 12:6, 19:8, 119:75, 128. Keep this verse in its context and the context is worship and praise. All God's works are done in truth, fidelity, steadfastness, and stability, and all that happens in the church service should reflect these virtues. God is righteousness and truth, and all we do needs to draw attention to that fact about God's character, for upon these things is our salvation secure.

Worship is to reflect the stability of our salvation and the joy we have in it through the Lord's stable character and plan. Worship is not about a "wall of sound", nor is it to center around emotionalism, for the Word of God is to be lifted up so that people learn of the character of the Lord and honour his name. "The Lord has magnified his Word above his name!" Psalm 138:2.

Deuteronomy 32:1-4

"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."

APPLICATION

1. God's Word is to be uplifted and the lyrics of song to be checked to ensure they teach truth. All about the church service is to proclaim truth and lift up the Lord.

2. Righteousness and Truth are to be magnified in the church worship service. Let us ensure that this occurs in all aspects of the service.

Psalm 33:5

“He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.”

REFLECTION.

God loves righteousness and correct judgment. Justice matters to the Lord and it must matter to us. We are to reflect the Lord’s character and honour the Lord’s Plan that has justice at its heart. What is righteous and just is to be reflected, supported, proclaimed and defended in our services.

The earth in its creative wonder reflects the character of the Lord and the proclamation of the wonder of the Lord’s nature is to be at the centre of all worship we run in the church services. God’s faithfulness, goodness, and kindness is to be proclaimed in all ways in our churches and these words are to be used in song, in bible readings and in proclamations from the pulpit at all times and in all services.

APPLICATION

1. Pastors, ask yourselves whether people could ever leave the church service with any doubts about the certainty of the holy Character of God. Do they hear about the righteousness, justice, kindness, goodness and faithfulness of the Lord at every service? If they do not you need to modify things in the service format.
2. Let us proclaim our God and Saviour in all his glory and majesty, and let us do it daily.

DOCTRINE

GOD: CHARACTER OF GOD

Psalm 33:6

“By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.”

REFLECTION

Let us remember to honour the Lord as the creator of all things. Let us remember that it is the Word of the Lord that created all things and that his creative power is simply “spoken” and it is done. The power of the Creator is to be sat with and reflected upon, for what we read of in Genesis 1:1ff, and John 1:1ff is the most profound statement of power and majesty ever recorded by mankind. The universe is the work of his hands; his “finger work”. How much more care has he taken over us and our salvation? Psalm 102:25, 111:7.

Psalm 148:1-5

- “1 Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens: praise him in the heights.
 2 Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts.
 3 Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light.
 4 Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens.
 5 Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created.
 6 He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass.”*

*“All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:3).
 “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether [they be] thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him” (Colossians 1:16).
 “And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail” (Hebrews 1:10-12).*

Psalm 8:3-6

*“3 When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;
4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?
5 For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.
6 Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet:”*

APPLICATION

1. This world is now fallen, but it still has the image of the creative power of God worked into its very fabric and structure. As we look we can and should gasp in awe at times and give thanks for the work of God on our behalf.
2. The God who holds the universe in his hands can handle the plan for our life. Let us rest in his creative arms, for he has, in Christ Jesus crowned us with glory and honour, and we are to reflect that back to Him in worship.

Psalm 33:7-8

“He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.”

REFLECTION

The great depths of the oceans is a marvel indeed and the great tidal surges that are possible to emerge caused by deep land slips in the great sea trenches can create tsunamis hundreds of feet high. There is awesome power in the deep places of the oceans and the great waves that have been created in the past are things to make man stand in holy fear before the Lord. Let us look into the deep darkness of the sea and be in awe of the creator and in fear for our lives rather than in arrogance at our beach houses and million dollars boats.

Clarke writes on these same lines: **“Let all the earth fear the Lord - He who has thus bound, can unloose; he who has created, can destroy. He has promised life and prosperity only to the godly; let the ungodly stand in awe of him.”**

It is a fool indeed who stands before his creator in arrogance, and yet so many ignore the reality of their life's end and acts as if they will live forever and are entitled to enjoy only good things.

APPLICATION

1. Let us stand in awe more often as we survey nature, for we see the creative power of the Lord our God and we stand on unstable ground at all points of this fragile planet. Let us be in awe of God's creative power and let us remember that the earth will shake one more time and the great upheaval of the Flood will be repeated and the earth re-made by the Lord's creative power. Revelation 16:17-21.
2. Let us look with holy fear on the oceans and remember the creative and destructive power of them and not make them in our minds happy and restful places only. We can enjoy nature, but let us remember that it is not “Tame”, it is wild and destructive, and it will turn against man under God's orders in the Great Tribulation Period and man will be judged by he very things that many worship. Let us worship the creator, not the creation!

Psalm 33:9

“For he spake, and it was [done]; he commanded, and it stood fast.”

REFLECTION

By his word the LORD established the earth and by his word it continues (Psalm 119:90). This universe is held together by the Word of God not by “natural forces”. The men who speculate about their theories are speculating to cover their atheism, and all such academic wars of words will be silenced by the judgments that will come upon this world in the days to come. God's creative power will be seen, and man will understand, as they hide in the cave and holes in the ground, that they are but creatures again. Revelation 6:16-17.

APPLICATION

1. It is the creative word of God that holds the universe together, and the universe will hold together, even though one third of the stars will be seen to fail in a moment in the Great Tribulation period. Revelation 8:12. Even then there is another 1000+ years to run for this universe before it is replaced, but replaced it will be. 2 Peter 3:10-18, Revelation 21-22.
2. Magnify the Word of God, for in it you discover the Character of God, and in this wisdom there is stability as the earth shakes and the waves crash mans buildings to pieces.

Psalm 33:10

“The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect.”

REFLECTION.

The enemies of the truth are malice filled towards the Lord and the Lord will deal with them in his time and in his way. The reference here to “heathen” is not a simple reference to “unbelievers”, for the lost may be found and the unsaved may be saved. The “heathen” however are the group that is determined to follow after paganism and heed the “doctrine of demons”. Leviticus 17:7, Deuteronomy 32:17, 1 Corinthians 10:20-21, 1 Timothy 4:1.

Those who are actively and systematically opposed to God will always “take counsel” together and plot and plan to embarrass believers and make insulting comments about the existence of God, but we needn’t worry too much about these people. It doesn’t matter whether it is an Oxford Don who mocks God or the drunk in the gutter, for both will be food for worms one day soon and the Lord will have his judgment day. Revelation 20:5-15.

All that man builds will be crushed to nothing before the end and all this world will be rebuilt by the Lord who made it in the first place. The bible makes it very clear that “the cities of man will fall”. Revelation 16:19. Nothing that man has built to his own glory will stand to proclaim anything other than God’s power when the Lord returns. All the plans of atheists to mock God will be brought to nothing.

APPLICATION

1. Do not waste time on those who attack the integrity and character of the Lord, for He will bring them to their knees in the end. Commit them to the judgment of the Lord and keep moving forward yourself in obedience to the plan. Do not be distracted by their malice and evil slanders, just serve the Lord in focused truth.
2. Do not try to out plot the enemy. Just be obedient to the clearly revealed will of the Lord for yourself and leave the enemy forces to the Lord’s justice. He will do a far better job of judging than you could ever do. Just serve and honour Him in all ways, and commit the enemy to the Lord.

DOCTRINE

REMNANT

Psalm 33:11

“The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.”

REFLECTION

The enemy attacks the Lord’s character as if there is some doubt as to the Lord’s ability to deliver his people or judge his enemies. There is none at all. Do not refer to these evil people as the “opponents” of the Lord, for they cannot oppose anything the Lord does, for his plan is going to be fulfilled. Our task is to obey our part in the plan and not concern ourselves with the apparent power of the enemy. We make our prayer to the Lord, ensure our armour is in place and we advance with sword swinging. Ephesians 6:10-18.

The Lord’s counsel stands forever, for the plan is from everlasting to everlasting. Proverbs 19:21, Isaiah 14:24-27, 46:10. There is no doubt about the fulfilment of the Lord’s plan. Psalm 41:13, 90:2. God’s Word stands forever and not one word of it will remain unfulfilled by the end of time. Matthew 5:18. God’s thoughts are deep and beyond the fathoming of man, but they are righteous and powerful, and they reflect true reality, and all that God desires will occur in this creation of his.

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.”

APPLICATION

1. There is no doubt about the Lord’s final victory on this earth. The Lord God will be the victor over all evil. Celebrate this fact in your daily prayers.
2. The depth of the Lord’s thinking may baffle us at times, but we are to express our faith each day in the thinking of the Lord, for it is the basis for our salvation and deliverance.

Psalm 33:12

“Blessed [is] the nation whose God [is] the LORD; [and] the people [whom] he hath chosen for his own inheritance.”

REFLECTION

Blessed indeed are the people group that make the Lord their God and serve Him in righteousness and truth. This verse specially refers to Israel and they are indeed a blessed nation when they walk with God. During their days as a godly nation they experienced power and influence way beyond their numbers and even in their decline they produced prophetic words and Words of God through called men and women that have blessed the world for all time. They are the Lord’s elect people, set aside only temporarily at this time, due to unbelief. Daniel 9:26-27, Zechariah 10:12ff, Romans 11.

The future of Israel is secure, for it is written in the Word of God and the promises there are sure. Israel will be taken up again and its destiny is secure in Christ Jesus. Isaiah 60-63, Zechariah 13-14, Revelation 7-20. The nation is back in the land, the only people to achieve this after nearly 1900 years, and they are back to stay, and the Lord will rescue them right there from the Anti-Christ’s fury. Nothing can stop the victory of the Lord.

APPLICATION

1. Israel has been set aside for a time, but is back in the Plan of God as an active player, although at this point only as “dry bones”. Ezekiel 38-39. Watch this space believer, for the Lord has things to do and they will be done.
2. Bless the Lord as a people group, of whatever size you are, if you are people who love and serve the Lord. All who bless the Lord are blessed abundantly.

DOCTRINE

GOD: ELECTION AND PREDESTINATION

GOD: FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD

Notes

Psalm 33:13-14

“The LORD looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men. From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth.”

REFLECTION

Nothing is hidden from the Lord's gaze upon this earth. We are all part of the plan and we all are involved in the events of history and so we are closely observed by angels and by God. What we do is of moment and the angelic hosts pay close attention to us, as to the righteous dead, cheering us onwards as we serve the Lord. Examine the Hebrews verses below, and read them in their context, for they indicate that more than the angels are watching us; that even the righteous dead are in the stands of heaven and they cheer our efforts as the crowds cheered the gladiators in the amphitheatre.

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.”

God watches us for rewards, and the angels watch us to see what will unfold (for they lack foreknowledge), and the righteous dead watch us to cheer us onwards. Let us draw up our clothing like athletes, tighten our armour like soldiers, and fight and run our race as we are called to with dignity and honour to the Lord. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, 16:13, Ephesians 6:10-18, 2 Timothy 2:1-10.

APPLICATION

1. God sees us, and watches us intently in order to give eternal rewards to us. 2 Corinthians 5:6-12. Let us remember that our efforts for the Lord are all seen by the Lord.
2. Let us remember that the righteous dead, our own ancestors in the faith, cheer us on from the stands, and so let us fight worthy of them and the Lord who saved us all. We will rejoice forevermore with the Lord and so let us throw ourselves into the battles of the day and give our ancestors something to cheer about, and ourselves something to rejoice in forever. The stakes could not be higher!

DOCTRINE**SALVATION****Psalm 33:15**

“He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works.”

REFLECTION

God has made us all and so none can claim “special” rights above others, nor pretend that they do not understand the Lord their God, for all have been made in his image and are able to understand all that they need to. I have just spent time with a family who has experienced the death of a very young child with cancer. I am in this situation on a regular basis in my clinic today and yet in my own childhood such deaths were almost unknown here. We are experiencing a growth of childhood autistic disorders and cancers in the western world that is inexplicable, and the treatment is often worse than the disease, simply prolonging the death and dying process.

Modern medicine can often prolong dying rather than heal, and make the entire experience so traumatic that people look me in the eye and say, “I am an atheist on the basis of what I saw my child go through”. I understand their hatred of the terror they experienced, and often it is “modern miracle medicine” that creates the trauma rather than the disease. In other cases we face the results of teenage and early twenties drug taking which has affected the sperm and eggs of those who later become parents, and the results are disastrous in their young children with autism and other brain issues.

We are “well made”, or as the psalmist later puts it, we are “fearfully and wonderfully made”, Psalm 139:14, but with drugs, alcohol and other environmental toxic pollutants we have destroyed our DNA and then later blame God for imperfection. We are certainly facing things that are inexplicable in the medical world now, and often it is not simple at all as to where the problem has come from; individual volition (drug usage), or environmental pollutants..... What we face in these “last days” are things that combine individual choices and things that are happening to us without our approval or knowledge.

We have “muddied the water” by our evils, both personal and societal, but the base line remains, that the Lord knows how we are made and can speak directly to the soul of each and every one of us. There is no problem with our communication DNA, and while some may “hate” the maker for their great grief, he has made us well and we all are made to understand God. It is well to remember that the bible is very clear that the death of children leads to their entry directly into heaven. 2 Samuel 12:23. We will often feel like the great prophets over these things, and let us take them to him.

Isaiah 64:1-8

“1 Oh that thou wouldst rend the heavens, that thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence,

2 As when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence!

3 When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence.

4 For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.

5 Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways: behold, thou art wroth; for we have sinned: in those is continuance, and we shall be saved.

6 But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

7 And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.

8 But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.”

APPLICATION

1. We are all made by God and he is able to speak directly into our heart without interpreters needed. We are well made, but the evils of men have seriously played with our genetics in these last days and may have serious questions as a result. Let us not be too flippant and trite in answers to questions that are way beyond us. Let us pray for those who are in deep anguish, to work through and not rush to quick answers to things that we may only understand in heaven.

2. Let us be careful in our embracing of modern miracle “miracle cures” as all the “treatment” may offer is the prolonging of dying and the attendant pain and distress that involves for all around. Do not embrace things in medicine that violate the natural order for a person to die with quiet dignity in a few days, rather than debilitation through their medication over painful and stress filled months. Let us not allow the “euthanasia debates” of the pagans to cloud the real issue for biblical believers, for we seek the Lord’s natural path through to heaven, not the longest time on earth, even if it is without any quality or purpose.

Pagans hungrily cling to life causing distress to all around them, when a believer doesn't need to. We can quietly select “no treatment” for we do not seek to prolong our suffering or that of those who love us, for we know where we are going. Psalm 68:20, 116:15. How clearly do we think in these matters?

DOCTRINE

SIN: OLD SIN NATURE

Psalm 33:16

“There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength.”

REFLECTION

The battle is always the Lord's alone, for it is not in man to understand all the things that are happening on the field let alone the specific and often hidden things that may affect the outcome. Men kid themselves that they know strategy and understand the enemy, but often they delude themselves and are affected by deceptive information by the enemy. 1 Samuel 17:47, Proverbs 21:31, Ecclesiastes 9:11.

It is never straight numbers of men that win battles, but a vast host of small issues that lead to victory. Alexander the Great was always outnumbered and always won. It is being, what some refer to as, “on the right side of history” that wins great and decisive battles. To be on the “right side” of history is to be on God's side. It is to be in the place where things are happening because they are in accordance with God's Plan.

Victory is rarely to the biggest battalions, nor the strongest man, but it is often to the force that knows its role in history and is playing it in accordance with God's will. The great Chinese general Sun Tzu realised this five hundred years after David, that what wins battles is not size of army or men, but the size of their will power and determination. It is people who know God's will and are determined to fulfil it that change battles and they do it not by their power, but by God working through them.

Psalm 44:3-8

“3 For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them.

4 Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob.

5 Through thee will we push down our enemies: through thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us.

6 For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me.

7 But thou hast saved us from our enemies, and hast put them to shame that hated us.

8 In God we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever. Selah.”

APPLICATION

1. Do not be put off by the numbers against you in conflicts, for it is God's will that will always triumph not men's numbers. Stand for truth and do not be swayed by numbers of evil men against you. Pray and advance into the Lord's will.
2. Do not ever trust your strength, trust only the Lord's power working through you. The worst defeats will be experienced when you are strongest, for then you trust yourself rather than God. Walk in the Spirit's power alone for then there is victory every time.

DOCTRINE**WEALTH****Psalm 33:17**

“An horse [is] a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver [any] by his great strength.”

REFLECTION

No matter how modern and powerful your equipment, and no matter how wonderful your resources, they will always be defeated by others unless you are walking with God. Do not ever trust in what unsaved men consider “assets” or “allies”, trust in the Lord alone. No-one is delivered by the strength of their alliances and the power of their equipment, for I have seen powerful men floored by the simplest weapons. It is being in the right place, at the right time, to be walking with God that makes any soldier “lucky”.

Joshua 1:5-11

“5 There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

6 Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them.

7 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

10 Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying,

11 Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the LORD your God giveth you to possess it.”

APPLICATION

1. Do not trust your own strength, but rest upon the Lord at all times. Walk in the Holy Spirit's power alone and you are safe indeed. Ephesians 5:18.

2. Just be sure believer that you walk with God and then grip your sword, hold your shield high and advance against the enemy. The Lord will flattened them before you.

Psalm 33:18-19

“Behold, the eye of the LORD [is] upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy; To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.”

REFLECTION

God's attention is focused upon all who reverence him and walk in holiness before Him. All we are asked to do is obey his Word and walk in humility before him and expect his mercy and we will receive it. God's promise to all who “fear the Lord” is that they will receive his mercy, for that is his nature and can be the clear expectation of the believer. We will always be able to depend upon the Lord's character for if he lest us down he loses more than us, he loses his reputation.

As we walk before the Lord in danger that we are called to walk in we can be confident that we will receive his protection and we will not die one second earlier than he has ordained for us. We have absolute confidence in the plan of God for it has been established from eternity past. Our job is to obey and serve with focused energy and relax in the Lord's hands in all things. If there is war we relax and if there is famine we relax, for the Lord can protect us, and if we are where he wants us we will be kept. Psalm 91:3-7, 147:11, Proverbs 10:3.

Psalm 34:15-22

15 The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.

16 The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

17 The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.

18 The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.

20 He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.

21 Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.

22 The LORD redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.”

APPLICATION

1. Do not consider “danger” as men reckon danger, only consider the path of the Lord and advance into it with confidence in the Lord's deliverance and absolute obedience to the directions he has given.

2. Walk in the Holy Spirit's filling and do not consider fear worthy of thought. If the Holy Spirit guides, you are safe, if he does not you are dead! Walk in the Spirit, or don't walk at all.

DOCTRINE

GOD: ABILITY OF GOD

GOD: ANCHOR OF THE SOUL

Psalm 33:20-21

“Our soul waiteth for the LORD: he [is] our help and our shield. For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name.”

REFLECTION

Until we are clear as to where we are to walk, we hesitate, pray and wait for clear orders. Our soul waits for the Lord's clear direction. I have only ever gotten into real strife when I have walked forward without clear orders from the Lord. The Lord Jesus Christ wants to walk with us, not ahead of us, or behind us. The Holy Spirit within us will support and encourage or convict and flatten if required. Wait for the Lord and if the path isn't clear, pray some more and wait upon the Lord. Psalm 115:9-12, 130:5-6.

Psalm 62:5-8

“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.”

The Lord is our shield and protector in all things. Our heart will rejoice in the Lord because we know that he alone is our strength and shield and he alone is our support in difficulties. We will praise the name of the Lord for his glory in these things. Psalm 5:11-12, 30:10-12, 32:10-11, 119:49, 76. Our heart rejoices in the Lord because we trust in Him and we know that our trust is not in vain in the Lord. He is worthy of our praise and he delivers us again and again.

APPLICATION

1. Let us use the Lord as our shield, for he delights in our use of his holy Word and its promises as our shield in difficult times.
2. Let us trust in and praise his name, for he delights in our worship, and delights also in blessing us mightily.

Psalm 33:22

“Let thy mercy, O LORD, be upon us, according as we hope in thee.”

REFLECTION

It is his mercy we seek, for nothing else will support and encourage us in all our ways in this world. It is a lovely prayer to pray that the Lord will bless us as we hope he will, for that is wonderfully. As we hope and trust in the Lord, so let the answers to our prayers be. This is a challenge to faith and hope and it is good to reflect upon this.

Psalm 5:11-12

“11 But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.

12 For thou, LORD, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.”

APPLICATION

1. How strong is our faith in what the Lord gives us? David challenges us to ask to receive as we expect. What would that be if it was answered? Let us ask the Lord expecting grace abundantly.
2. We seek mercy, and so let us ask for mercy and deliverance in abundance from the Lord today. We may receive it actually tomorrow or even many months from now, but let us claim it in his holy name today.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE: FAITH

Psalm 34

Praise For God's Providential Care of the Righteous

[A Psalm] of David, when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed.

"It is unlikely that this title was given to the psalm by the author himself; but as with other inscriptions that have been applied to previous psalms, it was almost certainly prefixed by the one who put together this collection of Psalms. There doesn't appear to be any connection to the time referred to (1Samuel 21:10-15) but it must have been the current belief of the time regarding the basis for the psalm.

This Abimelech, was in all probability the same as Achish king of Gath (1 Samuel 21:10 - 22:1); with whom David sought refuge when fleeing from Saul, and with whom he was dwelling at the time of the Philistine invasion of Israel, which cost Saul his kingdom and his life (1Samuel 27:1-12). It appears from this that Abimelech was the ancient royal title, and not the personal name of the Philistine kings. ISBE". (Introduction by Brian Huggett.)

Psalm 34:1

"I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise [shall] continually [be] in my mouth."

REFLECTION

David's commitment is the same as ours is to be. As I personally travel down the darkest time in my life as I work through these commentaries I have been challenged every dark night and worrying down to claim the challenge here and make it my own. Will I daily and nightly succumb totally to the fear that can sweep over me as it did to Abraham? Genesis 15:12. It is not sinful to experience worry, fear, anguish of soul, and great terror at what might occur. It is only sinful to hold onto such things and not pass them over to the Lord. 1 Peter 5:5-10. It is only sin to stay in fear and not move into praise and bless the Lord. "Whatever is not of faith is sin". Romans 14:23.

David makes his solemn commitment to bless the Lord at all times; in times when events lead naturally to rejoicing, and in times when events lead naturally to grief or fear. The challenge is for the truth of God's Word to be more real than the reality of the events that cause fear and worry. This is not "psychiatric denial", but firmly seeing the threat, and still in its very presence, praising the Lord for the answer to your prayers that has not yet arrived, but by faith you claim that it will certainly arrive.

There is a psychological state that people can get into that is labelled "denial". It means that the person goes into a manic state where they become unable to see the true reality of a situation and have false optimism and unreal expectations. This is not a spiritual phenomenon, but a psychological one, and the people who are so self deluded may be criminal or just annoying, but they refuse to face reality. We see such people as the so called "con artists", or "psychopaths", facing criminal court, who have refused to believe the evidence against them, and are in total denial about what they have done.

These criminal people appear to genuinely believe they are innocent, even though there is a mountain of solid evidence that connects them with often evil crimes. Annoying people who just refuse to accept personal responsibility for their actions and believe they will be "alright in the end", even though they have created the chaos, are also guilty of this self delusion. Such self delusion is not "faith" it is just delusion. The difference between the two states is seen in the individual's attitude to the truth, their honesty and humility as they face the truth, and their resting upon the Word of God, the person of God, and the Plan of God for their life.

As believers in the Lord we are not to enter this self deluded world, but walk in true biblical faith. Walking in faith means sitting with the truth of our situation, and then consciously applying God's Word and prayer to it, seeing what it is that the Lord will do to bring deliverance whatever the natural odds against it. I face an impossible situation personally, but in the Psalms I see David facing such things often, where all could have been lost, and my challenge in the filling of the Holy Spirit, is to join him in faith, looking to Jesus and trusting in his holy Word.

In difficulty and in disaster I must stand with David and say, "I will bless the Lord at all times". Psalm 145:1-2, Isaiah 24:15, Acts 5:41-42, 16:25.

Psalm 71:1-9, 14-16.

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 thine 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.

6 By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels: my praise shall be continually of thee.

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.

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."

Paul challenges us in his Prison Letter to the Philippian and Colossian Church to praise the Lord, and give thanks for all things at all times in Jesus name. Philippians 4:4, 11-13, Colossians 1:27, 4:2. He does this from house arrest facing possible execution. He mentors the very thing he asks others to do, Philippians 3:13-17, and so has total credibility, as has David. These men are to be followed!

The praise of the Lord's name will be in David and Paul's mouth at all times, and they will give thanks for all things, for they look in all situations for what God is doing. They seek opportunities to be always in praise of God before men. In the earliest time of persecution in Thessalonika the church was also encouraged to use praise, thanksgiving, and worship as their coping tool to usher in victory with praise. 1 Thessalonians 5:18, 2 Thessalonians 1:3, 2:13. Let us be also encouraged to stand with them. Let us praise the name of the Lord.

APPLICATION

1. "Christ in us, the hope of glory". Colossians 1:27. Let us remember that we can express confidence in all situations because the Lord himself is with us and he will not place himself in any situation without reason that leads to glory. Let us bless the Lord and praise his holy name today.

2. Let us look for what the Lord is doing in all situations we face. Let us seek out his purposes and walk in them alone. In our "prison" situations, where we are trapped by circumstances, let us see them as Paul and David did, as places where the glory of God can be shown even more powerfully.

DOCTRINE

PRAISE

Psalm 34:2

"My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear [thereof], and be glad."

REFLECTION

In advance of the answers to prayer we await, let us make our boast in the Lord and express our hope/confidence in the Lord's power to deliver, and the Lord's will to deliver. Isaiah reminds us, directly with a word from the Lord on the matter, that the power of God is never "shortened" or restricted in any way, and his desire is always to save his people when they turn to Him for salvation. Isaiah 50:2, 59:1-2. It is only deeply harboured iniquity that separates us from the answers to prayer that we seek. Psalm 66:18. Let us pause and deal with any sin that has separated us from the Lord immediately. 1 John 1:5-10.

Isaiah 64:4-6

"4 For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.

5 Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways: behold, thou art wroth; for we have sinned: in those is continuance, and we shall be saved.

6 But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

If we have any boast, let it be in the grace, mercy and deliverance of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 11:23 – 12:10. As Paul faces the same things that David did one thousand years before, he rests in the same deliverance; that of the Lord alone. If we can boast in one thing we boast in the Lord's power and grace over us. As we do this at all times we can speak of the Lord's grace over our life, then those who are "humble" will rejoice. Some will not rejoice in our testimony of grace, for the world loves show and drama and self congratulations, but God delights in humility alone. 1 Peter 5:5-10.

James 4:6-10

"6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

*9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.
10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."*

It is only those who are humble, (and in their own spirit bow before the Lord), it is only those people who will understand fully our spiritual walk. It is only those who have seen that they are indeed weak and that they need the Lord at all times, it is only those who can be truly spiritually strong. There is strength and stability in no other power than that which the Lord alone can give. We are simply not made to get victory in any other way.

APPLICATION

1. Let us "boast" in the Lord's power shown through us, and let us rejoice in the Lord's power that is revealed in and through our obedience in all situations. We may plead for a testing time to be over, but having had our "moan", let us commit ourselves back to the battle and fight on in the Holy Spirit's strength alone.
2. Let us maintain the humility that the Lord requires of us. This means to keep the truth of our total dependence upon the Lord's power to win to the forefront of our battered mind. We will get a hammering some days, because this is the "Angelic Conflict" and Satan hates us! Keep telling yourself the truth believer; this is a battlefield not a holiday camp! Humble yourself before the Lord again today and praise his name for the deliverance yet to be seen.

Notes

Psalm 34:3

"O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together."

REFLECTION

Once again we see David's deliberate choice to worship in the face of his enemies and in the presence of great pressure. He will not let anything distract him from his praise of the Lord; not threat of immediate death, nor disease, nor dangers of any sort. All such threats are simply "distractions from worship".

Romans 8:33-39

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

34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh 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."

David asks the congregation to join in with him to magnify the Lord's name, and lift up the knowledge of the Lord so that all might praise his holy name. When we worship we begin alone, but we urge all to join in the song of joy. Let us rejoice in the Lord and invite the people of God to join with us and lift up his name. Let us unite in worship and draw encouragement from each other in the battlefield of this life. Right in the field of conflict let us praise the name of the Lord in the presence of the enemy. Psalm 23:5-6.

APPLICATION

1. Let us exult the name of Jesus together this day and every day, for every day is a day of grace and mercy.
2. Let us be leaders in worship, setting the pace of praise, and let other rejoice as they join us in the affirmation of our faith, for the Lord will deliver and bless his people.

Psalm 34:4

“I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.”

REFLECTION

First we are to be delivered from our fears, and then later, in the Lord's timing, we will be delivered from our enemies. We must win the battle for the mind first, and in the Lord's grace, mercy and the Holy Spirit's power we can win the battle of the mind. Romans 12:1-2, 2 Corinthians 10:5.

The way we receive freedom from fear is by earnestly seeking the Lord's presence, for it is his presence that banishes the darkness from our soul and spirit. He is the light, and there is no other except the fake light of satanic delusion. John 8:12, 2 Corinthians 11:13-15. We are called to walk in the truth, as we have seen above, and so we are protected from deception and delusion and walk in the power and stability that God gives to the spirit.

David identifies that it is the regular walk with God, and the regular feeding on his Word, that leads us to the throne of grace daily and stabilizes our mind in his truth. The truth alone sets us free, and that truth is contained in his Word. John 4:23, 8:32-45. As we walk with Him, feed upon His Word, and apply it into the fabric of our daily life, so we are delivered from our fears and stabilized upon the rock of his presence within us. Psalm 27:1-2, 46:2, 56:3, 2 Corinthians 7:5-6.

APPLICATION

1. Let us walk with Jesus in living fellowship through his Word every day, and so draw up the doctrines into our spirit that we need to stabilize our mind and banish fear.
2. Fear is banished by the truth of God's presence with us. Let us fellowship in prayer now and at all times.

Psalm 34:5

“They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.”

REFLECTION

It is looking to Jesus that stabilizes us, not looking to men or systems of theology. Hebrews 12:1-2. It is as the old Hymn says it, “Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in his wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of his glory and grace.” When we look deeply into the face of Jesus we are “lightened”. The light of the world lights up the dark recesses of our soul and we are encouraged and strengthened within.

Quite physically Moses face shone with the light of God after he has spent time with Jesus upon the Mountain of Horeb in Arabia. Exodus 34:29ff. The Lord's face shone as his humanity reflected a little glimpse of his divinity on the Mount of Transfiguration. Matthew 17:2ff, Mark 9:2ff.

When we spend time with the Lord we are transformed and his light shines through our life. Acts 4:10-13. Those whose lives are not transformed by the light of the presence of Jesus have simply not met him, but are deceived and deluded. 2 Corinthians 11:13-15, James 2:14-26. There is no embarrassment, nor any shame when we have met Jesus and walked with Him through this life. He brings light, never shame or embarrassment. The Lord puts the enemies of truth to shame, but never his own people. Psalm 40:14-15, 44:7-15, 83:13-18, 112:7, 119:31.

APPLICATION

1. Let the light of the presence of Jesus shine into your spirit this day believer and so let the light of his Word bring light and truth to your path this day.
2. Do not let fear grip your soul for longer than it takes to cast your deep burden on the Lord who will not bring you to shame. The Lord delivers us from disaster and brings us out of the miry pit. Trust in the Lord and you will be delivered.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE: FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Psalm 34:6

“This poor man cried, and the LORD heard [him], and saved him out of all his troubles.”

REFLECTION

The rich were heard in the ancient world and the poor all too often ignored; corruption still ensures that this occurs even today. People are treated by the Lord however with absolute grace, mercy and love in Christ Jesus. There is no “shadow of turning” with Him. James 1:16-18. When the poor man cries out to the Lord in humble distress, he is heard by the Lord who loved and loves him. No human based status will save man, but the Lord will deliver his people, no matter how poor or wealthy they are. Psalm 10:17, 40:17.

Psalm 3:1-4

*“1 Lord, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me.
2 Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. Selah.
3 But thou, O LORD, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.
4 I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah.”*

Psalm 66:16-20

*“16 Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.
17 I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue.
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. Cry out to the Lord and he will hear you. Cry out to him with confidence and know that your prayers have entered his heart and will be answered in accordance with his eternal plan to the glory of his name and your blessing. Wait upon the Lord in joy and in peace; you are beloved and you are heard believer!
2. God will deliver us out of our troubles, not “from” them. We must pass through some deep rivers in this life and we will feel despair at times, but by looking up and holding out our hand to the Lord in prayerful expectation of deliverance we will see it come and we will praise Him in that day. Let us not wait until that day, but by faith praise him now for our coming deliverance.

DOCTRINE

PRAYER

Psalm 34:7

“The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.”

REFLECTION

The Lord (in the Old Testament when he appeared to men was referred to as “the Angel of the Lord”), is with us and the Holy Spirit is within us, (John 14-16), and we have a guardian angel covering our back, (Hebrews 1:14, 12:1ff), so we are fairly well protected; in even a stronger position than David was given the change in the ministries of the Holy Spirit after Pentecost.

David pictures the Lord as encamping around about the believer like the camp of a mighty army. It was a way of saying you are surrounded by assets that are there on your behalf. David is feeling protected and encouraged by the presence of the Lord and he identifies that if we “fear the Lord”, then we will receive “fearful protection” that must make the enemy fear filled. God will deliver us; it is just that the timing and place is in the Lord’s hands. We wait upon the Lord.

APPLICATION

1. The believer is not ever alone, and we need to reflect upon how protected we are under pressure, for when facing disasters we can get distracted and depressed.

2. We have the Lord alongside us, the Holy Spirit within us and a Guardian Angel behind us; we cannot be safer. Let us praise, worship and advance into the battle the Lord has called us to, for we walk in the place of power in Christ Jesus.

DOCTRINE

ANGELS

Psalm 34:8

“O taste and see that the LORD [is] good: blessed [is] the man [that] trusteth in him.”

REFLECTION

To all who do not know the Lord this is our open appeal. “Taste and see – for we know that the Lord is good”. We have no doubts about the “try before you buy” marketing strategy regarding the Lord’s person and work. There is no doubt about his love and his care for us, and there is no doubt about his ability to keep us and protect us and guide us through to victory. Psalm 63:5, 119:103, Hebrews 6:4-5.

Blessed are all those who trust in the Lord, for in the Lord they can relax, for he will always bring us through to blessing in heavenly places. Ephesians 1:3, 2:2:6, 3:10. We will have difficulties here on our walk through this earth, but in Christ we have a companion in the battlefield and he does the fighting on our behalf. Our task is to keep advancing and trust the one who walks alongside us. In the ancient world the soldier was trained to trust his mate beside him to cover his exposed side as he lifted his sword, each man’s shield covering his mate. We can trust the Lord far more than we can trust each other! Proverbs 3:1-9.

APPLICATION

1. Taste and see believer on the walk of faith. Try more and more steps of faith in the Word and application of the principles of the Word, and so see as you walk that the Lord can be trusted every day.
2. There is blessing abundantly for all who walk with the Lord, and so rest upon the truth of the Word and advance into the battles of today and focus on victory in the Lord.

DOCTRINE

GOSPEL OF SALVATION

Psalm 34:9

“O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for [there is] no want to them that fear him.”

“I have been young, and [now] am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.”
Psalm 37:25

REFLECTION

At its heart the secret of success in the life of the spirit is this verse. It is holy respect for the Lord that opens the door to blessing as we trust and obey his Word. Let the fear of the Lord grip your soul and then the fear of men will be far away from your thinking. Psalm 22:23, 31:23, 89:7, Isaiah 8:13-14.

There is nothing lacking for those who trust the Lord and fear his rebuke and disapproval. If all our attention is focused upon the Lord’s assessment of us then we can get the criticisms of men in their right place and focus on achievement in the battles that are to be fought.

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 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?
 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 knoweth 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 faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.
 34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.
 35 Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning;”

APPLICATION

1. If we fear the Lord we never need to fear men. Let us fear the Lord’s disapproval and focus on his “well done” and do all things for his glory, and then we can deal with fears easily.
2. There will be no needs that the Lord does not meet for us as we rest upon Him alone. At times the Lord will allow our own resources to run out before he provides just to underline our trust is in Him alone, not our “foreign bank account”. Let us trust the Lord and rest upon his provisions.

Psalm 34:10

“The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good [thing].”

REFLECTION

The young lions at times die of hunger and all the animals of the wild places all at times run out of provisions, but if we walk with God in his path for us, and apply his Word in holy reverence, then we can be assured by his Word that we will be provided for. We will be hungry at times, and in need at times, but we will not suffer through these things, for the Lord will never place us in any situation that there isn’t a path out of. Paul’s words build upon these things in 1 Corinthians 10:13.

Philippians 4:11-13

“11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.
 12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.
 13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

APPLICATION

1. All that is needed for the fulfilment of the path of God for our life will be provided by God, for it is his path! We will lack nothing we need, but at times we must ask and wait for the provisions. The Lord will provide and our job on the road is to rest in his plan and keep advancing. Like an obedient army we advance to meet our objectives, trusting in the supply chain to reach us at our new location. The Lord knows where we are and what we need and it has been ready since eternity past. Relax believer and advance in confidence in the holy character of the Lord.
2. No “good thing” will be withheld from us if we need it to do the work we are called to complete. If there is any need deliver the request to the Lord as to your “Supply Officer”, for it is his responsibility to meet all needs in all things.

Psalm 34:11

“Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD.”

REFLECTION

The most important lesson we can learn in this world is the “fear of the Lord”, for then we will be correctly oriented to all problems we face. When we really see the greatness of God we will understand the weakness of the enemy and the right spirit to have as we face difficulties. We cast our cares upon Him because he cares for us, for he does and has the answers to our needs. Proverbs 4:1ff, Ecclesiastes 11:9 – 12:1, 1 Peter 5:5-10.

To understand we must hear, and to really hear we must pay attention and really concentrate upon the speaker. All too often people do not take seriously the need to learn things that will save their lives later. It is the seriousness of understanding bible doctrine that needs to grip people in the churches. We are all too often slack in our study and wonder why we get “blind sided” by a satanic counter punch. We ought not to be able to be “blind sided”, because we ought not to be “blind” to biblical truths. Let us listen and understand and keep asking questions of the teacher and the Lord until we do understand and have applied the truth. God seeks real change, not just an academic pass mark!

How can we learn the fear of the Lord, and how can David teach us the fear of the Lord? This is an interesting claim by the great psalmist and so lets see where he takes us on this journey. Psalm 32:8, 111:10.

Proverbs 2:1-9

*1 My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee;
2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding;
3 Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;
4 If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;
5 Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.
6 For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.
7 He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.
8 He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints.
9 Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.”*

APPLICATION

1. Come believer and listen closely to the bible teacher. Let us challenge our people to place themselves under the teaching ministry of the called pastor-teachers and so learn the things that will keep them safe.
2. Hear the Word pastor and study the Word every day. Fellowship with the Lord in the Word, for when people gather to hear you speak they want to hear a man who has been with God, not a man who has read fifteen books!

DOCTRINE**FEAR****Notes****Psalm 34:12**

“What man [is he that] desireth life, [and] loveth [many] days, that he may see good?”

REFLECTION

Do you love this life of yours? Do you have pleasure in your life? Now I hope that you answered both questions with a resounding “YES!” We are here to enjoy our walk with God and have “life and have it more abundantly” John 10:10. If we are not enjoying this walk through the world we need to ask why not. David challenges us with his questions here in this verse, and he expects a positive answer to each question. Psalm 91:15-16, 1 Peter 3:10-11.

Do you want many days to live and have good days? There is a long life that is a challenge and a frustration to self and others due to debility, but there are many years in great blessing for self and others. I have just spent time with an older fire fighter, who is 78, fit, strong and still active in his volunteer fire service. He loves his life and is keen on passing on his over 60 years of experience in fire fighting to younger women and men. This man is no liability on a fire truck and his fitness shames many younger people. He is an example of focused energy and determined living.

It is great to have many days when they are active ones, but as we move through life we make choices that affect how long we live and how well we will be. Now our genetics and disease will play a part in this, but a lot of variables are within our choices and David challenges us hard on these things. Are we eating good food daily, not too much to get fat, and are we exercising sustainably so that we are neither worn out or unfit? Are we wasting our life in habits that are destructive to our health? Are we investing in our years or wasting them? David challenges his people and ourselves to see every day as one to seize for the Lord and live well within.

APPLICATION

1. Let us live every day well and in all we do focus on what is sustainable and will build power for tomorrow. There are two dangers we need to avoid; the first is not going for every day with passion, and delaying things for a tomorrow that may not come. The second is going so hard out each day that we burn out and wear out well before we were meant to. Let us be good stewards of our body and use it well to the glory of the Lord.
2. Let us set an example to all of healthy and focused living. Let us not waste our lives on useless pursuits and hobbies when the Lord calls us to achieve something worthy of the time he has given us. Let us rest and recharge when we need to and throw ourselves into the battles we are called to fight and avoid time and energy wasting activities that will distract us from the real goals the Lord has for us. 1 Corinthians 9:24-29.

Psalm 34:13-14

“Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.”

REFLECTION

Dealing with the temptation to commit sins of the tongue is a major step towards holy living. It is the tongue that shows the heart, or at least the confusion of the mind and so we need to catch the tongue and think before we speak. There are two areas to avoid in the sins of the tongue; evil and guile. Evil is the policy of Satan as against the policy of God. Guile is all crafty lying and deceit. It is all play acting with the truth to achieve devious purposes.

There are two paths for believers to walk; the first is the path of God’s plan for your life, and the second is your plots and plans to try to achieve what you think is best. The words of the book of Judges haunt me as I grow older, “and every man did as it seemed best in his own eyes”. It is a foolish thing to seek our own way rather than seek the way of the Lord, for the Lord’s way is always going to be best for us. Proverbs 14:12, 16:25. What seems right to us is a way that will likely lead to death! Let us walk with God’s path alone through this life, for we simply do not have enough facts at any time to make our own calls. It is a dumb path that is built on the guile of man, for we are just not that smart.

Depart from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it! It seems so straight forward, and yet it is missed by most. Let us pause and reflect upon the orders here. Evil must be recognized to be avoided, and evil is only recognized by those who hear the Word, and so understand the policy of God clearly. Evil is often subtle, for it is Satan’s policy of deception and he seeks to deceive and then destroy all on his false path.

Peace must be sought after like the treasure it is, and it is caught only by those who truly and whole heartedly pursue after it. Peace with God is found only when the individual makes their peace with God, and that means faces their sinfulness and their limitations, eliminates arrogance, and does not seek to be like God. This is humility that is being spoken of here and it must be pursued after like a prize of great price, for the natural tendency of mankind is to inflate their own importance. “There is no peace, says the Lord, for the wicked”. Isaiah 57:21.

APPLICATION

1. Guard your tongue believer and ensure that nothing passes your lips except truth in love.
2. Seek peace with God every day, and that means deal with all sins quickly and defeat any tendency to self confidence and arrogance, replacing it with humility and patient waiting upon the Lord.

Psalm 34:15

“The eyes of the LORD [are] upon the righteous, and his ears [are open] unto their cry.”

REFLECTION

God sees us and hears our prayers when we stand before him in the righteousness of Jesus. Let us recognize again that all our personal righteousness is as “filthy rags”, but the righteousness of Jesus provided for us makes us acceptable in the beloved. Isaiah 64:6, Titus 3:5. We are heard because we stand on the blood soaked ground of Calvary, and He hears our cry, just as he heard the cries of Jesus from the Cross. Romans 3:21-26, 5:17-21, Philipians 3:6-9.

Two later great prayers reflect the spirit that David captures in this verse. Hezekiah’s prayer and Daniel’s both mentor this prayer of faith, this cry for help; both of which are from times of great distress and overwhelming odds against them being heard and answered, and both were answered in grace and mercy.

Isaiah 37:15-20

“15 And Hezekiah prayed unto the LORD, saying,

16 O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth.

17 Incline thine ear, O LORD, and hear; open thine eyes, O LORD, and see: and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent to reproach the living God.

18 Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations, and their countries,

19 And have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them.

20 Now therefore, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD, even thou only.”

Daniel 9:17-23

“17 Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake.

18 O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies.

19 O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

20 And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God;

21 Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation.

22 And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.

23 At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.”

APPLICATION

1. God hears our cries. In dark days, like Hezekiah’s and Daniel’s days, they had no obvious sign in their present distress that they were heard, or would be heard, but God’s Word was to be clung to. We may have little human hope in our cries to the Lord, but we are called to the same faith of David, Hezekiah and Daniel. Let us be encouraged and trust the Lord in this and make our cry to the Lord.

2. We stand in the grace gift of the righteousness of Jesus, not our own. We stand in his provision not our own works. Let us rest in his provision, not our own.

Psalm 34:16

“The face of the LORD [is] against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.”

REFLECTION

As we pray for justice or deliverance we need to reflect upon this verse also, for it gives God’s verdict upon the oppressors that we will come up against. James referred to this in his letter, with rich people targeting the poor believers for court actions that they knew the poor couldn’t defend. James 2:5-7. We will be the targets of evil men during our walk through this world. We have no doubt about the malice of Satan’s people, for we have the Lord’s word upon it. John 15:18-21.

The very memory of evil will one day be eradicated from the earth, and in the new heavens and earth all evil will be forever gone. It is a mystery that the Lake of Fire still appears to be present in eternity in some form, and yet it causes no distress, nor has any impact upon the perfection of the new creation. Revelation 20:10-15, 21:8, 27. The memory of evil men and women is wiped away thoroughly and they disturb the mind no more.

Today evil men and women disturb our minds and upset our hearts with their malice. David has spoken often of this fact and poured out his broken heart to the Lord regarding evil people. We will face this, and I myself as I write these commentaries are facing this daily, and must, like David, bring my prayers and cries to the Lord for deliverance.

APPLICATION

1. The enemies of the truth will be dealt with by the Lord, and He will do a far better job than we could ever do to them.
2. The very memory of evil men will be swept away and all their great memorials will be ground to powder and will be gone.

Psalm 34:17-18

“[The righteous] cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. The LORD [is] nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit”

REFLECTION

I have needed this verse this morning as I write these words. In deep despair, which worship, as I type, has gradually lifted, these words are a balm to my broken heart and depressed spirit. David knew a broken heart, as did the other great prophets and leaders of God’s people through the ages. When we are crushed by oppression or distress we need to affirm the truth of the good company we keep in such dark places. We may be sharing in the “fellowship of his suffering”, Philippians 3:10, 1 Peter 4:10. As he suffered for us, if we are called to share in his suffering, then we are to take it to the Lord and seek his path through.

When we cry the Lord’s Word is clear, He hears and delivers us out of our troubles. God is near to us, not far away. We are heard and we are loved, and we are kept by Him. God sees the “crushed” heart and he gives vigour back to us and directs us in the path we are to walk. Psalm 16:11. At times we will feel as if we have been crushed, with the wind knocked out of us, but he hears our voice as we cry out to Him, and he will answer. Any delay is part of the plan, and is no delay, it is just timing.

APPLICATION

1. God sees our brokenness and hears our cries to Him.
2. At times we are crushed by the weight of the pressures we must face on our path, but we are heard and we will be lifted up and restored to health and service. We are here to serve and that must be our focus through the broken heartedness and the crushing weight of oppression. Let us see past our suffering to the glory that is set before us and serve the Lord as we are called to do.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE: REPENTANCE

Psalm 34:19

“Many [are] the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.”

REFLECTION

In case there was any doubt about my previous words about the pressures that come upon the righteous David underlines the truth here. We will have tribulation in this world, and we have Jesus words upon that. John 16:33. Sadly we suffer “many afflictions/distressing situations”. The journey through this life is often a difficult one, but we are not to blame God or rebuke the Lord for letting us down, for suffering comes to the righteous to strengthen their faith and provide opportunities for eternal reward. James 1:2-12.

Now I said above “sadly” we suffer, and yet it is not sad in the long run, for whatever our suffering here it is not worthy to be compared to the blessing that we receive eternally. Romans 8:18. Even though we may know that fact thoroughly we will still be overwhelmed at times and feel the deep sadness of great loss and suffering. We must take our suffering to the Lord who does understand. Hebrews 4:14-16.

Even though we may go through many afflictions that overwhelm our human coping power, we have the Lord’s promise that he will “pluck us out of” them and deliver us into glory. Proverbs 24:10, 16. The Lord will deliver to the glory of his name. We are not to faint under the pressures but be focused on the service of the Lord, for in his perfect timing, he will deliver us.

2 Corinthians 4:6-13.

“6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

8 We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;

9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

11 For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

12 So then death worketh in us, but life in you.

13 We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;”

APPLICATION

1. Many may be our afflictions on our patch of the battlefield in which we are called to fight in this life. We may be called to fight upon a difficult piece of spiritual ground, and we may endure great suffering, but there is glory in it, if we trust Him and rest upon his provisions.

2. The Lord will deliver us, and we are to rest in that certainty.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE: DISCIPLINE OF BELIEVERS

TEMPTATION

ANGELS: SATAN - ADVERSARY

ANGELS: SATANIC ATTACK ON BELIEVERS

Psalm 34:20

“He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.”

REFLECTION

Christ is “*the perfect lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world*” (John 1:29), he is *Christ our Passover* (1Corinthians 5:7; c.f. 1Corinthians 15:3-4; Exodus 12:5-6; Isaiah 53:7-10; John1: 29; 1Peter 1:19; Revelation 5:6-9, Revelation 5:12). Not one bone was broken – and miracle of that given what he suffered is staggering, but scripture was 100% fulfilled. It always will be.

Scripture will be proved correct, and the promises of God will be fulfilled in our lives, just as they were with the Lord upon the Cross. It may be with great suffering, but our “bones will not be broken”. This is not a promise that is to be literally claimed as we play sports where broken bones are considered “normal”, but it is a solid promise of protection as we serve the Lord. We are guarded by the Lord, and those who attack us attack the Lord.

APPLICATION

1. The Lord was kept, even in the midst of the greatest suffering any man has ever endured. We will also be kept through the deep waters we may have to wade with the Lord. Remember that the Lord is with us through the deep waters. Psalm 69:2, Isaiah 43:2.
2. We are guarded by the Lord and those who attack us attack the Lord. We are to commit ourselves to the power and protection of the Lord.

Psalm 34:21

“Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.”

REFLECTION

Evil is very disloyal to its own. Satan’s hatred of mankind is total and he delights in the destruction of all who serve him and he loves to destroy all who he has deceived. He is a total narcissist and so has no room for anyone other than himself and given that he encourages narcissism there is no unity in his camp and they fight each other with more focused passionate hatred than they fight believers at times. Psalm 37:30-40, 94:23.

Isaiah 3:10-11

*“10 Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.
11 Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him”*

Those who hate the righteous hate righteousness, and as such have declared themselves enemies of God’s character and plan. Such people are placing themselves directly under God’s judgment hammer and it will come down upon them. We are urged to adopt a godly attitude towards them, not seeking their deaths, nor plotting their deaths, but resting in God’s deliverance

Psalm 37:1-11

*“1 Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.
2 For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.
3 Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.
4 Delight thyself also in the LORD: and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.
5 Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.
6 And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.
7 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.
8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.
9 For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.
10 For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.
11 But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.”*

APPLICATION

1. Leave evil people to self destruct, for they will do so, or the Lord will crush them thoroughly. We are crushed by troubles, but we revive and are restored, but the evil are crushed and will not rise again.
2. Judgment is full and final with the Lord. Pass the evil opponents of your ministry to the Lord and trust in his deliverance.

DOCTRINE

SIN: SIN UNTO DEATH

SIN – UNPARDONABLE SIN

Psalm 34:22

“The LORD redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.”

REFLECTION

The Lord ransoms our soul and none who trust in the Lord will be made guilty before him and treated as criminals eternally, but by implication the evil ones will be and rightly so. The Lord redeems us and blesses us in spiritual ways that are beyond our comprehension. We may feel crushed by circumstances still, but we are to claim this verse and expect to see the Lord’s redemption working out in our life here and eternally.

APPLICATION

1. None who trust the Lord will be left desolate and judged by God. There is no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus, and we need to affirm this daily and rejoice in our redemption. We will be delivered; we are in God’s hands.

DOCTRINE

UNBELIEVER

Notes

Psalm 35:1

Deliverance from The Malice of Evil Men

[A Psalm] of David.

We are reminded of the words of Jesus as we read this Psalm, and it flows naturally on from the previous ones that speak of the afflictions that can come upon the righteous as they stand for truth amidst those who value only lies.

John 15:18-27

“18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

20 Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

21 But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

22 If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin.

23 He that hateth me hateth my Father also.

24 If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.

25 But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.

26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

27 And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.”

Psalm 35:1

“Plead [my cause], O LORD, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me.”

REFLECTION

When we face great evil we need to confront the reality we face and recognize that the Lord alone can defend us; we cannot defend ourselves, nor make alliances with others to do so. The Lord alone must plead our cause and defend us. The Lord will “contend” for us, and that means he will fight for us with all his mighty power. Those who have made themselves our adversaries must now fight God not us. Psalm 119:154, Proverbs 22:22-23.

It is legitimate to ask that the Lord fight for us, for we are his servants and soldiers, and the Lord is our Commanding Officer and he must defend his own. We are to cast our cares upon the one who defends us, and commit the judgment of evil men to the one who is entitled to judge them.

Psalm 43:1-5

“1 Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation: O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.

2 For thou art the God of my strength: why dost thou cast me off? Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

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.”

APPLICATION

1. God will strive against all who strive against us. We are to commit judgment of evil men and women who oppose us to the lord and leave these people in the Lord's hands.
2. God will fight for us. Trust Him alone.

Psalm 35:2-3

“Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for mine help. Draw out also the spear, and stop [the way] against them that persecute me: say unto my soul, I [am] thy salvation.”

REFLECTION

When we are under great tribulation we need to feel the Lord’s active support before we buckle under the pressure. David cries out for the Lord to be seen to be active in the battle against the enemy. David knows the truth that the Lord is ready and able and will act in accordance with his divine timetable, but he seeks in order for his human strength not to fail, for the Lord to “stand up” and be seen to act.

David wants to see the Lord’s spear strike the enemy down and stop their march towards victory. He wants to see their defeat and rejoice over the Lord’s actions, and he desperately needs assurance of his salvation and deliverance, so that he might keep going. The assurance of salvation is the work of the Holy Spirit who reveals God’s truth to the heart of man (John 14:16-17, 26, John 16:7, 13-14).

At times we will be so worn out in battle that we just desire to see the Lord’s dramatic actions to re-assure us that we are on the right track and rightly positioned on the field of carnage. I have felt that emotion of David this very day and this verse is my prayer today. I had previously thought David was being “too dramatic” and almost embarrassing in his emotionality in some of these early psalms.

The Lord has however allowed me to suffer at a level I never thought was possible over these last three months and now I see David as he always was; he is simply a man under greatest pressure, and now I have joined him in this terrifying reality, I understand him and share his prayers. My previous criticism of him was out of order and reflected not my insight, but my previous lack of insight into the dynamics of suffering and faith. I bow with him and allow my tears to join his and I see him as my brother in more power than ever before.

APPLICATION

1. There are some things that are only understood after great suffering has been endured and walked through with Jesus. Let us be humble in our assessments of some texts, and let us advance in what we know and allow the Lord to lead us into all truth.
2. Let us commit our way to the Lord afresh each day. The Lord will “stand up” and judge for us. Let us trust Him not men.

DOCTRINES

REMNANT

HOLY SPIRIT: COMFORTER

HOLY SPIRIT: MINISTRY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT
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Psalm 35:4

“Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul: let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt.”

REFLECTION

When evil men attack us it is easy to get very vindictive ourselves and take actions to gain justice. It is harder to do what David encourages and yet that is the Lord’s clear demand of us, especially if the offenders are fellow Christians. 1 Corinthians 6:2-12. David’s prayer is our model for injustice. Do not reach for your lawyer, reach for your prayer stool and kneel beside it. It is right to ask the Lord for the enemies of the Cross to be confounded and brought to their knees, for only then can they be saved. John 16:8-11.

Those who “devise hurt” will be hurt. There is no peace for the wicked and those who plan evil for believers will receive their own evil back with interest. It is right and proper to pray for judgment, for there must be justice before there can be grace if grace is first rejected. Psalm 31:17-18, 40:14-15, 70:2-3.

The enemy needs to be “turned back” from their evil designs so that we might advance in the battlefield of the Angelic Conflict, and the Lord will turn them backwards. It is a serious thing to the Lord to have his blood bought children abused by evil men and women. Let us leave our case in the Lord’s hands, and deliberately place ourselves in the Lord’s hands for justice and righteousness.

APPLICATION

1. When people declare war on us they declare war on God, and it is a foolish thing to say the least!
2. Ask the Lord to act and then stand back and let him act.

Psalm 35:5

“Let them be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the LORD chase [them].”

REFLECTION

Let us remember as we walk through this world, that mankind divides into two categories; the wheat of the Lord and the chaff of Satan. God judges those that become like the chaff in their rebellion against His Word and will. Isaiah 5:24, Jeremiah 23:28, Hosea 13:3, Matthew 3:12. The destination for the chaff of the enemy is the Lake of Fire, for they have chosen their own works against the work of Jesus on the Cross for them, and have insulted his person and work and his people. Revelation 20:10-15.

David passes them to the justice of the “Angel of the Lord” who will chase them down like the hunter chases down the game. The “Angel of the Lord” in the Old Testament is the Lord Jesus Christ, and by passing the evil men to the Lord David passes them to the one they have finally insulted and assaulted and he leaves them to the grace, mercy and judgment of the one who died for all. 1 John 2:1-2.

APPLICATION

1. Let the enemies of the Cross be chaff before the wind, and let them be blown away from hindering the work the Lord has called us to complete. Let us do the work and call upon the Lord to blow the enemy away.
2. The Lord is the Saviour, but he is also the judge! They reject his Word and they must accept that they will be judged by his Word.

ANGELS

Psalm 35:6

“Let their way be dark and slippery: and let the angel of the LORD persecute them.”

REFLECTION

Do not think David spiteful here as I used to do. I have been corrected by the Lord over the last three months, for as I have walked through dark valleys of threat from evil men in power over my financial survival I have plunged the depths that David knew. I now see that he was quite right to ask for the Lord’s complete and total judgment upon them, and I see now that he is asking for them to receive exactly what they have planned for him!

Their plans and plotting were devious and treacherous and so David asks that the Lord judge them by giving them exactly what they had planned for him. He also asks for the Lord to personally pursue and stay after them to badger them into submission, if they will in any way bow their knee before him. The word translated “persecute” is not to be taken in our meaning but the original meaning seen and understood.

David wants these people “run down” by the Lord and so brought to their knees any way they can be. **John 16:8-11**. He still seeks their salvation if it is possible, and we will seek the same for our enemies, but judgment must come first for those who have declared war upon the Lord and his people.

APPLICATION

1. Let us pray for the Lord to “run down” and flatten all our enemies, that they might be convicted of sin, righteousness and judgment, in accordance with his Word.
2. Let the enemies of the Lord receive exactly what they have planned for the believers, but let them be brought to their knees as Saul was on the Damascus Road.

Psalm 35:7

“For without cause have they hid for me their net [in] a pit, [which] without cause they have digged for my soul.”

REFLECTION

Do not feel any sorrow for evil people when the justice of the Lord falls upon them. They have hidden their malice and planned treachery against the innocent and so their plans rebound upon them. They planned to catch David like an animal in a pit trap, but they will be taken in such a device themselves. They searched out devices and plans to murder him and so he places them under the judgment of the Lord who will execute them eternally unless they repent.

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Hebrews 10:31. Our God is a consuming fire. Hebrews 12:29. It is foolishness indeed for men to stand against God, but if they do, let us call down God’s judgment upon them that they might learn not to blaspheme. 1 Timothy 1:20.

APPLICATION

1. When evil men plan to murder us, or at least kill our financial life and reputation, we can leave our case in the Lord’s hands and seek his redemption and deliverance. They plan great evil, but they plan as pee-wee potentates, and they stand against Almighty God.
2. Those who are very devious make a rod for their own back and they will be beaten with it. Leave them with the Lord and ask for their judgment to be as David desires it here; thorough and final if they do not repent. Have no pity for evil people, for unless they are beaten to their knees like Saul they have no chance to become a Paul!

DOCTRINE

FALSE TEACHERS

Psalm 35:8

“Let destruction come upon him at unawares; and let his net that he hath hid catch himself: into that very destruction let him fall.”

REFLECTION

They planned to ambush David and catch him unawares, and so David asks for them to be taken the same way and face their own demise exactly as they had planned it for God’s people. Once again do not feel pity towards those who show none, for unless they are thoroughly brought down and repent 100% they are a lasting danger to the innocent. There is no mercy shown to those who show no mercy, and if you forget this in your dealings with proven evil people then innocent people will be hurt!

I have seen people ignore the truth of scripture and show mercy in a situation when judgment was called for, and they paid with their job or their life later. When the Lord brings evil people down to their knees they are to be judged according to their evil works, and if repentance is forthcoming then they may be lifted up later to Christian service, but never to power over people again. I have seen many tragedies caused by people being too ready to quote Matthew 5:7 without the truths of these psalms and the other passages quoted below referred to. Romans 9:15-23, James 2:13.

APPLICATION

1. "Be sure your own sins will catch you out", unless you repent of them and forsake your evil ways. Let us warn those who think they can ignore righteousness and take advantage of others by guile. By their own evils they will be taken themselves.
2. Be careful in showing mercy too quickly to those who have shown none and give no fruit/evidence that they have forsaken evil, or your good intentions will be used to abuse more innocent people.

Psalm 35:9

"And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD: it shall rejoice in his salvation."

REFLECTION

Irrespective of the assaults upon him David will rejoice in the Lord. Nothing will stop David giving thanks to the Lord for his goodness and for his salvation. In both senses David praises God for his salvation; his eternal salvation and his present and soon to come deliverance from the enemy. Praise and worship banishes fear and despondency and David knows that the victory of the Lord, although "delayed" from his perspective will arrive in exactly the right time for him in accordance with the divine plan from eternity past.

Psalm 68:1-3

"1 Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him.

2 As smoke is driven away, so drive them away: as wax melts before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.

3 But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice."

Isaiah 61:10-11

"10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

11 For as the earth brings forth her bud, and as the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations."

APPLICATION

1. Praise the Lord his people and give honour to his holy name. In the midst of the battlefield of life praise his name. He is our Saviour and he will deliver us.
2. We cannot be joyful in our adversity, for it hurts us, but we can always be joyful in the Lord, and so let us praise his name, and then we will find we can rejoice even in the adversity itself. Philippians 4:4ff.

DOCTRINE

OLD TESTAMENT PASSAGES ON RESURRECTION:
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Notes

Psalm 35:10

“All my bones shall say, LORD, who [is] like unto thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him?”

REFLECTION

From the deepest parts of our soul and body we praise the Lord and lift up our hands and hearts to Him. Our very bones groan in their pain and distress, but also cry out to their maker and their saviour. There may be aches and strains in our joints and bones under stress, but the truth is there is none like God our Lord. There is none who can deliver the poor from the rich who will oppress them. The enemy are too strong for us in our human strength, but in the Lord there is hope alone, for his power is there to help.

The malice of the enemy against the poor and vulnerable is great, but the power of God is greater. The enemy will always be too strong for us, and yet “greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world”. 1 John 4:4. It is in the Lord alone that we have deliverance. Three hundred years after David, Isaiah praised God for who he is as creator and saviour, and his words encourage me as I contemplate my aching bones that speak of the stress I am under, but the great God I am “under” as my Saviour and Deliverer.

Isaiah 40:21-31.

“21 Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?

22 It is he that sits upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretches out the heavens as a curtain, and spreads them out as a tent to dwell in:

23 That brings the princes to nothing; he makes the judges of the earth as vanity.

24 Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble.

25 To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? says the Holy One.

26 Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that brings out their host by number: he calls them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one fails and falls.

27 Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God?

28 Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, faints not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding.

29 He gives power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increases strength.

30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:

31 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.”

APPLICATION

1. Our bones will ache and “cry out” at times of great stress, but that is simply to reflect the reality of the pressure situation. Let us recognize the greater reality we are “under”, which is the sovereignty and power of Almighty God.
2. Let us cast ourselves at the feet of our God and King, for He alone is the Saviour and He alone is our deliverer from the malice of satanic men and women.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE: SPIRITUALITY

Psalm 35:11

“False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge [things] that I knew not.”

REFLECTION

The impact of liars upon us is significant in the business and political world, and it is a shock to hear people speak of things that we have no idea about because they are simply fabrications. David was under the threat of verbal attack always in foreign courts, for it was by lies that courtiers gained the ear of the factions in court and deviously led away one time allies into rebellion against a king. Satan is the “father of liars” and so his people are good at deceit, just as he is. John 8:44ff.

The dirty satanic political and business game of lying to achieve goals is still very common, and when you forget the malice of the enemy you will be “bowled over” by his evil at times. Recognize what is occurring and do not take the lies personally, for it is just Satan’s policy and you are simply his target today, others will be tomorrow. Pour out your distress and request for aid to the Lord and wait upon him for deliverance. Psalm 27:12-14.

APPLICATION

1. When liars do their work, pray, request the Lord to vindicate and restore your reputation, and continue to do well before the Lord. In one case I had to wait for seven years to be restored to trust in some people’s eyes, as it was only then that the liar was unmasked and “closed down”. Wait upon the Lord and keep doing his work, for you will reap in good time the rewards of truth and spiritual fruit will keep your energy up. The Lord will always vindicate those who calmly keep working to the glory of his name.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE: SUFFERING

Psalm 35:12

“They rewarded me evil for good [to] the spoiling of my soul.”

REFLECTION

When we face malice it is shocking to us that people would try to cause distress to us without any cause and without any concern for the upset they cause to our family. The hatred of Satan himself gets hold of his servants at times and their evil is beyond all normal human logic, but the reason for that of course, is that it is satanic. When facing this level of hatred to the very grieving of the soul, so the heart breaks within in grief, all you can do is cast your weary body before the Lord in prayer. Hear the words of Psalm 109, David speaking of his own pain in a situation, but also prophetically speaking of the suffering of the Lord facing malice at this level.

Psalm 109:1-5, 21-27.

*“1 Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise;
 2 For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me: they have spoken against me with a lying tongue.
 3 They compassed me about also with words of hatred; and fought against me without a cause.
 4 For my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer.
 5 And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love.
 21 But do thou for me, O GOD the Lord, for thy name's sake: because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me.
 22 For I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me.
 23 I am gone like the shadow when it declineth: I am tossed up and down as the locust.
 24 My knees are weak through fasting; and my flesh faileth of fatness.
 25 I became also a reproach unto them: when they looked upon me they shook their heads.
 26 Help me, O LORD my God: O save me according to thy mercy:
 27 That they may know that this is thy hand; that thou, LORD, hast done it.”*

APPLICATION

1. Malice will always shock good people and it should, for it violates the Holy Spirit’s love for others within us. See their evil, name their evil for what it is, and rebuke it with the love of Jesus, and pray for their souls. Ask for judgment to bring them to their knees like hate filled Saul, that they might become like Paul.

2. When the “soul is spoiled” rest in the care and love of Jesus for you. Draw closer to the Lord and pour out your heart more to Him who cares for you and will lift you up in joy. Remember the nature of evil, but do not be tainted by reacting to it; simply cast these people to the judgment of God and rest upon his love for you.

DOCTRINE

EVIL

Psalm 35:13

“But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing [was] sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom.”

REFLECTION

The hardest wounds to heal are received in the “house of our friends” by acts of betrayal and deviousness. Zechariah 13:6. When people we have prayed for turn on us, and abuse, insult and lie about us, it is hard to take. David does the right thing here with such traitorous malice; he takes it to the Lord for remedy. Psalm 69:10-11, Romans 12:14-15.

David comes before the Lord regarding these evil people, and he recalls that he fasted and prayed for them when they were ill, but now that he is ill they have “put their boot into him”. To kick a man when he is down is a true satanic fruit. David can examine himself, 1 Corinthians 13:5, and he can affirm that he is still producing good spiritual fruit towards others and their evil will not stop his production. This is our challenge, to keep on producing spiritual fruit, even when others send us only the fruit of the Old Sin Nature. Galatians 5:19-26.

APPLICATION

1. Let us maintain our own prayer life towards the saints, even if some of the “saints” prove themselves to be “aints” at times. If our heart does not condemn us we are on ground and holy ground. 1 John 3:20-21.
2. Let us always be ready to pray deeply in our own heart for others, and keep a steady flow of loving care going towards those who pastor and teach with focused power and energy.

DOCTRINE**CHRISTIAN LIFE: FASTING****Psalm 35:14**

“I behaved myself as though [he had been] my friend [or] brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth [for his] mother.”

REFLECTION

David had dealt with these people, who later proved to be evil enemies, as if they were friends, brothers, and mothers. He had dealt with them in integrity and love and care, but they had repayed with lies and deceit. These people had received all the blessing of fellows but had proved to be deceitful workers of the enemy. Remember Jesus words in Matthew 7:13-23, and remember, “by their fruits you know men”. We do not know people by their words or their apparent giftedness, but by the fruit of their life work. James 2:14-26.

The hardest thing is facing the deceit of people we today call “power players”, but who we should just refer to as evil. Let us be careful in our labels of people, but let us be accurate rather than weak in this matter. There is a grave danger today in our “politically correct” world to fail to label evil for what it is, and so others are later deceived, for they are not warned. When men or women are proven deceitful workers they are to be publically recognized as such. Failure to warn others leads to more casualties in the Angelic Conflict.

APPLICATION

1. It is hard to recognize that friends are enemies of our soul, but we must, and we must warn others of their evil or more harm will be done.
2. Spot the fruit of the lives of evil men before their fruit poisons your soul and spirit. Cast them over for the Lord to discipline and bring to their knees if they are believers, and judge them thoroughly if they are unbelievers.

Psalm 35:15-16

“But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together: [yea], the abjects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew [it] not; they did tear [me], and ceased not: With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth.”

REFLECTION

It is hard to see men who once were pretending to be friends, rejoicing over your distress. It is an evil indeed when men rejoice over other's misfortune when those poor men have done no evil to them. Not content with rejoicing individually, these evil men gathered together in groups and rejoiced in David's distress as a group. They did not cease from their jesting at his expense, making jokes about his problems. They even feasted and rejoiced and mocked as they ate and drank to David's ill health!

Our Lord experienced this hatred on the Cross, and we may ourselves experience such hatred if we stand for truth and uphold righteousness. Psalm 69:10-12, Matthew 27:39-44. When we face such things we need to reflect upon David and our Lord and draw strength from David's words here. The enemy will mock believers until the day he is imprisoned by the Lord himself. Revelation 19:19 - 20:3.

APPLICATION

1. The old saying, “he who has the last laugh laughs longest”, needs to be remembered when we are mocked by evil men. Eternity belongs to believers, not to evil men. They will have their day and then their night will fall. Rest upon the Lord's vindication and the Lord's justice, for He does such a better job than we can ever do.
2. Do not be distracted or offended at evil, for it is just reflecting satanic nonsense, and always has, and always will until the end. God will judge, it is just a matter of time. Trust in the Lord and keep your eyes upon Jesus.

DOCTRINE**PERSECUTION****Psalm 35:17**

“Lord, how long wilt thou look on? Rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions.”

REFLECTION

It may feel that rescue is taking a great deal of time, but the Lord has heard us, and the answer will come in his time with his power. The big challenge is to trust the Lord not depend upon men for rescue. Let the Lord do it to his glory and let no man take the glory or honour. Let the Lord be blessed and let men be rebuked.

David is clear about his need and it is for “rescue”, not just a “bit of help”. Let us be clear in our requests, for we are urged to ask clearly of the Lord and we will receive. Spurgeon's last words before his death are worth recalling; “believe more, pray more, and so receive more”.

James 4:2-10

“2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

5 Do ye think that the scripture says in vain, The spirit that dwells in us lusts to envy?

6 But he gives more grace. Wherefore he says, God resists the proud, but gives grace unto the humble.

7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.”

APPLICATION

1. Let us truly “do business” with God in our prayers, asking for the things we need, for He delights in receiving and answering our prayers. It is almost like the Lord limits himself in his dealing with us to prayer, and so if we do not ask, we do not receive. Let us pray believing and receive with rejoicing.
2. When the Lord appears to delay, wait upon Him in constant prayers for “rescue”. The Lord delights in assisting his children and restoring hope to his beloved ones.

Psalm 35:18

“I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people.”

REFLECTION

David abruptly moves straight into worship and praise, and that is a model for us when we face evil. Having committed his path to the Lord and delivered the enemy to God for judgment he moves straight into praise and worship to the glory of the Lord. He not only lifts up his voice to praise the Lord himself, but he praises the Lord in the face of all the people who are around. David will announce his faith before the great congregation.

When the people gathered in hundreds of thousands for the great feasts of Israel at Jerusalem he would stand before them all and praise the name of the Lord in the face of all the people, including the many who had rebelled against him. David will be worshipful in the presence of his enemies, exactly as he had spoken of years before as a young shepherd. Psalm 23:5.

APPLICATION

1. Praise and worship is an act of volition, a determined act to celebrate the Lord in the presence of great distress and many enemies. Worship is volitional and needs to be “selected” as our “application” to every problem and situation. Let us praise the Lord and express our expectation of deliverance and rescue. Let all the people hear of our faith and hope.

Psalm 35:19

“Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me: [neither] let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause.”

REFLECTION

We pass the enemy to the Lord and ask David’s prayer over them, that they might not rejoice over us and so bring any disgrace upon the Lord. We want no arrogant exulting over our distress or defeats, lest the enemy win any credibility in the eyes of the weak and vulnerable. At times the enemy may appear to win, and this prayer is the right one to target into that situation. “Lord do not let the enemy rejoice long over me, and bring them down to the pit, that they might learn humility”.

People will openly mock God’s servants and they will also “wink at us” as if we are in some way “stupid” and “don’t get it”. It is this insulting “winking” that often causes more distress than anything else. David confronts insulting behaviour and deals with it correctly, passing these people over to the justice and timing of the Lord. The Lord may give evil people more grace than we would prefer, but let us thank God he deals with us the same way! Psalm 103:9-18. We were given grace and time to repent and often evil people are given great time to repent. Give thanks, trust the Lord and keep serving the Lord.

The evil ones have no genuine “cause” or reason to hate us; their hatred is purely satanic in origin. Do not look for reasons for hatred in evil people, for their “reasoning” is mocked by Satan and their mind and body with it. Those who oppose God and God’s servants give in to hatred, and are opened up to all manner of evil and degeneracy. Their hatred and despising of all who follow the Lord Jesus is to be expected, not ever understood.

APPLICATION

1. Do not try to fully understand the malice of the enemy, for that would be to understand the mind of Satan himself, and there is no logic there, only malice. The hatred of evil men is simply that; the “fruit” of their rejection of the

truth. Leave them with the consequences of their actions, casting them upon the Lord for judgment, and if possible, salvation through repentance.

2. When you are despised by those who hate the Lord, rejoice, for it means you are clearly doing the work of the Lord to pick up hatred reserved by Satan for the Lord. When we are attacked and abused by the "right people" we can rejoice, for at least it certifies our membership of the Lord's Army. One lady said to me that she wore her scars like medals, and that is a good way of seeing this.

DOCTRINE

HATERS OF GOD

Psalm 35:20

"For they speak not peace: but they devise deceitful matters against *[them that are]* quiet in the land."

REFLECTION

Evil people may speak of peace, but they do not mean peace, they mean deception and destruction. There is no peace in these people's thinking, for they are at war in their heart against God. There is no soundness and health at the centre of the thinking of those who are in active rebellion against their creator. There cannot be any soundness in such people's lives, for they have rejected the core of all logic, which is the existence of an infinite mind behind this universe.

Satan cannot stand peace and rest amongst mankind, and always seeks to create maximum chaos in the lands of the earth. Satan hates mankind and seeks its destruction. Satan's ultimate strategy is to create such chaos upon the earth that mankind turns to the ultimate powerful dictator to bring them hope, and of course the ultimate and godless dictator is Anti-Christ himself. Satan's present preparation for the arrival of Anti-Christ is to get as many self centred politicians in place as possible to create maximum financial and political chaos, building up despair amongst unsaved men, to open the door to their acceptance of tyranny at the right point.

This verse helps understand this satanic logic in the political and criminal areas. All Satan's people undermine security and stability for their own short sighted financial and political gain, without seeing consequences. The totally self-destructive nature of satanic logic escapes all reason. Why do evil people act so self destructively? Why do their political and criminal organizations destroy themselves by their own in-fighting? Satanic logic is totally self centred and as such does not cooperate, even when such joint strategies would assist the overall objectives.

They are incapable of working together for any longer than a short time, before falling into factions and destroying each other. Like Satan himself, Isaiah 14:12-17, Ezekiel 28:1-10, these people consider themselves way above the intelligence of all around them, superior in all ways to their rivals, and so each considers himself the only one capable of rulership, and yet all are stupid and fatally flawed in their character and thinking processes. They are all baffled by their failure when they fall into hell. Isaiah 14:5-11, 48:18-22.

APPLICATION

1 Understand satanic logic believer, and thereby spot the servants of the enemy in politics and business, for their self centred, short term gain thinking will give them away every time. These are people who will create chaos to maximize their "return" without any thought for the good of society as a whole, or any other living creature. Just see their "fruit" and correctly label them, and so separate yourself from them and their organizations.

2. Be a person who brings peace to your fellow man through the Gospel message. The only peace in this world is achieved through the Gospel's acceptance, not by politics or financial manipulation of economies. Expect to see more such satanic manipulation as we draw nearer the end, but do not despair at the power of the game players, simply seek the Lord's task for you and play your part in His Plan, and you will be a blessing to some.

Psalm 35:21

"Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me, *[and]* said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen *[it]*."

REFLECTION

David has used this phrase before. In Psalm 22:7 the enemies of God "shoot out their lip", which means they opened their mouths in scornful words. In Psalm 22:13 their mouths "gaped open" as if to devour. Here he is emphasizing the verbal insults of these people towards him. They are pouring scorn, derision and hatred out of their mouths, which are like a tap that pours our sewerage. They cannot kill him, for they presently lack the power and authority to do that, but they indicate by the stream of evil words that this is their desire.

Aha, aha, is used in Psalm 40:15 and Psalm 70:3, and it is always an indication of the joy that evil people take in the misfortune or mistakes of others who they despise. They hate and despise David and they take joy in his hurt. Expect no mercy or sympathy from the devil's people, for they have no feelings towards others except contempt.

Brian Huggett notes in his commentary on this verse that Keil and Delitzsch say that '**Aha**' - *he'ach* is a cry of joy, and more especially of malignant joy at another's hurt, as in Ezekiel 25:3: -

*"And say unto the Ammonites, Hear the word of the Lord GOD; Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou saidst, **Aha**, against my sanctuary, when it was profaned; and against the land of Israel, when it was desolate; and against the house of Judah, when they went into captivity"* etc.

APPLICATION

1. Do not expect anything other than contempt from satanically influenced people. All your time spent upon good logic and careful argument and politically correct formulations of your viewpoint is time wasted! These people just hate you, so stop trying to win them with logic, for unless the Holy Spirit flattens them to the road like Saul on the Damascus Road they will do nothing but despise you.

Psalm 35:22

"[This] thou hast seen, O LORD: keep not silence: O Lord, be not far from me."

REFLECTION

David affirms the important truth to reflect upon when under vicious satanic attack from evil people; God has seen and heard all their deeds and will act in his time, in accordance with his plan. Nothing is hidden from the Lord. The challenge to the believer is to quietly and powerfully orient themselves to the plan of God and work within it, and by prayer seek the intervention of the Lord in power. Psalm 28:1, 39:12, 50:21.

David has two specific requests, each of which he knows will be answered. Firstly he seeks the Lord assurance of action by the Word of the Lord to him. He seeks the Lord's clear answer to his request for help. David knows God hears and sees all, but in his depressed state under great pressure he seeks re-assurance. It is bone fide to ask for this, for it is simply a reflection of our humanity and our need for help.

David's second request is that the Lord stay close by and give him that inner evidence, and even external evidence, of his presence with him. Psalm 10:1, 22:11, 38:21, 71:12. It is one thing to know that God is with us academically but quite another to feel his presence and walk in it. David wants a passionate faith, one that is powerful and real enough to deal with the very real hatred of the satanic people. Our faith must be more real than their faith in their master! James 2:18-20.

Isaiah 66:1-2

"1 Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?"

2 For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, says the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at my word."

APPLICATION

1. God sees, and God hears the verbal attacks upon us. In our prayers let us reflect upon this truth as we speak with the Lord about the enemy. Let us speak to the one who hears, who sees, and who delights in delivering his people from evil people and plans.

2. Let us remember how close the Lord is and draw near to Him in prayer and bible study. Let us fellowship deeply with the Lord through each and every day. The days when we wander off and away from the path are the days of danger.

DOCTRINE

GOD: FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

Psalm 35:23-24

“Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment, [even] unto my cause, my God and my Lord. Judge me, O LORD my God, according to thy righteousness; and let them not rejoice over me.”

REFLECTION

Asking God to “stir himself” appears to our eyes and ears very blasphemous, but the Lord’s verdict upon David is clear and he is not guilty of that sin. David is entitled to be this passionate in his appeal to the Lord, and that means so are we under similar pressure. It is not wrong to passionately plead with the Lord or action we don’t see happening. We can recognize that things are in the Lord’s hands and yet still feel deep panic and anxiety and we need to pour this out to the Lord and seek his action. Psalm 7:6, 44:23, 80:2, Isaiah 51:9.

David recognizes that the Lord is his God and he wants the Lord to judge fully and finally these evil men and also to judge him and deal with any unrighteousness within David. It is according to the standard of the righteousness of God that David desires judgement, not according to any limited human viewpoint. He desires vindication before God, and that the rejoicing of evil might be as short as possible, and the defeat total. We may be called to suffering in this world as we follow the Lord Jesus, but we commit ourselves for keeping on the journey to his character and his plan for our life, and for his glory through the successful completion of that plan. 1 Peter 2:21-24.

Psalm 18:20-24

“20 The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.

21 For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God.

22 For all his judgments were before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me.

23 I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity.

24 Therefore hath the LORD recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his eyesight.

25 With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright;”

APPLICATION

1. Do not be afraid of passion in your appeals to the Lord believer, for the Lord hears and understands. If you feel desperate and seek the Lord’s immediate action say so to the Lord, for he seeks our honesty and desire fellowship, and fellowship means all things are shared together, even our panic!

2. It is the Lord’s Plan and his power that will keep us as we commit to advancing in that plan. Let us commit ourselves 100% to the Plan of God and so rest upon the power of God to fulfil the plan.

Psalm 35:25

“Let them not say in their hearts, Ah, so would we have it: let them not say, We have swallowed him up.”

REFLECTION

As we age and advance towards our death we need to know that the Lord’s will is being worked out and his plan fulfilled in and through our life work. We do not want any victory for the satanic side at all. We do not want to do any action that will give Satan the smallest chance of gloating over us. David wants to be such a witness to the grace, mercy and power of God that none can even hint at satanic victory over him. David is specific in his prayer and expecting the Lord to answer this as he has before.

Psalm 27:11-14

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

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.

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

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

APPLICATION

1. David does not want the enemy to have open victory over him, but he also wants them denied the chance to even gloat in their hearts over him. He is determined that the Lord will be honoured in everything he says and does.

2. Let us live in such a way as to bring total honour to the Lord in all we do and say, and give the enemy no occasion against us to mock our Saviour and Lord. Daniel 6:4-5, 1 Timothy 5:14.

Psalm 35:26

“Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together that rejoice at mine hurt: let them be clothed with shame and dishonour that magnify [*themselves*] against me.”

REFLECTION

Let the Lord arise and his enemies be scattered. Psalm 68:1. The enemies of the Cross seek the scattering of God's people and the shame of God's servants, but we seek their shame and embarrassment as they confront their evils. We do not seek this to gloat over them, but that they might be so ashamed that they bow their knees before the Lord and are saved. Psalm 71:1, 2 Peter 3:9.

Satanic logic is “confusion”, for all he does is built upon lies and deceit, and so asking for the Lord to bring their counsels to confusion is very appropriate and is the normal way the Lord judges satanic groups. Satan is the master of confusion, whereas the Holy Spirit is the lord of order and decorum. Where chaos reigns so does the enemy, and where there is order, legitimate authority being exercised, and the fruit of the Holy Spirit manifested, then you know the Lord is on the throne in that place. 1 Corinthians 14:33, James 3:16.

APPLICATION

1. Let the enemies of the truth we preach be confused to the point of collapse, and so let them fall into the arms of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. Let Satan's work be manifest to all in its confused chaos, and let the purity, decency, and dignity of the words of Christ be seen by all as we preach them clearly.
2. God brings the enemy to confusion by the power of the Holy Spirit, not by any logic of ours. Do not debate the enemies of the Cross, unless you are very clear of the Call of the Lord upon your life to do that, but simply preach and live the truth that will set the enemy free from their slavery to Satan. Focus upon the Lord's path through evil, never your own. Prayer is the power that leads to deliverance. “Pray more, believe more, and so receive more”, just as Spurgeon said with his last breath.

Psalm 35:27

“Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Let the LORD be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.”

REFLECTION

David makes it clear in this verse that he sees support for himself and the path the Lord has called him to walk, as support for the Lord. There is no arrogance in this identification for he is indeed the Lord's shepherd of the sheep of Israel and he has been called to lead this nation before God. Support for David is indeed support for the Lord's plan and opposition to David is opposition to the Lord.

Remember just how badly David had sinned with Bathsheba and Uriah, and how evil he had been in his deception and disgraceful behaviour. Many had turned away from him in disgust at his actions, including his old counsellors who had known and loved him for decades. David had been 100% wrong, and he was without any excuse for the evil of his actions, and when he was confronted he repented at Nathan's feet and at the tabernacle door. 2 Samuel 12:1-23, Psalm 51:1ff, 103:10-17.

David had been gross in his sin and had brought disgrace to the name of the Lord by his actions, and yet through confession, by God's grace and mercy, he was forgiven and restored. Many could not forgive him as God had done, but that was the challenge to all the people of his land; to see their king as God saw him, rather than in self righteousness and judgment. Romans 8:1-2, 12:1-2. David had dedicated himself to rebuilding his spiritual life after his great sin, but the depression that dogs his steps thereafter and the terrible divine discipline that flowed from his great evil overwhelmed the commitment of many to their king.

All who delight in David's path as a believer delight in the plan of God, and David seeks their blessing in that commitment. Let us see that our genuine leaders in the church are the Lord's anointed, and if they act selfishly and foolishly at times, let us be careful of raising rebellion, but rather lift them up by encouragement and support. Let us treat our brethren and our leadership as God does and restore all to function.

Now there are certain sins that disqualify a pastor-teacher today, which David was not disqualified by, 1 Timothy 3:2-7, but we are still to restore all who fall into whatever sins to fellowship, even if they are removed from an office. Let us not allow any self-righteousness to destroy a ministry, and even where a man's actions bar him from future leadership let us still treat him as a beloved brother, no matter the embarrassment we feel towards his past sins.

APPLICATION

1. Let us be challenged in our attitudes to our flawed and at times sinful leadership. Good pastors can act with anger, with impatience, with frustration, and with selfish concerns rather than the Lord's, but they must be supported and backed up by prayer at all times, and wise and godly counsel at other times. Let us take seriously the command of Galatians 6:1, and if we consider ourselves spiritual, let us restore those who have fallen into any self centeredness in actions. Let us not "put the boot into our brethren", but lift them up after confession and accept them as God does.

2. Let us remember that leadership is to be honoured and backed up before the Lord, not undermined and rebelled against. It is a serious thing to lift your hand against the Lord's anointed in any situation, and if a pastor-teacher is to be removed from office it must be for a gross violation of moral standards that eliminate his witness to the pagan community alone. 1 Timothy 3:2-7. Let us not be people who rebel against ministers and raise factions in churches, but support the Lord's anointed and strengthen their hands by good and godly counsel and powerful prayer.

DOCTRINE

CHRISTIAN LIFE: PROSPERITY OF THE CHURCH AGE BELIEVER

Psalm 35:28

"And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness [and] of thy praise all the day long."

REFLECTION

What is the subject of our tongue as we advance through this life? Do we magnify the Lord and speak of his righteousness or do we magnify our own concerns and amplify our own so called "great deeds"? We must be careful of arrogance and self importance, for the Lord can raise up better servants from the rocks of the fields than us. Matthew 3:9, Luke 3:8.

Let us make sure that our words reflect the spiritual reality of our lives, and that the spiritual reality is the power of God seen through the weakness of man. Let us be sure that any weakness in the area of self importance is thoroughly confronted and eliminated, for it must be in the power of God alone that we move forward.

Psalm 71:20-24

"20 Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth.

21 Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.

22 I will also praise thee with the psaltery, even thy truth, O my God: unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel.

23 My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee; and my soul, which thou hast redeemed.

24 My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long: for they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt."

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

"7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

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. Let us pray, "Lord, give us the wisdom to see things from your perspective not man's viewpoint. Lord let us see our task, not our abilities, and let us rest in the power of the Holy Spirit, not the power of man."

2. Let us give thanks for his grace in which we stand every day long. Let us give thanks that his power is made perfect in our weakness, and that we are to be strong in the Lord, not ever in ourselves.

DOCTRINE

HOLINESS - OF GOD

Psalm 36

To the chief Musician, [A Psalm] of David the servant of the LORD.

(The Wickedness of Evil men – Contrasted to the Steadfast Love of God For Us)

Keil and Delitzsch provide an alternative description of the contents of this psalm as being:

“The Curse of Alienation from God, and the Blessing of Fellowship with Him”

In Psalm 18:1, 19:11-13, 27:9, 31:16, 35:27, 68:17, David delights again and again in the phrase “**the servant of the LORD**”. This title became the one he was known by in later Israel and it is a great title for a great king, for he mentored the concept that our Lord would later expand upon of “Servant leadership”. Paul delighted in the title “**the bond slave of Christ**” for the same reason as David delights in a similar title. These great leaders delighted in the service of the Lord and sought no other lasting joy than the delight of the Lord in their work.

Leadership in the Lord’s work is to be servant focused, not “lordship” focused. We magnify our Lord and Saviour, we do not magnify the “dignity of the clergy”. We have no dignity outside the dignity of the Lord, and we seek no other glory than the glory of the Lord. As the Lord’s servants we seek his provision, his path, his work, and his glory through our walk with him. Matthew 6:31-34, 20:25-28. Let us read these passages as we enter this Psalm, for they sum up the essential mental attitude of biblical leaders like David. They also remind us that leadership pressures are the Lord’s to handle, and that those who assault and abuse us, are in effect abusing our Lord, for all assaults against a servant are indeed against his master!

Matthew 6:31-34

*31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?
32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.*

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”

Matthew 20:25-28

25 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.

26 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:

28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Psalm 36:1

“The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, [that there is] no fear of God before his eyes.”

REFLECTION

The sinful attitudes and actions of the unbelievers around David teaches him about their heart attitude. By their fruit he identifies their “family relationship” with the enemy of God. We are ordered by the Lord Jesus to be “fruit inspectors”. Matthew 7:13-23. We are given the lists of “fruit” of the life of men, and these are to be used when we are trying to identify the difference between a potential friend or foe in our spiritual walk. Galatians 5:16-24, Ephesians 5:1-7.

Evil men have rejected the Lord as their sovereign and have identified us as their enemies because of our attitude to the Lord our God. Let the Holy Spirit minister within your heart and show you the importance of affirming the truth about the enemy, lest they “rent space in your head”. If you do not correctly identify the fruit of the Spirit in your brethren, and distinguish genuine believers from the fakes, you will end up being deceived by fakes and so be led astray by them. Once you see that there is no “fear of the Lord” in them, you can mark them, and separate yourself from them.

APPLICATION

1. Let us be thorough “fruit inspectors” identifying the evil men quickly and keeping them at arms length lest they slip their satanic daggers into us. Let us call the enemy for what they are truly and so keep ourselves safe from evil, and by correctly labeling evil people as such, keep the Lord’s people safe.

2. Let us expect the enemy to have no fear of the Lord in their eyes. They are determined enemies of the truth and we need to be absolute in our identification of them and opposition to them.

Psalm 36:2

“For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful.”

REFLECTION

David analyzes the mental attitude of the evil man with the precision of the experienced psychologist and student of human nature that he is. Let us see in men like David better mentors for Human Resource Management than most professors, for David has insights through the Holy Spirit's work within him that make his words more valuable than most pagan text books. We have excellent analysis here of the mental attitude of the evil man who has no "fear/respect of the Lord".

These people are self deceived in their opinion of themselves. Satanic deception begins by deceiving yourself about your own abilities. All of Satan's leaders through the years have ended up in disgrace and shame, for they over-estimated their intelligence and ignored basic facts. Keep remembering Adolf Hitler, for he is the greatest satanic man of recent centuries. He is a case study in the working out of this verse. He flattered himself in his own eyes, and believed that he would build his "Third Reich" to last forever, but in his arrogance he ignored all the basic facts that would defeat him in the end.

Satanic logic is flawed at its base line because it turns away from the person, plan and power of God, and so stands against the flow of history. Those who stand against the one who holds the universe in his hands can only fail in their puny designs! Psalm 2:1-5.

Until their evil plans are unmasked they can pretend they are "good" people, but as the facts emerge over time they are exposed for what they are. They can maintain their good reputation for a time only, but evil will always burst out for all to see eventually and it is then that they are exposed and their deeds seen to be hateful in the eyes of all. All men must know that their sins will "find them out", Numbers 32:23, and that their evils will be exposed for all to see. Some may escape total exposure in this life, but there is no-where to find at the Great White Throne Judgment. Revelation 20:10-15.

APPLICATION

1. All the works of men will be known and see by all one day. Do not fret at evil men who live in luxury and who abuse the weak, for they will be exposed for what they are in the end. Leave justice in the hands of the one who pays back all evil.
2. Evil always rots the soul and will create misery over time; it is only ever time that is the issue, never justice. Leave these people in the Lord's hands, but call them out for what they are as their fruit becomes visible.

Psalm 36:3

“The words of his mouth [are] iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise, [and] to do good.”

REFLECTION

When people adopt a path of deceit and evil actions they make more choices than they realize at the time. They choose to depart from the path of blessing in this life and the next, and they choose to stand on the unstable ground of human works rather than God's work for them. There is no wisdom on that path, for satanic self centeredness does not lead to wisdom, only further deception. Humility alone leads to wisdom.

Matthew 7:24-27

“24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.”

APPLICATION

1. Let us warn those who walk after the counsel of their own hearts, that their chosen path has no joy nor lasting benefit in it. Let us tell the truth about where blessing lies, and it lies in the paths of righteousness only.
2. Do not envy the beach houses of the rich on unstable sand, for the winds will rise and the storms will come and all they have built to their own egos will be swept away.

DOCTRINE

GOOD WORKS – ORIGINALLY TITLED WORKS

Psalm 36:4

“He deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way *[that is]* not good; he abhorreth not evil.”

REFLECTION

The evil people are baffling to those who walk in the Holy Spirit, for we are focused upon blessing others and praising the Lord’s name, and when we lie upon our bed it is to rest or cuddle our loved one, but not them. Evil men and women cannot stop from their evils plots and plans, and even when they should be resting and recharging their batteries they are plotting and planning evil. Matthew 7:13-27.

They can’t help themselves but plot evil, and there is to be no sympathy for them, for they have chosen this path. They make plans to achieve evil goals and they have no thought of the impact of their plans on others; they see only themselves and their own rewards. They establish themselves in paths that are “not good”, and by their fruit they are known. They do not hate, despise and cast away evil, rather they embrace it and seek after it with passion.

APPLICATION

1. When you see people obsessed by planning and plotting evil, and when you notice they have no concern for moral goodness then you can be sure that they are on evil’s side.
2. Those who do not hate evil are servants of the enemy, even if they have not committed themselves consciously to him. Let us be fruit inspectors of these things, for then alone we are safe in our assessments.

DOCTRINE

EVIL

Psalm 36:5

“Thy mercy, O LORD, *[is]* in the heavens; *[and]* thy faithfulness *[reacheth]* unto the clouds.”

REFLECTION

When we consider the actions and thinking of evil people there is great danger in becoming preoccupied with their thinking rather than the reality of the majesty and power of the Lord. We think upon the enemies of the truth only so as to identify their evil ways and protect ourselves from them by spotting them clearly and avoiding their paths totally. We stand in humility before the Lord and give thanks that he does not deal with us as evil men do! Psalm 103:10-18.

Having identified the enemy we avoid them and we do not allow them to “rent space in our head” by obsessive thinking upon them. Our focus is to be upon the Lord not our enemies. Our enemies are the Lord’s enemies and so we identify them and pass them over to Him for judgment, and then we spend no more of our limited and so valuable time obsessing about them.

The mercy of the Lord is to be our focus, for we stand in his mercy and grace alone. We live and move forward into the work he has called us to in his faithfulness alone. It is God’s faithfulness to us, not ours to him that gives us hope, for the Lord alone strengthens us and enables us to reach the objectives he has for us. 2 Timothy 2:12-14.

Isaiah 55:6-11

“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, says 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.

10 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returns not thither, but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:

11 So shall my word be that goes forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”

Lamentations 3:19-26

“19 Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall.

20 My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me.

21 This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope.

22 It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.

*23 They are new every morning: **great is thy faithfulness.***

24 The LORD is my portion, says my soul; therefore will I hope in him.

25 The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeks him.

26 It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD.”

APPLICATION

1. Let us praise the Lord for his mercy towards us and his faithfulness that is renewed every morning. 2 Corinthians 4:16.
2. Great is the faithfulness of the Lord. Let us give thanks to Him for his grace and mercy every day and rejoice in his strength given to us afresh in the Holy Spirit's filling every morning.

DOCTRINES

GOD: ELECTION AND PREDESTINATION

GOD: FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

CHRISTIAN LIFE: ETERNAL SECURITY

CHRISTIAN LIFE: ETERNAL SECURITY - HEBREWS CHAPTER 6

Psalm 36:6

“Thy righteousness [is] like the great mountains; thy judgments [are] a great deep: O LORD, thou preservest man and beast.”

REFLECTION

When we pray we ought always to begin with prayer that simply praises the Lord for who He is rather than get into our “prayer lists”, and we see David set the example for us here. Let us begin our prayer time with quiet reflection upon the righteousness of the Lord our God and the wonder of his mighty power and plan. We are part of something eternal and overwhelming in its power and majesty, and so let us begin our prayer time every day with thinking that stabilizes us in the Lord.

God's plan is like a mighty mountain, and we are built upon that great rock. God's judgments and logic is deeper than our thinking, as we saw above in Isaiah 55. The Lord's creative power and purposes keep mankind and the animal kingdom safe, and we will be kept until the end. Matthew 28:18-20. We are to have no anxiety about the Lord's ability to keep the earth, and mankind until his return. We have the Lord's words upon this, and when the Lord Jesus returns

he will return to a blasted earth after the Great Tribulation period, but an earth that he can redeem and restore to its pre-flood beauty and productivity. Revelation 20:1-9.

APPLICATION

1. Let us praise the Lord for who he is and how stable and powerful his character is. Let us rest upon the Lord's character and rejoice in his attributes. We live and move and have our being in the stability that God alone can give, and he gives it to us and to this fallen earth. Jesus is coming to rule over this earth, and he will not return to a radioactive potato chip spinning in a nuclear sunset, but to the earth as the habitation of mankind.

2. God's judgments are past knowing, but we are in his hands and we are safe within his hands. This universe will pass away and in God's good time it will be replaced, but that is at least 1007 years away, and until the day the earth is folded up we can relax upon its surface in the hands of the Lord as we walk focused only on fulfilling his plan for our life.

Psalm 36:7

“How excellent [is] thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.”

REFLECTION

How absolutely excellent is the loving kindness of God towards us as his children. Judgment is always God's strange work, Isaiah 28:20, and mercy and love his constantly desired work. Let us sing of and stabilize our minds daily in the reality of his loving kindness. We can start to become obsessed with the dangers we face and the malice of the enemy, whereas the Lord desires for us to be stabilized in his constant and abiding love for us. We can trust Him as the eagle chicks trust the cover of the eagle's wings to keep them from the fierce sun in summer. Psalm 17:8, 57:1, 63:7, 91:4.

1 John 4:10-19

*10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.
 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.
 12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwells in us, and his love is perfected in us.
 13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.
 14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.
 15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God.
 16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him.
 17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.
 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear: because fear hath torment. He that fears is not made perfect in love.
 19 We love him, because he first loved us.”*

APPLICATION

1. Let us draw ourselves closer to the Lord our God and shelter under his wings, trusting in his protection not the protection of men and the plans and schemes of men.

2. God's care and protection over us is characterized by loving kindness, and when we see anything else it is to be taken to his throne of grace, for he gives only loving kindness and all else is of the enemy. Let us affirm the character of God and stabilize our minds and emotion in his grace and love.

Psalm 36:8

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

REFLECTION

Believers are under the “much more” care of the Lord. The logic of grace is to be remembered every day, and that logic states clearly, if the Lord did so much to save us while we were sinners and his enemies, will he do less for us now that

we are his friends? There is no hesitancy in blessing his children on the part of the Lord. We are not battering down the reluctance of the Lord in blessing, but catching hold of his benevolence. He desires to bless us every day.

Romans 5:8-11

“8 But God commends 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.”

Isaiah 55:1-3

“1 Ho, every one that thirsts, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

2 Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfies not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

3 Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.”

APPLICATION

1. God will deliver to us all the “fatness” of blessing that we require to complete our service for the Lord. If we lack anything let us bring that before the Lord, for he will abundantly provide so that we can advance in his work.

2. Let us drink the rivers of pleasure from the deep treasures of his Holy Word. Let us drink deeply of the spring of eternal life that the Lord provides for us through the “washing of the water of the Word”. Ephesians 5:26, Titus 3:5.

Psalm 36:9

“For with thee [is] the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.”

REFLECTION

The Word of the Lord is light to our path and the fountain of life to our spirit. Jesus captures both these concepts in his teaching as John identifies in his words during the last Feast Of Tabernacles he attends before the Cross the next year. John 7:37-39, 8:12. The Lord is our deep fountain of blessing and truth and we are to draw deeply from the riches of his grace towards us. Isaiah 12:1-3, Jeremiah 2:13.

John 7:37-39, 8:12

“37 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.”

APPLICATION

1. Let us draw deeply from the wells of salvation, drawing up doctrinal strength every day we live and feasting upon the Word of Life every moment we have breath.

2. Let us walk in the light of God’s Word each and every day, and rejoice in the light he gives us and walk with confidence and focused power in the paths of service.

DOCTRINE

LIGHT

Psalm 36:10

“O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart.”

REFLECTION

Many do not make this their prayer for they take it for granted, but that is why David's psalms are so helpful to us. The Lord delights in being asked to do things he does by nature, and so we are encouraged by David to request these things daily. The Lord delights in doing all that is in accordance with his nature, and that means he deals with us graciously, in loving kindness and in mercy and love, and so we ask for these things in confidence and expect to see them abundantly poured upon us daily. Psalm 103:13-17, John 15:9-10.

Let us seek the loving kindness of God over all our dealings. Let us look for manifestations of his righteousness in all aspects of our life and work, and seek to uphold and praise the Lord's righteous dealings in all service we render to the Lord. The challenge is always to walk in righteousness ourselves and to live in ways that uphold the Lord's standards in all our work. Ephesians 5:2-8, 1 Thessalonians 2:12, 4:1, 1 John 1:6-7.

APPLICATION

1. Let us continue walking in the filling of the Holy Spirit each and every day and so walk in the fruit of the Spirit; loving kindness, mercy and grace towards all around us.
2. Let us recognize in all we do and say that we are responsible to keep the holy standards of God.

Psalm 36:11

“Let not the foot of pride come against me, and let not the hand of the wicked remove me.”

REFLECTION

Firstly we ask for the keeping power of God to hold us back from any evil thoughts ourselves, and then we seek his protection from the actions of evil men. We are always in more danger of tripping ourselves up than being tripped up by evil men. Our old sin nature is always more of a danger than evil men. Let us join David and guard ourselves against any thinking associated with pride and arrogance. Having guarded ourselves from the sins of pride, let us then commit our safety to the Lord from the malice of the enemy. God protects his people. Romans 8:28-39.

Psalm 17:11-15

“11 They have now compassed us in our steps: they have set their eyes bowing down to the earth;

12 Like as a lion that is greedy of his prey, and as it were a young lion lurking in secret places.

13 Arise, O LORD, disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword:

14 From men which are thy hand, O LORD, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes.

15 As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness”

APPLICATION

1. Let us guard ourselves against any Old Sin Nature based pride and defeat all temptation to sinful thought by confession of sin.
2. Let us then commit our path to the Lord and seek his defeat of the enemies we may meet on the way.

DOCTRINE

GOD: COMFORT FOR BELIEVERS

Psalm 36:12

“There are the workers of iniquity fallen: they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise.”

REFLECTION

In the path of the Lord for our life the enemy will always be defeated thoroughly. There is no chance of victory for the enemies of the Cross on the path that is covered by his precious blood. We are called to walk his path and as we do so we have his hand upon us and his power around us. No harm can come to us while we serve the Lord in the Holy Spirit's power.

All the workers of iniquity will be defeated by the power of the Holy Spirit on the path the Lord has called us to walk. There is no danger to us when we walk with Jesus in the Holy Spirit's indwelling power. The enemy will not rise again, but though we are cast down again and again we will rise in his power and love as we seek and receive his power to stand and serve again. We are under his grace and under grace there is always a path through the fires that sweep through this life, a path that leads to glory. Romans 8:28-39.

APPLICATION

1. The enemy will be cast down, but we will be lifted up. Deuteronomy 33:27.

DOCTRINE

SALVATION: IMPUTATION

Bibliography:

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