



# A Great While Before Day

VOLUME X

PART TWO:

July 1–December 31

A New Devotional from  
DON & PEARL ANDERSON

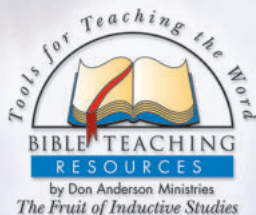
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# ***A GREAT WHILE BEFORE DAY***

**Volume X (July - December)**  
***Daily Devotional***

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Scripture quotations are noted within the text.

# Bible Teaching Resources

## by Don Anderson Ministries

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# A GREAT WHILE BEFORE DAY

**G**he gospel writer Mark records that Jesus “rising up a great while before day... went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.” (1:35 KJV) Whenever and wherever you spend your time with the Father each day, we hope that these devotional verses and thoughts will be encouraging. Unless otherwise noted, New Testament verses are taken from the New American Standard Bible and Old Testament verses are taken from the New International Version.

## **July 1 — Psalms 42 & 43: The Psalms of Depression, Dejection, Despair, Desperation, and Disappointment (Ps. 42:1 )**

*Psalm 42:1: “As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God.”*

John the Baptist, Jeremiah, Job, and Elijah all fell prey to this plague of the soul.

Oswald Chambers said: “When a man gets to despair he knows that all his thinking will never get him out. He will only get out by the sheer creative effort of God. Consequently he is in the right attitude to receive from God that which he cannot gain for himself.”

David is late in life when he writes these psalms. He is 65 years of age with 5 years left. His family has been fractured. He is now an unemployed king because Absalom has stolen the kingdom. He is a man who has lost his dream. On top of all that, his third-born son is trying to kill him. He has fled to Mahanaim, which is north and east of Jerusalem. He writes the psalms while at Mahanaim.

**Verse 1:** “As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God.”

Our psalm opens with the psalmist in prayer. As a deer that is hunted, persecuted, chased and threatened longs for streams of water to slake its thirst, so David describes himself in a similar situation: “My weary, persecuted soul longs for thee, O God.” You can sense a tinge of desperation.

Psalm 143:6: “I spread out my hands to you; my soul thirsts for you like a parched land. Selah” (NIV).

This is the deepest possible longing for God when the relationship has been disturbed. Jesus said: “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled.” Pant means in a state of exhaustion.



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Our priorities are made plain in the midst of a loss. You don't find David complaining over the loss of the throne. It's his relationship with the Lord that is his primary concern.

What a man cries for when he has lost everything will tell you where his heart is.

Can you say with the psalmist as you begin this new day: "My heart truly cries for you and only for you, O Lord my God"?

How about joining me in a verse of "**I Need Jesus**": *"I need Jesus, my need I now confess; No friend like Him in times of deep distress; I need Jesus, the need I gladly own; Tho' some may bear their load alone, Yet I need Jesus. I need Jesus, I need Jesus, I need Jesus ev'ry day; Need Him in the sunshine hour, Need Him when the storm-clouds low'r; Ev'ry day along my way, Yes, I need Jesus."*

## **July 2 — David is Thirsty (Ps. 42:2)**

**Psalm 42:2:** *"My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?"*

**Verse 2:** "My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?"

In this verse David is talking to himself. I know you probably think this is strange but from the very moment of consciousness in the morning until we go to bed at night, we are listening to our inner-voice speak. David is now speaking to himself. One of the secrets of curing ourselves of spiritual depression is not only to talk to the Lord, but to talk to ourselves.

Lloyd-Jones in his book *Spiritual Depression* says: "I say that we must talk to ourselves instead of allowing 'ourselves' to talk to us!...Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself?" (20)

Yesterday in verse 1 we learned that David's soul pants for the Lord. Now here in verse 2, his soul thirsts for the Lord.

John 7:37, 38: "Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, "From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water"' (NASB).

In the last part of the verse we are meditating on this morning, we have a question: "When can I go and meet with God?"

David is a displaced king north in Mahanaim. He is longing to be back in the presence of the Lord. He is saying, "How long is it going to be before I can know the joy of being in the center of Your presence and the sweetness of Your fellowship?"

Hudson Taylor said: "Lord Jesus, make Thyself to me a living bright reality...more dear, more intimately nigh than e'en the sweetest earthly tie."

David also tells us in our verse that his thirst is for the living God. That is the God who is intimately involved in our trouble, our danger, in our valley of

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death. He is alive, aware, and available.

Join me in singing the chorus of that great old hymn, **“Fill My Cup Lord!”**: *“Fill my cup, Lord, I lift it up, Lord! Come and quench this thirsting of my soul; Bread of Heaven, feed me till I want no more, Fill my cup, fill it up and make me whole!”*

I also find myself facing this day with the words of Jimmy Dean upon my lips: “Lord, I’m drinking from my saucer ‘cause my cup has overflowed!”

### **July 3 — Little Is Much When God Is In It (Pearl)**

Jesus saw a great crowd climbing the hill looking for Him. He turned to Philip to find enough bread to feed the multitude. Andrew, one of the disciples found a young boy with five loaves of bread and two fish. Jesus turned this small lunch into enough to feed several thousand people.

Jesus is famous for taking small things and unknown people to do mighty acts of service to lead literally millions of sinners to salvation. Consider this: Edward Kimball, a Sunday school teacher in Boston, decided to visit a young man in his class to be sure he was a Christian. That day he led that man, Dwight

L. Moody, to the Lord.

Moody, the Billy Graham of the 19th century, had a major impact on Wilbur Chapman. Chapman, a prominent evangelist, recruited Billy Sunday to join in his evangelistic campaigns. In turn, Sunday launched a national ministry that had great results in cities like Charlotte, North Carolina. An organization that started as a result of Sunday’s revival invited evangelist Mordecai Ham to Charlotte. In one of those meetings, Billy Graham received Christ as his Savior and later became the most prominent evangelist of our time.

When you think you don’t have much to offer, remember Sunday school teacher Edward Kimball, who spent a Saturday afternoon reaching out to someone in his class. God has a special way of using routine faithfulness in the “small things” to accomplish great things! (Joe Stowell, *Our Daily Bread*, Tuesday, March 8, 2011)

**Prayer:** Father, encourage and bless the teacher who is faithful to pray for and teach a group of rowdy young people; or a class of senior citizens who have used up most of their usefulness but are still hanging in there until they step into Your presence. We know with You all things are possible. Amen.

“Little is a lot when the Lord is in it” (Eph. 3:20 NASB).

### **July 4 — David in Deep Grief (Ps. 42:3) Psalm 42:3:**

*“My tears have been my food day and night, while men say to me all day long, ‘Where is your God?’”*

Mary Beth Chapman in her book *Choosing to See: A Journey of Struggle and*

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*Hope* describes the process and pain that comes with the loss of a child. Her husband Steven wrote this song “With Hope”: *“This is not at all how / We thought it was supposed to be / We had so many plans for you / We had so many dreams / And now you’ve gone away / And left us with the memories of your smile / And nothing we can say / And nothing we can do / Can take away the pain / The pain of losing you, ...”* (74)

**Verse 3:** “My tears have been my food day and night, while men say to me all day long, ‘Where is your God?’”

David is describing for us his internal and external grief in verse 3. Internally, his emotions have been so upset that his tears have been his “food day and night.” He is describing a situation as being so heavy that he does not even feel like eating. And all he has been able to do is weep day and night over his circumstances. This one has really hurt David. Its missiles from the family that can really put you down.

I am reminded of that great hymn “For Those Tears I Died”: *“You said You’d come and share all my sorrows. You said You’d be there for all my tomorrows. I came so close to sending You away, But just like You promised You came there to stay, I just had to pray. Jesus said, ‘Come to the water, stand by My side, I know you are thirsty, You won’t be denied. I felt ev’ry teardrop when in darkness you cried, And I strove to remind you That for those tears I died.’”*

Externally the verse concludes with a question: “...while men say to me all day long, ‘Where is your God?’” If your God is a God of love and He is so great, why doesn’t He do something? Where is He in these difficult times? Why does He let you continue to suffer?

Spurgeon says: “Many people are born crying, live complaining, and die disappointed.”

David’s experience reminds us of Jonathan Edwards’ own words from a letter written a week after his dismissal from his pulpit: *“I have nothing visible to depend upon for my future usefulness, or the subsistence of my numerous family. But I hope we have an all-sufficient, faithful, covenant God, to depend upon. I desire that I may ever submit to him, walk humbly before him, and put my trust wholly in him. I desire, dear Sir, your prayers for us, under our present circumstances.”*

Meditate with me for a moment on Revelation 7:17: “for the Lamb in the center of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them to springs of the water of life; and God shall wipe every tear from their eyes” (NASB).

Let’s close our meditation today by listening to Steven Curtis Chapman sing the second verse of his song “**With Hope**”: *“And never have I known / Anything so hard to understand / And never have I questioned more / The wisdom of God’s plan / But through the cloud of tears / I see the Father smile and say well done / And I imagine you / Where you wanted most to be / Seeing all your dreams come true / ‘Cause now you’re home / And now you’re free.”*



July 4th is all about freedom.

## July 5 — Precious Memories (Ps. 42:4)

**Psalm 42:4:** *“These things I remember as I pour out my soul: how I used to go with the multitude, leading the procession to the house of God, with shouts of joy and thanksgiving among the festive throng.”*

**Verse 4:** “These things I remember as I pour out my soul: how I used to go with the multitude, leading the procession to the house of God, with shouts of joy and thanksgiving among the festive throng.”

Here in our verse for today he is recalling the goodness of God in the past.

He is recalling the happy occasion when he led the nation Israel in the bringing up of the Ark of the Covenant to the city of Jerusalem.

It was probably an occasion of new tears, when he remembered these former joys. But it is only on a watery cloud that the Father paints the rainbows.

David decides to do 2 things: (1) to remember the good times of the past and (2) to pour out his soul.

There are 3 things that are called to remembrance here in verse 4: (1) “how I used to go with the multitude”; (2) “leading the procession to the house of God”; and (3) “with shouts of joy and thanksgiving among the festive throng.”

As we try to summarize David’s condition in verse 4, we could use the following words: there’s a dryness, there’s bewilderment, there’s despairing, and he is confused.

There are 3 key words that stand out that are the key to triumph: (1) he pants for the Lord in verse 1; (2) he thirsts for the Lord in verse 2; and (3) he pours out his soul to the Lord in verse 4.

The key to triumph in difficulty is to keep your focus on the Lord.

Hebrews 12:2: “fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (NASB).

Let’s ask ourselves 3 key questions in view of what David has shared with us: (1) Am I panting after God? (2) Am I thirsty for the living God? and (3) Am I pouring out my soul to the Lord in prayer?

I find myself singing a verse of “**Precious Memories**”: *“Precious mem’ries, unseen angels, Sent from somewhere to my soul; How they linger, ever near me, And the sacred past unfold. Precious mem’ries, how they linger, How they ever flood my soul; In the stillness of the midnight, Precious sacred scenes unfold.”*

Ecclesiastes 7:10: “Do not say, ‘Why were the old days better than these?’ For it is not wise to ask such questions” (NIV).

## July 6 — David in the Dumps (Ps. 42:5)

**Psalm 42:5:** *“Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and*

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*[my God.]”*

**Verse 5:** “Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and [my God.]”

I am reminded of the bumper sticker that says: “When you are down and out, lift up your head and shout, ‘I am down and out!’”

This chorus we have in verse 5 will be repeated 2 more times: Psalm 42:11 and Psalm 43:5.

All of your past experience adds up to this: “God is not withdrawn from you, nor abandoned you so continue to hope in Him, build on Him, rest on him, even though the present gives no token of accepting you or even hearing you. Past experience gives full warrant for such an attitude.”

There are 2 questions in our verse for today: (1) “Why are you downcast, O my soul?” and (2) “Why so disturbed within me?”

Here his faith reasons with his fears, his hope reasons with his sorrows.

If we allow how we feel to alter what we believe we are in deep trouble.

Yes, David is still talking to himself. He asks himself 2 questions: (1) “Why are you downcast, O my soul?” and (2) “Why so disturbed within me?” Then he admonishes himself with the statement: “Put your hope in God.” Then he gives the reason: “for I will yet praise him, my Savior and [my God.]”

Can you hear David saying: “Come along with me, the best is yet to be!”

Ruth Harms Calkin writes a little poem “I’m Drowning”: “Lord, I’m drowning / In a sea of perplexity. / Waves of confusion / Crash over me. / I’m too weak. / To shout for help. / Either quiet the waves / Or lift me above them— / It’s too late / To learn to swim.” (*Tell Me Again Lord, I Forget*)

Corrie Ten Boom said: “There is no pit so deep but He is not deeper still.”

Job 19:25-27: “I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!” (NIV).

How about a couple of verses of **“Because of He Lives”**: “*God sent His Son, they called him Jesus; He came to love, heal, and forgive; He lived and died to buy my pardon, An empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives. And then one day I’ll cross the river; I’ll fight life’s final war with pain; And then as death gives way to vict’ry, I’ll see the lights of glory and I’ll know He lives. Because He lives I can face tomorrow; Because He lives all fear is gone; Because I know He holds the future, And life is worth the living just because He lives.*”

**July 7 — He Makes All Things Beautiful in His Time (Ps. 42:6-7)**

**Psalm 42:6:** “*my God. My soul is downcast within me; therefore I will remember you from the land of the Jordan, the heights of Hermon—from Mount Mizar.*”

**Psalm 42:7:** “*Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your*

*waves and breakers have swept over me."*

**Verse 6:** "my God. My soul is downcast within me; therefore I will remember you from the land of the Jordan, the heights of Hermon—from Mount Mizar."

Whereas David is remembering the past in verse 4, he will remember in the days ahead the things that are described here in verses 6 and 7.

You could summarize David's statements in the phrase: The times we had by the river or in the mountains or by the seashore.

Oh how happy are they who in the midst of their trials can take shelter in their God!

**Verse 7:** "Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your waves and breakers have swept over me."

In verse 7, David in essence is saying: "When it rains it pours!" It is like the waves in the ocean. One calls to another and they just keep coming and so it is in our lives. One circumstance brings another.

The old cowboy said it right: "If you want to work up to bein' a good rider, you've got some mud to eat."

Jeremiah 12:5: "If you have raced with men on foot and they have worn you out, how can you compete with horses? If you stumble in safe country, how will you manage in the thickets by the Jordan?" (NIV).

2 Corinthians 4:8-9: "we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed" (NASB).

It was Vance Havner who said: "These days find me living in the strength of Another. My own resources are exhausted. I am like the poor fellow who said, 'I've wrecked my constitution and am living on my bylaws.'"

It was Jesus who spoke "Peace be still." On a stormy night when the disciples had given up all hope of making it to shore, the sea became calm: And now I have a Captain, / He'll guide I know He will, / I've given Jesus full command, / Since He said, "Peace be still," / He whispered "Peace be still to me," / My heart obeyed His will, / His word made calm the rolling sea, / When He said, "Peace be still."

Would you join me in singing a verse of "**Wonderful Peace**": "*Far away in the depths of my spirit tonight Rolls a melody sweeter than psalm; In celestial-like strains it unceasingly falls O'er my soul like an infinite calm. Peace! Peace! Wonderful peace, Coming down from the Father above; Sweep over my spirit forever, I pray, In fathomless billows of love.*"

**July 8 — This is the Day the Lord Has Made (Ps. 42:8)**

**Psalm 42:8:** "*By day the Lord directs his love, at night his song is with me—a prayer to the God of my life.*"

**Verse 8:** "By day the Lord directs his love, at night his song is with me—a prayer to the God of my life."

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You will notice that David's focus is still upon the Lord. During the day his focus is on His love. During the night his focus is on His song.

During the day it is provision. During the night it is praise.

There are 3 words to describe what is in this verse: (1) sovereignty; (2) song; and  
(3) supplication.

(1) In his sovereignty the Lord directs. (2) The song he sings in the dark. (3) The supplication is a prayer to the Lord of my life.

(1) Sovereignty—"By day the Lord directs his love." Romans 8:28: "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (NASB). He is the sovereign director of the universe.

(2) Song—"At night his song is with me." Psalm 77:6: "I remembered my songs in the night. My heart mused and my spirit inquired" (NIV). Psalm 118:14: "The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation" (NIV).

(3) Supplication—"A prayer to the God of my life." Philippians 4:6-7: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (NASB).

All of these circumstances have not broken his lines of communication with the God of his life.

Let's express our song and praise to the Lord with **"My Tribute"**: *"How can I say thanks for the things You have done for me? Things so undeserved, yet You give to prove Your love for me. The voices of a million angels could not express my gratitude; All that I am and ever hope to be, I owe it all to Thee. To God be the glory; To God be the glory; To God be the glory for the things He has done. With His blood He has saved me, With His pow'r He has raised me. To God be the glory for the things He has done. Just let me live my life, let it be pleasing, Lord, to Thee; And should I gain any praise, Let it go to Calvary."*

### **July 9 — Why Have You Forgotten Me? (Ps. 42:9)**

**Psalm 42:9:** *"I say to God my Rock, 'Why have you forgotten me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?'"*

**Verse 9:** "I say to God my Rock, 'Why have you forgotten me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?'"

Peterson in *The Message* paraphrases this verse: "Sometimes I ask God, my rock-solid God, 'Why did you let me down? Why am I walking around in tears, harassed by enemies?'"

In the midst of our griefs, sometimes it seems like it, doesn't it?

Psalm 137:5: "If I forget you, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its skill" (NIV).

Hebrews 13:5: "Let your way of life be free from the love of money, being

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content with what you have; for He Himself has said, ‘I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you’” (NASB).

Barbara Johnson says: “Experience is what you get when you don’t get what you want. There is only one thing more painful than learning from experience, and that is not learning from it! It’s in the darkest places, after all, that the grace of God shines most brightly. That is where people begin to see Him. By His wounds we are healed. By our scars we are recognized as belonging to Him.” (*Boomerang Joy*, 93)

“I have a prayer that I often use when I run into problems: *If this obstacle be from Thee, Lord, I accept it; but if it be from Satan, I refuse him and all his works in the nature of Calvary.*” (*Nothing Daunted: The Story of Isobel Kuhn* by Gloria Repp, 9).

Let’s sing a couple of verses of “**Now I Belong to Jesus**”: “*Jesus my Lord will love me forever, From Him no pow’r of evil can sever, He gave His life to ransom my soul, Now I belong to Him; Joy floods my soul for Jesus has saved me, Freed me from sin that long had enslaved me, His precious blood He gave to redeem, Now I belong to Him; Now I belong to Jesus, Jesus belongs to me, Not for the years of time alone, But for eternity.*”

### **July 10 — Love Can Change Us (Pearl)**

The love of Christ Jesus constrains me. My love for Him holds me back from doing anything that would disappoint Him.

My constant love for my family, fellow Christians, neighbors and everyone with whom I come in contact should be treated in such a way as to cause them to consider why.

“Love always desires to bless the object of its affection.” (Jim Cymbala, *Break Through Prayer*)

“Giving (love) unlocks our own hearts to God’s comfort and His new plans for our lives after tragedy and grief have done their worst.” (Eugenia Price)

“My heart has heard you say, ‘Come and talk with me.’ And my heart responds, ‘Lord, I am coming’” (Ps. 27:8 NLT).

“Continue to love each other with true Christian love” (Heb. 13:1 NLT).

*“Love can change the attitude; / Love can change the mind, / Love can make us likeable; / Love can make us kind. / Love can break the barriers; / Love can set us free. / In other words, love can mold a new life / For you and me.”* (Otis Skilling)

### **July 11 — Lord, You Are My Only Hope (Ps. 43:1)**

**Psalm 43:1: “Vindicate me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation; rescue me from deceitful and wicked men.”**

**Verse 1:** “Vindicate me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation; rescue me from deceitful and wicked men.”

Remember as we look at this verse in Psalm 43, David has fled from Jerusalem, north to Mahanaim on the east side of the Jordan River, preparing for the onslaught of Absalom and his forces.

The 3 key words in verse 1 are: “vindicate,” “plead,” and “rescue.”

Foreshadowed in the word “vindicate” is the great doctrine of justification.

In the word “plead” is our Savior’s continuous intercession for us. In the word “rescue” is the great doctrine of salvation.

The psalmist is in prayer here and he asks for 3 things: (1) “Vindicate me, O God”;

(2) “plead my cause against an ungodly nation”; and (3) “rescue me from deceitful and

wicked men.” George Horne says: “David, in the same situation as before, appealeth to God against a people who had driven their sovereign from his capital, to wander, like a fugitive and vagabond, in the remotest parts of his dominion; against the hypocrisy of Absalom, and the villainy of Ahithophel.”

Isaiah 66:13-16: “As a mother comforts her child, so I’ll comfort you. You will be comforted in Jerusalem. You’ll see all this and burst with joy—you’ll feel ten feet tall—As it becomes apparent that God is on your side and against his enemies. For God arrives like wildfire and his chariots like a tornado, A furious outburst of anger, a rebuke fierce and fiery. For it’s by fire that God brings judgment, a death sentence on the human race. Many, oh so many, are under God’s sentence of death” (MSG).

Isaiah 14:24, 27: “The Lord Almighty has sworn this oath: ‘It will all happen as I have planned. It will come about according to my purposes. The Lord Almighty has spoken—who can change his plans? When his hand moves, who can stop him?’” (NLT).

I feel like celebrating today and singing that great chorus, “**God Is So Good**”: “*God is so good, God is so good, God is so good, He’s so good to me! Jesus is real, Jesus is real, Jesus is real, He’s so real to me! He saved my soul, He saved my soul, He saved my soul And He made me whole! I praise His name, I praise His name, I praise His name, He’s so good to me!*”

## July 12 — David Continues to Pray (Ps. 43:2-3)

**Psalm 43:2:** “*You are God my stronghold. Why have you rejected me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?*”

**Psalm 43:3:** “*Send forth your light and your truth, let them guide me; let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell.*”

**Verse 2:** “You are God my stronghold. Why have you rejected me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?”

Back in Psalm 42:9 David refers to “God my Rock.” Here in Psalm 43:2 it is “God my stronghold.”

There are 3 key words and 2 “why” questions. The 3 key words are “rejected,” “mourning,” and “oppressed.” The 2 “why” questions are “Why have you rejected me?” and “Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?”

I’m sure David feels like Ziggy in the cartoon. Ziggy is standing looking up



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at a mountain. The sky is dark and there's one cloud up there. Ziggy says, "Have I been put on hold for the rest of my life?" (*The Tale of the Tardy Oxcart*, 455)

**Verse 3:** "Send forth your light and your truth, let them guide me; let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell."

David continues his prayer with a petition that the Lord "send forth" 2 things: (1) "your light" and (2) "your truth." Light represents understanding and life. Truth represents God's faithful Word.

The purpose behind this 2-fold petition is: (1) "let them guide me" and (2) "let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell."

Vance Havner says: "What it does mean is that we accept what does happen and table all dogmatic assertions on the subject until we have better light. And when we do, we shall not even bother to ask why, for all will be forgotten in the glory of His presence." (*Though I Walk Through the Valley*, 86)

François Fénelon said: "God has a time for everything. Never second-guess Him.

One of the most important things you must do is live in the present moment. It is not how fast you go, but how well you go. God knows just how long it will take you to get from one place to another. You needn't always be rushing about. Simply follow God's leading. All you need to do is prepare your heart by giving it completely over to God, without reservation. He will do with you what He pleases. Close your eyes and follow Him. Walk, as Abraham did, not knowing where you are going. God Himself will be your guide. He will lead you through the desert to the Promised Land. You will be so happy if you let God take full control of your life!" (*The Seeking Heart*, 115)

Please join me in singing a verse of "**Footsteps of Jesus**": "Sweetly, Lord, have we heard Thee calling, Come, follow Me! And we see where Thy footprints falling Lead us to Thee. Footprints of Jesus, that make the pathway glow; We will follow the steps of Jesus where'er they go."

### **July 13 — How to Handle the Tough Times (Ps. 43:4)**

**Psalm 43:4:** "*Then will I go to the altar of God, to God, my joy and my delight. I will praise you with the harp, O God, my God.*"

**Verse 4:** "Then will I go to the altar of God, to God, my joy and my delight. I will praise you with the harp, O God, my God."

When the Lord acts upon the petitions in verse 3, David makes the promise in verse

4: "Then will I go to the altar of God, to God, my joy and my delight. I will praise you with the harp, O God, my God."

I'm reminded of Andraé Crouch's song "Through It All": "I've had many tears and sorrows, I've had questions for tomorrow, There've been times I didn't know right from wrong. But in ev'ry situation, God gave blessed consolation that my trials come to only make me strong. Through it all, Through it all, Oh, I've learned to trust in Jesus, I've learned to trust in God. Through it

*all, Through it all, I've learned to depend upon His Word."*

There are 3 things that David says he will do as the Lord responds to his prior petitions: (1) "Then will I go to the altar of God." He is going there to sacrifice and to worship. (2) "to God, my joy and my delight." The *New Living Translation* translates it: "There I will go to the altar of God, to God—the source of all my joy. I will praise you with my harp, O God, my God!"

The NET Bible translates verse 4: "Then I will go to the altar of God, to the God who gives me ecstatic joy, so that I express my thanks to you, O God, my God, with a harp."

John 15:11: "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full" (NASB).

Lord, your joy is my strength as I face this new day.

The third promise from David is: "I will praise you with the harp, O God, my God."

I think it would be fitting if we sing the last verse of that great old hymn **"Nothing Between"**: *"Nothing between, e'en many hard trials, Tho' the whole world against me convene; Watching with prayer and much self-denial, I'll triumph at last, with nothing between. Nothing between my soul and the Savior, So that His blessed face may be seen; Nothing preventing the least of His favor, Keep the way clear! Let nothing between."*

Can you say to God this morning, "You are my joy and my delight"?

#### **July 14 — There's a High Cost to Low Living (Ps. 51:1)**

**Psalm 51:1:** *"Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions."*

You remember well the story of David getting involved in a relationship with one of the military wives and getting her pregnant. In the process of trying to cover his sin, he brings Uriah, the husband, home from the field of battle in hopes that he will go in unto his wife and this will cover David's sin. Uriah, however, fails to cooperate and David sends word to Joab, the military commander, by the hand of Uriah, to place him in harm's way. As a result, Uriah's life is taken and David marries Bathsheba. The baby has been born, there has been a year of silence, and David feels like things are getting back to normal. It is at this time that David is confronted by Nathan the prophet. The parable he tells concludes with Nathan saying to David, "You are the man."

This psalm is a prayer from David as he pleads for mercy and forgiveness.

Isaiah 44:22: "I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you."

"Just one little sin, what harm can it do? But give it free reign and soon there are two. And then sinful deeds and habits ensue, so guard well your thoughts or they'll destroy you." Someone has said "Give the devil an inch and he'll become a ruler."

**Verse 1:** "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love;

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according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.”

David begins his prayer with these words: “Have mercy on me, O God.” David’s only hope is mercy from a God of grace.

Luke 18:13: “But the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, the sinner!’” (NASB)

The measure of the mercy that I’m asking for from You Lord is 2-fold: (1) “according to your unfailing love” and (2) “according to your great compassion.” It’s going to take both of these to get us through this. David was fully aware that this undeserved mercy could only be granted to him because of God’s “unfailing love” and “great compassion.”

The question we have at this point is: Does the Lord have “unfailing love” and “great compassion” adequate for David? You better believe He does! And He has it for you and me too!

As David opens his prayer he begins with “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion.” He concludes this verse with the second phrase “blot out my transgressions.”

It is: (1) “Have mercy” and (2) “blot out my transgressions.” To “blot out” means to erase from your remembrance.

One of the commentators says to “blot out” is to cancel or obliterate.

Notice the plural form: “blot out my transgressions”—plural.

Notice David takes ownership with the little word “my”—“my transgressions.”

Stewart Perowne says: “No sin ever stands alone: each single transgression is the mother of many transgressions...”

In the word “transgressions” is the thought of rebellion against a rightful sovereign—a person who disregards the NO TRESPASSING sign. It is thought of as deliberate disobedience.

Barbara Johnson said: “Don’t waste today’s time cluttering up tomorrow’s opportunities with yesterday’s troubles!” (*Boomerang Joy*, 101). In other words, keep a short list! Address the issues immediately and get rid of denial, defense, and delay.

Let’s celebrate by singing Charitie Bancroft’s great old hymn “**Before the Throne of God Above**”: *“Before the Throne of God Above, I have a strong and perfect plea. A great high Priest whose Name is Love Who ever lives and pleads for me. My name is graven on His hands, My name is written on His heart. I know that while in heaven He stands No tongue can bid me thence depart. Behold Him there the risen lamb, My perfect spotless righteousness, The great unchangeable I AM, King of glory and of grace, One in Himself I cannot die. My soul is purchased by His blood, My life is hid with Christ on high, With Christ my Savior and my God!”*

**July 15 — What Can Wash Away My Sins? (Ps. 51:2)**

**Psalm 51:2: “Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.”**

**Verse 2:** “Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.”

David uses the words “transgressions” in verse 1 and “iniquity” and “sin” in verse 2.

The word “iniquity” focuses on that which is crooked or distorted. The word “sin” focuses on missing of the mark, coming short of the target.

Whereas David used the words “have mercy” and “blot out” in verse 1, he uses “wash away” and “cleanse” here in verse 2.

Isaiah 64:6: “All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away” (NIV).

If you are living in a lukewarm comfort zone, no distance excuses the sin.

We notice here in David’s prayer in verse 2, he is asking the Lord to “wash away all my iniquity.” In other words, “wash me at your Laundromat.”

In verse 1 it was “blot out my transgressions,” plural. Now here in verse 2 it is “wash away all my iniquity.”

Spurgeon says: “Lord, wash, and wash, and wash again, till the last stain is gone, and not a trace of my defilement is left.”

He then says: “cleanse me from my sin.”

The old cowboy says: “The water won’t clear up until you get the hogs outta the creek.”

I love the puritan prayers in *The Valley of Vision*. One of them states: “Let me come to thee renouncing, condemning, loathing myself, but hoping in the grace that flows even to the chief of sinners.” (39)

I think it would be appropriate for us to worship by singing a couple of verses **“Nothing But the Blood”**: *“What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus; What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus; This is all my hope and peace, Nothing but the blood of Jesus; This is all my righteousness, Nothing but the blood of Jesus; Oh! Precious is the flow That makes me white as snow; No other fount I know, Nothing but the blood of Jesus.”*

**July 16 — Deliberately Disobeyed (Ps. 51:3) Psalm 51:3: “For I know my transgressions and my sin is always before me.”**

**Verse 3:** “For I know my transgressions and my sin is always before me.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 3: “I know how bad I’ve been; my sins are staring me down!”

Here in verse 3 David states the reason why he wants the Lord to have mercy, to blot out his transgressions, to wash away his iniquity, and to cleanse him from his sin. The reason being: “For I know my transgressions and my sin is always before me.” I can never get away from it.

The word “always” indicates the fact that he is continuously aware of his sin.

There is a sickening contentment in our contemporary Christianity with a level of contamination that is dictated by the culture.

Kris Lundgaard says: “sin wears out its welcome....If sin only came to visit

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now and then, like an unwelcome in-law, we could get a lot of godliness done while it was away. If it were like an army that struck, then pulled back for a time, we could refresh ourselves and fortify our defenses during the calm. But the flesh is a relentless homebody and assailant.

“Wherever you go, whatever you do, the law of sin is with you step for step—in the best you do, in the worst you do. How often do you think about the fact that you carry around in you a deadly companion?”

“Sin can be like trick birthday candles: you blow them out and smile, thinking you have your wish; then your jaw drops as they burst into flames.”  
(*The Enemy Within*, 32, 39)

So many Christians are comfortable with a low view of sin. The culture says it’s what’s right in your own eyes.

The old cowboy song says it very well: “I’m living up to her low expectations because her low expectations are high enough for me.”

My prayer and hope is that from this revelation that we have looked at in verse 3, you can sing with a full heart verse 3 of **“It Is Well With My Soul”**:  
*“My sin, O, the bliss of this glorious thought, My sin not in part but the whole, Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more, Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul! It is well with my soul, It is well, it is well with my soul.”*

### **July 17 — Contentment (Pearl)**

Are you contented right now? If not, why not? Are you where God wants you?

If you are, then you will be contented when the good times and the hard times come.

God will keep and provide where His will is.

Elijah was to go to the Brook Cherith and God would provide for him there.

Don’t look back. Don’t look forward. Dwell in the present. How you work and prepare now will take care of the future.

You are building memories today.

We need to look in the mirror of God’s love for us. He loves and accepts us completely.

Whenever we get our eyes off God and concentrate instead on what we are not, we get discouraged.

Contentment is not a time of life, but a condition of the spirit.

*“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.”*

### **July 18 — The Judge of All the Earth Will Do What is Right (Ps. 51:4)**

**Psalms 51:4:** *“Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.”*

**Verse 4:** “Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 4: “You’re the One I’ve violated, and you’ve seen it all, seen the full extent of my evil. You have all the facts before you; whatever you decide about me is fair.”

2 Samuel 11:27 records the Lord’s initial response to David’s sin: “After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the Lord” (NIV).

Joseph refused in a similar situation to this temptation in Genesis 39:9: “No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?” (NIV).

We raise the question: Who else was hurt in this situation besides David? The number one and primary relation is the one with God Himself. Then you can think about Bathsheba as a participant in the act of adultery has sinned against her own body. Uriah the Hittite lost his life. The baby lost his life. Several in the administration were hurt because someone had to go and inquire about Bathsheba. Joab had to know what was going on when he received the instructions from David about Uriah. And the subject of the kingdom itself had to be much aware about these matters as facts began to unfold.

The result of this is seen in the 2 phrases at the conclusion of the verse. “So that”:

(1) “you are proved right when you speak” and (2) “you are ... justified when you judge.” Jeremiah 16:17: “My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from me, nor is their sin concealed from my eyes” (NIV).

Notice David does say: “I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.”

Hebrews 4:13: “And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do” (NASB).

Proverbs 28:13: “He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy” (NIV).

Let’s sing together three verses of “**Just As I Am**”: “*Just as I am, without one plea, But that Thy blood was shed for me, And that Thou bid’st me come to Thee, O Lamb of God, I come! I come! Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind; sight, riches, healing of the mind, Yea, all I need, in Thee to find, O Lamb of God, I come! I come! Just as I am, Thou wilt receive, Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve; Because Thy promise I believe, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!*”

## July 19 — A Clear Conscience (Ps. 51:5-6)

Psalm 51:5: “*Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.*”



**Psalm 51:6: “Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.”**

**Verse 5:** “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 5: “I’ve been out of step with you for a long time, in the wrong since before I was born.”

Romans 3:23: “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (NASB).

Ecclesiastes 7:20: “There is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins” (NIV).

The *Valley of Vision* says: “Sin is my malady, my monster, my foe, my viper, born in my birth, alive in my life, strong in my character, dominating my faculties, following me as a shadow, intermingling with my every thought, my chain that holds me captive in the empire of my soul.” (41)

**Verse 6:** “Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.”

There are 2 things that David says in verse 6: (1) “you desire truth” and (2) “you teach wisdom.”

“Truth in the inner parts” and “wisdom in the inmost place.”

Paul said this in Acts 24:16: “And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men” (KJV).

2 Corinthians 2:11: “in order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes” (NASB).

It is because of these 2 things that David prays in Psalm 26:2-3: “Test me, O Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind; for your love is ever before me, and I walk continually in your truth” (NIV).

Psalm 25:4-5: “Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long” (NIV).

Psalm 17:3: “Though you probe my heart and examine me at night, though you test me, you will find nothing; I have resolved that my mouth will not sin” (NIV).

Hebrews 13:18: “Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a good conscience, desiring to conduct ourselves honorably in all things” (NASB).

Please join me in a verse of “**Have I Done My Best For Jesus?**”: “*I wonder, have I done my best for Jesus, Who died upon the cruel tree? To think of His great sacrifice at Calv’ry! I know my Lord expects the best from me. How many are the lost that I have lifted? How many are the chained I’ve helped to free? I wonder, have I done my best for Jesus, When he has done so much for me?*”

**July 20 — Father, Forgive Them For They Don’t Know What They’re Doing (Ps. 51:7-8)**

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**Psalm 51:7:** “*Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.*”

**Psalm 51:8:** “*Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice.*”

**Verse 7:** “Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says, with regard to hyssop: “...he was alluding to the use of hyssop at the religious ceremonies to sprinkle sacrificial blood on the altar.” (832)

It is a reference to cleansing on the basis of a past offering.

1 John 1:7: “...the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin” (NASB).

Warren Wiersbe says: “He also asks to be purged with hyssop, the little shrub the Jews used to put blood on the doorposts at Passover.”

**Verse 8:** “Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice.”

There are 2 requests in verse 8: (1) “let me hear joy and gladness” and (2) “let the bones you have crushed rejoice.”

The first request indicates the presence of the Spirit and the second indicates the discipline involved because of the sin.

The key words in this verse are “joy,” “gladness,” and “rejoice.”

James Boice says: “...The fact that the psalmist prays for so many things [in vv. 7-12] indicates how many things he knew he had lost when he plunged into sin.”

Zephaniah 3:17: “The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing” (NIV).

I am reminded of that great old hymn “**Nothing Between**”: “*Nothing between my soul and the Savior, Naught of this world’s delusive dream; I have renounced all sinful pleasure, Jesus is mine; there’s nothing between. Nothing between, like pride or station, Self or friends shall not intervene, Tho’ it may cost me much tribulation, I am resolved; there’s nothing between. Nothing between my soul and the Savior, So that His blessed face may be seen; Nothing preventing the least of His favor, Keep the way clear! Let nothing between.*”

## **July 21 — God Make a Fresh Start Within Me (Ps. 51:9-10)**

**Psalm 51:9:** “*Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity.*”

**Psalm 51:10:** “*Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.*”

**Verse 9:** “Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity.”

Once again we have the word “all,” just like we did back in verse 2: “wash away all my iniquity.” Now here in verse 9 we have “blot out all my iniquity.”

There are 2 things that David requests of the Lord here: (1) “Hide your face from my sins” and (2) “blot out all my iniquity.”

John H. Newman had a most appropriate prayer: “My ears are dull, so that I

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cannot hear thy voice. My eyes are dim, so that I cannot see thy tokens. Thou alone canst quicken my hearing, and purge my sight, and cleanse and renew my heart. Teach me to sit at thy feet, and to hear thy word. Amen.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 9: “Don’t look too close for blemishes, give me a clean bill of health.”

Joseph Alexander summarizes things when he says: “What he asks as to his sins is that God will cancel and forget them.”

**Verse 10:** “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”

In verse 10 he asks for 2 things: (1) “Create in me a pure heart, O God” and (2) “renew a steadfast spirit within me.”

Peterson paraphrases this verse: “God, make a fresh start of me, shape a Genesis week from the chaos of my life.”

The 2 key words in verse 10 are “create” and “renew.”

“Reform must come from within, not from without” according to James Gibbson.

Alexander translates the verse: “*A pure heart create for me, (O) God, and a fixed (or settled) spirit renew within me.*”

Isaiah 43:19: “See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?...” (NIV).

2 Corinthians 5:17: “Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come” (NASB).

David prays: “Create in me a pure heart.” Can God do this for us? You bet! He’s just waiting for the invitation.

The tragedy of David’s son Solomon is that he never did this.

The word “create” is the same word in Genesis 1:1, *bara*, to create something out of nothing. David is saying “I need a new heart.” He is literally getting to the heart of the matter. “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”

Psalm 57:7: “My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and make music” (NIV).

Stewart Perowne says: “A steadfast spirit; one, that is, firm in faith, not easily swayed hither and thither through its own weakness or by blasts of temptation, and therefore also firm and constant in obedience.”

Bill Keane in “Family Circus” has one of his children say: “Lead us not into temptation but deliver me close enough to evil so I can feel good about walkin’ away.”

1 Corinthians 15:58: “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord” (NASB).

Franklin Covey says: “We cannot go back and make a new start, But we can start now to make a new ending.”

How appropriate for us to do a couple of verses of “**Revive Us Again**”: “*All*

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glory and praise to the Lamb that was slain, Who was borne all our sins, and hath cleansed ev'ry stain. Revive us again; fill each heart with Thy love; May each soul be rekindled with fire from above. Hallelujah! Thine the glory, Hallelujah! Amen; Hallelujah! Thine the glory, revive us again."

## **July 22 — The Finishing Touches (Ps. 51:11-12)**

**Psalm 51:11:** *"Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me."*

**Psalm 51:12:** *"Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me."*

**Verse 11:** "Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me."

Peterson paraphrases verse 11: "Don't throw me out with the trash, or fail to breathe holiness in me."

There are 2 requests that David makes here in verse 11: (1) "Do not cast me from your presence"—in other words, don't give up on me—and (2) "Do not...take your Holy Spirit from me."

The Spirit of God was sovereign in the Old Testament and could take leave at any time when it was necessary. What a precious gift you and I have as believers in Christ in that we are permanently indwelt by the Spirit of God.

1 Corinthians 9:27: "I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified" (NLT).

**Verse 12:** "Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me."

In verse 12 we have 2 more requests: (1) "Restore to me the joy of your salvation" and (2) "grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me."

We had the word "renew" in verse 10 and "restore" here in verse 12. Both indicating the fact that David had previous possession of these things that he is describing. "Renew a steadfast spirit" in verse 10. "Restore...the joy of your salvation" in verse

12. Lord, I want to live all my life through Your eyes. In verse 11 he asks to be Spirit-filled. Now in verse 12 he would like to have the joy and power which is a manifestation of the Spirit's presence in his life.

Notice he says "Restore to me the joy of your salvation." David is delivered from self-centeredness in trying to make salvation a joint-venture, or something he is trying to accomplish on his own. He recognizes salvation is a gift from the Lord in the words "your salvation." It all comes by grace through faith and that not of himself.

In the second part of verse 12 he is focusing on the words "a willing spirit." David is basically saying, "Let's do it Your way Lord!" The use of the word "sustain" indicates the fact that he was not afraid to acknowledge his need and inadequacy. That he can't do it on his own.

David is asking for 3 significant things here in verses 10-12: "a pure

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heart,” “a steadfast spirit,” and “a willing spirit.”

When I completed meditation upon these verses, this was my personal prayer: “Lord, left to my own devices, I know I will blow it again! So I am praying that You will ‘create in me a pure heart...renew a steadfast spirit’ that will not bend under the stress of temptation. And above all, ‘a willing spirit,’ submissive to Your sovereignty, doing things Your way.”

Vance Havner confesses: “This morning, all alone in my apartment, I am packing up to start out on the third phase of my ministry. For nearly twenty-five years I was a bachelor preacher. Then followed thirty-three precious years with Sara by my side. Now, almost seventy-two, I take to the road as a wandering widower. My confidence is that God will make up to me all that my dear one meant and infinitely more for I am shut up to Him, and the soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose He will not desert to its foes.” (*Though I Walk Through the Valley*, 73)

Let’s celebrate by singing a verse of “**Jesus, Lover of My Soul**”: “*Jesus, Lover of my soul, Let me to Thy bosom fly. While the nearer waters roll, While the tempest still is high! Hide me, O my Savior, hide, Till the storm of life is past; Safe into the haven guide, O receive my soul at last!*”

### **July 23 — What I’ll Do If You Answer My Prayers (Ps. 51:13-14)**

**Psalm 51:13:** “*Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you.*”

**Psalm 51:14:** “*Save me from bloodguilt, O God, the God who saves me, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.*”

**Verse 13:** “Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you.”

The word “Then” occurs 3 times in these remaining verses. Once here in verse 13 then twice down in verse 19.

These all indicate what David will do in response to the prayer petitions that we have seen in verses 1-12.

“Then I will teach transgressors your ways.”

Many believe that Psalm 32 is the product of this promise.

Luke 22:31-32: “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers” (NASB).

Psalm 86:11: “Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name” (NIV).

Ezra 7:10: “For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the Lord, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel” (NIV).

Peterson paraphrases verse 13: “Give me a job teaching rebels your ways so the lost can find their way home.”

Stuart Briscoe says: “Wise old Isaac Watts had it right when he said: In works of labor or of skill, I would be busy too, For Satan finds some mischief still For idle hands to do.”

Lord, what I would like to do is: I will “teach transgressors your ways” and show them the consequences, of course, of my own disobedience. “Sinners will turn back to you” when they recognize the consequences of all that I’ve been through.

**Verse 14:** “Save me from bloodguilt, O God, the God who saves me, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.”

“Save me from bloodguilt, O God, the God who saves me.” And when You do, “my tongue will sing of your righteousness.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 14: “Commute my death sentence, God, my salvation God, and I’ll sing anthems to your life-giving ways.”

Ruth Myers says: “I find it so helpful to pray with the songwriter, Dear Lord, Take up the tangled strands, Where I have wrought in vain, That by the skill of Thy dear hands Some beauty may remain.” (*The Perfect Love*, 116)

1 Chronicles 16:11: “Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always” (NIV).

David longs to get his heart right with the Lord and then to make a contribution with what remains of his life in teaching transgressors the ways of the Lord and to proclaim the joy and freedom that he has by singing the songs of righteousness.

Let’s sing a couple of verses of “**Fairest Lord Jesus**”: “*Fairest Lord Jesus! Ruler of all nature, O Thou of God and man the Son! Thee will I cherish, Thee will I honor, Thou, my soul’s Glory, Joy, and Crown! Beautiful Savior! Lord of the nations! Son of God and Son of Man! Glory and honor, Praise, adoration, Now and forevermore be Thine! Amen.*”

## **July 24 — God’s Plans are Centered in Jesus (Pearl)**

“God’s secret (eternal) plan has now been revealed to us; it is a plan centered on Christ, designed long ago according to his good pleasure. And this is his plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and earth. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago” (Eph. 1:9-11, 13b NLT).

When we meditate on the above verses we know how truly rich we are in Christ Jesus. To know Him as Savior sets us apart to share in the incredible plan of eternal salvation centered around Jesus Christ.

Give thanks, praise and honor to Jesus our Savior. We are eternally secure in His care. It doesn’t get any better than that!

“The Lamb who died to save us is the Shepherd who lives to lead us.” (*Our Daily Bread*, March 5, 2011)

“Jesus told him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me’” (John 14:6 NLT).

## **July 25 — The Broken and Contrite Qualify for Ministry (Ps. 51:15-17)**

**Psalms 51:15:** “*O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.*”



**Psalm 51:16:** “*You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.*”

**Psalm 51:17:** “*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.*”

**Verse 15:** “O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 15: “Unbutton my lips, dear God; I’ll let loose with your praise.”

Warren Wiersbe says: “Sin also silenced his tongue. He had no song and no witness.”

William Law says: “If anyone would tell you the shortest, surest way to all happiness and all perfection, he must tell you to make a rule to yourself to thank and praise God for everything that happens to you. It is certain that whatever seeming calamity happens to you, if you thank and praise God for it you turn it into a blessing.” (*A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, 101)

**Verse 16:** “You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.”

The most important thought in verse 16 is what David has done can be covered by no sacrifice. Therefore, it would be a shame to come and offer a sacrifice in his circumstances.

The consequences under the law for what David has done is the death penalty.

“Not all the blood of beasts / On Jewish altars slain, / Could give the guilty conscience peace / Nor wash away its stain.”

**Verse 17:** “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.”

In dividing the verse, “the sacrifices of God are”: (1) “a broken spirit” and (2) “a broken and contrite heart.”

Psalm 34:18: “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”

Isaiah 66:2: “Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?” declares the Lord. “This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word” (NIV).

Isaiah 57:15: “For this is what the high and lofty One says—he who lives forever, whose name is holy: ‘I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite’” (NIV).

François Fénelon said: “How shameful it is that we are always searching for pleasure, always grumbling at the slightest suffering, always crawling around searching for comfort in the most miserable of places, always hiding our faults without correcting them—while at the same time we have been joined into one flesh with Jesus Christ himself!”

Romans 12:1-2: “And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will

accept. When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask? Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is" (NLT).

I think it would be good for us to sing a couple of verses of that great old hymn **"Is Your All on the Altar?"**: *"You have longed for sweet peace, and for faith to increase, And have earnestly, fervently prayed; But you cannot have rest or be perfectly blest Until all on the altar is laid. Would you walk with the Lord in the light of His Word, And have peace and contentment always? You must do His sweet will to be free from all ill, On the altar your all you must lay. Is your all on the altar of sacrifice laid? Your heart, does the Spirit control You can only be blest and have peace and sweet rest, As you yield Him your body and soul."*

### **July 26 —The Process of True Repentance (Ps. 51:18-19)**

**Psalm 51:18:** *"In your good pleasure make Zion prosper; build up the walls of Jerusalem."*

**Psalm 51:19:** *"Then there will be righteous sacrifices, whole burnt offerings to delight you; then bulls will be offered on your altar."*

**Verse 18:** "In your good pleasure make Zion prosper; build up the walls of Jerusalem.

David asks that Zion might recover economically and in other ways, because of his repentance and return.

Someone said: "As the king, so goes the kingdom!"

Howard Hendricks says: "When a leader makes a mistake, all the people suffer." (*Values and Virtues*, 201)

Ezekiel 22:30: "I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none" (NIV).

**Verse 19:** "Then there will be righteous sacrifices, whole burnt offerings to delight you; then bulls will be offered on your altar."

David is saying that he longs for things to get back to the way they were. That sacrifices and offerings would be made that would bring blessing to the people for their obedience.

So as to understand the arduous process of true repentance of David. There are 18 of these petitions: (1) "have mercy"; (2) "blot out my transgressions"; (3) "wash away all my iniquity"; (4) "cleanse me from my sin"; (5) cleanse me with hyssop"; (6) "wash me"; (7) "hide your face from my sins"; (8) "blot out all my iniquity"; (9) "create in me a pure heart"; (10) "renew a steadfast spirit"; (11) "do not cast me from your presence"; (12) "[do not] take your Holy Spirit from me"; (13) "restore to me the joy of your salvation"; (14) "grant me a willing spirit to sustain me"; (15) "save me from bloodguilt"; (16) "open my lips"; (17) "make Zion prosper" and (18) "build up the walls of Jerusalem."

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Charles Stanley in his book *The Blessings of Brokenness* says: “When God leads us into or allows us to experience breaking periods, he is after our self-will, self-reliance, self-dependence, self-sufficiency. He’s after everything that smacks of self, and of willful independence, in us.” (48) “Why are we afraid to let go? Because we don’t want to lose control. That’s pride in its rawest form.” (50)

As we conclude our study of Psalm 51, may I ask you some questions? (1) Are you thirsty for a clean conscience? (2) Do you crave a clean slate? (3) Are you yearning for a fresh start? (4) Are you longing for someone to make you right again with Him?

Let’s sing a couple of verses of “**I Surrender All**”: “*All to Jesus I surrender, All to Him I freely give; I will ever love and trust Him, In His presence daily live. All to Jesus I surrender, Humbly at His feet I bow, Worldly pleasures all forsaken, Take me, Jesus, take me now. I surrender all, I surrender all. All to Thee, my blessed Savior, I surrender all.*”

#### **July 27 — Trusting God No Matter What: His Testimony (Ps. 62:1-2)**

**Psalm 62:1:** “*My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him.*”

**Psalm 62:2:** “*He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.*”

It is going to be our pleasure during these next 6 days to meditate upon Psalm 62. We will take 2 verses each morning.

We shall consider first of all, his testimony (verses 1 and 2).

This psalm was probably written during the time of Absalom’s rebellion so it could be that it was written up in Mahanaim, which is the place where David fled when he left Jerusalem to stage the reacquisition of the kingdom, if that is the Father’s plan for him.

It is interesting that in this psalm there are no petitions of the Lord. David just reflects a confident trust in the Lord in spite of the opposition.

Warren Wiersbe says: “In troubled times, how often do you first look to yourself or others for answers before looking to God? If you look to God and wait for Him, He will see you through. Put God first and wait for Him to act on your behalf.”

This is really a sad time for David. He has experienced forgiveness but the consequences are lasting for a lifetime. After his affair with Bathsheba, the little son born to them dies.

David is tasting the bitter fruit of estrangement—11 years now—and the blowup takes place. The rival kingdom has been established, Absalom is taking over and David is fleeing the city of Jerusalem.

It is almost like a replay of “Fiddler on the Roof,” where in the end everyone is leaving Anatephecá.

After leaving Estes Park I found a Precious Moments™ figure that depicted Pearl and I and our feelings. It was called “Living by Faith.” He is pulling the

cart and she is sitting on top of all their belongings. Tucked into the side of the cart is a Holy Bible.

David is a very broken man. David is still trusting God no matter what.

Let's consider now his testimony in light of these tragic circumstances. His words are recorded in verses 1 and 2.

**Verse 1:** "My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him.

David is saying, "This is the way I want it to be. This is my determination and desire. This is my testimony."

The first thing he says is "My soul finds rest in God alone."

Matthew 11:28-30: "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light" (NASB).

David's rest at this difficult time is in the total adequacy of a sovereign God to order the events of his life to the accomplishment of the Father's purpose for him.

It is "in God alone."

I have a little sign in my office that I see every morning: "Don, Trust Me. I have everything under control. Jesus."

I think the secret of this is to take life: (1) one day at a time and (2) begin it with an audience with the King.

It is "in God alone." God plus nothing, who is totally adequate.

I can just hear Hudson Taylor singing at two a.m.: "*Jesus, I am resting, resting In the joy of what Thou art; I am finding out the greatness of Thy loving heart.*"

God, I do not have to have my kingdom to be satisfied. I do not have to have anything except You. You satisfy the deepest longings of my heart. You, O Lord, are my salvation. I'm trusting in You.

A friend of mine said: "You don't realize that Jesus is all you need until Jesus is all you have."

**Verse 2:** "He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken."

The Lord is 3 things to him in this difficult time: He is "my rock" to stand on, He is "my salvation" to bring solution, and "he is my fortress" to bring security.

The word that occurs 6 times in this psalm is translated 4 times by the word "alone": "in God alone"—verse 1, "he alone is my rock"—verse 2, "God alone"—verse 5, and "He alone is my rock"—verse 6.

Praise always leads to new perspective. David is totally resigned to God at this time though he is going through great difficulty.

Isaiah 30:15: "This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says: 'In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it'" (NIV).

There are 2 things that will bring about rest in your relationship with God: (1) perfect submission—all is at rest and (2) “perfect sovereignty”—all is at rest.

As long as you keep calling the shots in your life you are going to be putting up a lot of air balls.

God waits for that moment of brokenness and complete resignation to His plan and purpose so that you can experience His peace and His rest no matter what.

The last phrase in His testimony after giving those statements in verses 1 and 2 is: “I will never be shaken.” I will never be all shook up.” Our choice is to be stressed out and shook up or steadfast, stable and solid.

How about joining me in the first verse of “**Day by Day**”: *“Day by day and with each passing moment, Strength I find to meet my trials here; Trusting in my Father’s wise bestowment, I’ve no cause for worry or for fear. He whose heart is kind beyond all measure Gives unto each day what He deems best. Lovingly, its part of pain and pleasure, Mingling toil with peace and rest.”*

The reason why David is so victorious in these situations is that his soul is in silent submission before God.

## **July 28 — Trusting God No Matter What: His Circumstances (Ps. 62:3-4)**

**Psalm 62:3:** *“How long will you assault a man? Would all of you throw him down—this leaning wall, this tottering fence?”*

**Psalm 62:4:** *“They fully intend to topple him from his lofty place; they take delight in lies. With their mouths they bless, but in their hearts they curse. Selah.”*

We looked at his testimony in Psalm 62:1-2. Today will look at the next 2 verses—his circumstances.

**Verse 3:** “How long will you assault a man? Would all of you throw him down—this leaning wall, this tottering fence?”

We know some of the circumstances because he is fleeing his own son who is taking over his kingdom.

There are 2 questions here in verse 3 that bring us to reality. David sees himself at war. He is being attacked and his life is in jeopardy. Question 1: “How long will you assault a man?” Question 2: “Would all of you throw him down—this leaning wall, this tottering fence?”

The reality of the situation is that Absalom is on his way to Jerusalem and David and his friends must flee. The challenge to any leader is: If you can’t stand the heat, get out of the kitchen!

It is time to persevere, press on, and play the hand that you have been dealt.

Back in verse 2, David’s testimony concludes with the words “I will never be shaken.” Now, describing reality, he pictures himself in 2 ways, a “leaning wall” and a “trottering fence.”

David is saying, “I may have to kick it out of the end zone, but I’m not

going to be whipped!”

**Verse 4:** “They fully intend to topple him from his lofty place; they take delight in lies. With their mouths they bless, but in their hearts they curse. Selah.”

By the use of the word “They” David is putting his finger upon the opposition. He says 4 things about them: (1) “they fully intend”; (2) “they take delight”; (3) “with their mouths they bless”; and (4) “in their hearts they curse.”

There are actually 6 fiery darts of the wicked one that are described here in verses 3 and 4: “assault,” “throw him down,” “topple,” “delight in lies,” “mouths that bless,” and “hearts that curse.”

Isaiah 54:17 is the promise from the Lord: “no weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and this is their vindication from me,” declares the Lord” (NIV).

David, early in his career when confronting Goliath in the valley of Elah, told him: “...I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will hand you over to me, and I’ll strike you down and cut off your head...the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel” (1 Sam. 17:45-46 NIV). Then he says finally: “...the battle is the Lord’s, and he will give all of you into our hands” (17:47 NIV).

Let’s do a couple of verses of “**Rise Up, O Men of God!**”: “*Rise up, O men of God! The Church for you doth wait, Her strength unequal to her task: Rise up, and make her great! Lift high the cross of Christ! Tread where His feet have trod: As brothers of the Son of Man Rise up, O men of God!*”

## **July 29 — Trusting God No Matter What: His Struggle (Ps. 62:5-6)**

**Psalm 62:5:** “*Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him.*”

**Psalm 62:6:** “*He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken.*”

**Verse 5:** “Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him.”

David has lost his kingdom to his third-born son Absalom. He is writing this psalm from Mahanaim, north and east of Jerusalem and the staging area for resistance against Absalom’s attempts.

We have looked at David’s testimony in verses 1 and 2, the way he wants it to be. Then the reality of the way it is in verses 3 and 4. Now he is commanding himself in self-talk: “Find rest, O my soul, in God alone.” We had a similar situation in Psalm 42 and 43.

Back in verse 1 his testimony was: “My soul finds rest in God alone.” Now, to maintain his integrity and his witness, talking to himself he says: “Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him.”



It is a real good practice that when you talk to yourself use Scripture.

His expectation is in the Lord. This is David's prayer in the heat of battle. True prayer is the Holy Spirit speaking in the believer through the Son to the Father.

Psalm 39:12: "Hear my prayer, O Lord, listen to my cry for help; be not deaf to my weeping."

David would have found a great cohort in George Washington who was alone and cold and discouraged at Valley Forge. He penned these words to his favorite chaplain, Rev. Israel Evans: "It will ever be the first wish of my heart to aid your pious endeavors to inculcate a due sense of the dependence we ought to place in that all wise and powerful being on whom alone our success depends."

**Verse 6:** "He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken."

You can sense that he is somewhat tentative in verse 5. Then you can sense by contrast his determination in verse 6. His courage and intensity have heightened as a result of his time of prayer.

Psalm 31:24: "Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord."

Back in verse 2 David says: "I will never be shaken." Now here in verse 6 he says: "I will not be shaken."

Wouldn't it be good for us to take time to sing a couple of verses of that great old hymn "**Rock of Ages**": *"Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee; Let the*

*water and the blood, From Thy riven side which flowed, Be of sin the double cure, Cleanse me from its guilt and pow'r. Nothing in my hand I bring, Simply to Thy cross I cling; Naked, come to Thee for dress, Helpless, look to Thee for grace; Foul, I to the fountain fly, Wash me, Savior or I die!"*

### **July 30 — Trusting God No Matter What: His Trust**

**is in God (Ps. 62:7-8) Psalm 62:7: "My salvation and my honor depend on God; He is my mighty rock, my refuge." Psalm 62:8: "Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him for God is our refuge."**

**Verse 7:** "My salvation and my honor depend on God; He is my mighty rock, my refuge."

We are following David's struggle in the loss of his kingdom to Absalom and we are studying Psalm 62. In the first 2 verses we saw his testimony. In verses 3 and 4 we saw his circumstances. In verses 5 and 6 we saw his struggles. Now we turn our attention this morning to verses 7 and 8, his trust is in God.

"My salvation and my honor depend on God; He is my mighty rock, my refuge." David uses the word "my" here in verse 7. It is "my salvation" and "my honor depend on God." Then he is "my mighty rock" and "my refuge."

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When David says he is “my salvation” he is counting on victory. When he says “my honor depend on God” he points to his vindication. He will not mount his own defense. He is counting on and depending upon God who is his “mighty rock” and his “refuge.”

David not only speaks of his salvation or ultimate victory and honor, his vindication, but he also refers to the Lord as “my mighty rock, my refuge.” Because He is, He qualifies. He can get the job done.

M. Craig Barnes in his book *Hustling God* says:

A pastor once told me that as he walked along the street downtown he began praying that God would use his life for something truly significant. He wanted to build a great ministry. In his prayer he pledged that he would do anything and give up everything to do it. Just then he came upon a large building made up of thousands of small red bricks. He heard the Spirit of the Lord tell him, “I need you to be one of those ordinary bricks.” He thought, “No, not that! You need me to be a cornerstone.” Of course, that job has already been taken by Jesus Christ. We are called to be just another brick in the wall. It doesn’t even matter if some of the bricks in the wall are chipped or even broken. The wall doesn’t stand or fall with us. It stands on the Savior, the only cornerstone. (151)

**Verse 8:** “Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him for God is our refuge.”

Whereas in verse 7 he refers to 2 things he needs—salvation and honor—in verse 8 he gives us the 2 main essentials to finding the way to rest: (1) “Trust in him at all times” and (2) pour out your hearts to him.”

“Trust in him at all times.” Let’s meditate for a moment on Habakkuk 3:17-19: “Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to go on the heights” (NIV). It

is trusting God no matter what!

(1) “Trust in him at all times” and (2) “pour out your hearts to him.”

The writer then tells us the reason: “for God is our refuge.” We stand on the “rock” and we run to the “refuge.” The “rock” is a place to stand. The “refuge” is a place to survive.

Deuteronomy 33:27: “The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms...” (NIV).

How about we sing a couple of verses of **“I Need Thee Every Hour”**: *“I need Thee ev’ry hour, Most gracious Lord; No tender voice like Thine Can peace afford. I need Thee ev’ry hour, Stay Thou near by; Temptations lose their*

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*pow'r When Thou art nigh. I need Thee; O, I need thee; Ev'ry hour I need Thee!  
O bless me now, my Saviour, I come to Thee."*

### July 31 — Goals (Donna)

During my college years at a Christian College in California, my father was the guest speaker for the spiritual emphasis week on campus. I still remember something he said. He encouraged us to choose spiritual life goals and verses. I have written in my bible the spiritual goals he shared with us that day in the 70's: Be Fervent, Faithful and Fruitful.

Following are my spiritual life goals and verses as a result of his challenge to me and my fellow college students.

My spiritual goals:

- 1 To know Christ
- 2 To help others meet Christ
- 3 To help others know Christ

Special verses that speak to me of my spiritual goals:

### To Know Christ

Hosea 6:3: "So let us know, let us press on to know the Lord."

Philippians 3:8: "More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord." **To help others meet Christ**

1 Timothy 1:11: "according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted." **To help others know Christ**

Ephesians 4:12-13: "for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

All of us have life goals, professional goals, but do we have spiritual goals? Through the years there have been many precious verses in my life. Below are a few that I keep as reminders in the front of my Bible. I share them with you in hopes that they might encourage you to think about your relationship with God and your goals for this most important relationship. **My Life Verses**

Isaiah 45:9: "Woe to *the one* who quarrels with his Maker—An earthenware vessel among the vessels of earth! Will the clay say to the potter, 'What are you doing?' ..."

Jeremiah 18:6: "...Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand..." **Call to Vocational Christian Service**

John 15:16: "You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you." **Chaplain Ministry**

Job 6:14: "For the despairing man *there should be* kindness from his friend; So that he does not forsake the fear of the Almighty." **Children and Youth**

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## Ministry

Mark 10:14: "Let the children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God."

Poem: "Your privilege is beyond all price / Worth more than silver, gold or fame / To guide with love and sacrifice / And write on children's hearts God's name." **Our Marriage Verse**

Psalm 34:3: "O magnify the LORD with me, And let us exalt His name together."

## My Husband Mark's Life Verse

Micah 6:8: "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?"

As we all know from management seminars, if you aim at nothing you'll hit it!

Have a goal in life! If you aim at nothing you will hit it! (Guest contributor, Donna Anderson Skorheim)

## August 1 — The Warning: Don't Trust in Men and Material Things (Ps. 62:9-10)

**Psalm 62:9:** *"Lowborn men are but a breath, the highborn are but a lie; if weighed on a balance, they are nothing; together they are only a breath."*

**Psalm 62:10:** *"Do not trust in extortion or take pride in stolen goods; though your riches increase, do not set your heart on them."*

**Verse 9:** "Lowborn men are but a breath, the highborn are but a lie; if weighed on a balance, they are nothing; together they are only a breath."

We have journeyed with David in Psalm 62 for the last four mornings. This is day number 5. We've seen his testimony. We've seen his circumstances. We've seen his struggle. We've seen his trust in God. Now we come to the warning: Don't trust in men and material things (verses 9 and 10).

The warning in these verses is really 2-fold: (1) do not trust in men and (2) do not trust in material things.

The first warning is do not trust in men (verse 9). "Lowborn men are but a breath." Psalm 144:4: "Man is like a breath; his days are like a fleeting shadow" (NIV).

During this whole kingdom crisis, David has had several experiences of disloyalty and betrayal in his relationships. Ahithophel, his leading confidant and advisor, went with Absalom. Zebah misled David with regard to the loyalty of Mephibosheth in 2 Samuel 16. Shimei cursed David and pelted him with stones as he was leaving Jerusalem.

The Lord Jesus had a similar experience in the betrayal of Judas Iscariot.

Psalm 146:3: "Do not put your trust in princes, in mortal men, who cannot save" (NIV).

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The king is like Humpty Dumpty who sat on the wall. Humpty Dumpty had a great fall. All the king's horses and all the king's men, couldn't put Humpty Dumpty back together again!

Only God is able to do that kind of work! The true picture of man is described here in verse 9.

**Verse 10:** "Do not trust in extortion or take pride in stolen goods; though your riches increase, do not set your heart on them."

There are 3 commands in verse 10 and they are all negative and thus are warnings:

(1) "do not trust in extortion"; (2) "[do not] take pride in stolen goods"; and (3) "do not set your heart on them." "Though your riches increase." The word "increase" is germinating or sprouting. It would be the picture of successful investments, the market going up, this kind of thing. Let us look for just a moment at this third and final negative command or warning: "do not set your heart on them." Proverbs 4:23: "Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life" (NIV). Colossians 3:2: "Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on the earth" (NASB).

It's Vance Havner who said: "The man who feathers his nest too well here forgets that soon he must migrate." (*Truth for Each Day*, 233).

C. S. Lewis said: "Aim at heaven and you get earth thrown in. Aim at earth and you get neither."

We can trust in Him at all times. We can pour out our hearts to Him.

Let's sing verses 3 and 4 of "**I Need Thee Every Hour**": "*I need Thee ev'ry hour,  
In joy or pain; Come quickly and abide, Or life is vain. I need Thee ev'ry hour, Most Holy One; O make me Thine indeed, Thou blessed Son. I need Thee; O, I need thee; Ev'ry hour I need Thee! O bless me now, my Saviour, I come to Thee.*"

## **August 2 — This is The Bottom Line (Ps. 62:11-12)**

**Psalm 62:11:** "*One thing God has spoken, two things have I heard: that you, O God, are strong,*

**Psalm 62:12:** "*and that you, O Lord, are loving. Surely you will reward each person according to what he has done.*"

**Verse 11:** "One thing God has spoken, two things have I heard: that you, O God, are strong,

We have walked with David through the trauma and tragedy of losing his kingdom to his third-born son Absalom. He has had to flee north and east to Mahanaim to get away from certain death.

First we followed his testimony in verses 1 and 2, his circumstances in verses 3 and 4, his struggle in verses 5 and 6, and his trust in God in verses 7 and 8.

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The warning “don’t trust in men and material things,” verses 9 and 10. Now we come to the final section of the psalm and I’ve titled it “This is the Bottom Line—verses 11 and 12.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 11: “God said this once and for all; how many times Have I heard it repeated? ‘Strength comes Straight from God.’”

God is “strong” and He can pull it off. The good news is, He wants to! These final 2 verses we learn that He is “strong” enough and He loves us.

Ruth Harms Calkin said: “I Need Your Power. Lord God I so desperately need Your power. Not only to *sustain* me In times of overwhelming trouble But to restrain me In times of overwhelming temptation.” (*Lord, Don’t You Love Me Anymore?*, 87)

**Verse 12:** “and that you, O Lord, are loving. Surely you will reward each person according to what he has done.”

There are 2 things that the psalmist focuses on in the last 2 verses: (1) “you, O God, are strong” and (2) “You, O Lord, are loving.”

Lord, You are strong enough to get me through this. The most important thing is, You love me.

We now ask the question: What is the bottom line? We find it in the closing statement: “surely you will reward each person according to what he has done.”

Romans 2:6: “who will render to every man according to his deeds” (NASB). Romans 14:12: “So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God” (NASB).

If God is saying to us “launch out into the deep,” are we willing to run the risk and to trust that the God who calls will also sustain us and bear fruit through us?

François Fénelon in *The Seeking Heart* says: “Learn to trust God and open yourself completely to Him. Completely yield to God as He draws you to Himself. Do not be afraid to lose sight of yourself and see Him alone. How happy you would be if you were to completely plunge into that ocean of Love. Accept, with a humble heart, all the grace that God pours out of you. This will prepare you, as Teresa of Avila says, for new and fresh gifts from God.” (99)

Let’s sing a couple of verses of “**Be Still My Soul**”: “*Be still, my soul: the Lord is on thy side; Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain. Leave to thy God to order and provide; In ev’ry change He faithful will remain. Be still, my soul: thy best, thy heavenly Friend, Thro’ thorny ways leads to a joyful end. Be still, my soul: thy God doth undertake, To guide the future as He has the past. Thy hope, thy confidence let nothing shake; All now mysterious shall be bright at last. Be still, my soul: the waves and winds still know, His voice who ruled them while He dwelt below.*”

### **August 3 — Hallelujah for the Harvest (Ps. 65:1-4)**

**Psalm 65:1:** “*Praise awaits you, O God, in Zion; to you our vows will be fulfilled.*”



**Psalm 65:2:** *“O you who hear prayer, to you all men will come.”*

**Psalm 65:3:** *“When we were overwhelmed by sins, you forgave our transgressions.”*

**Psalm 65:4:** *“Blessed are those who choose and bring near to live in your courts! We are filled with the good things of your house, of your holy temple.”*

If we were to look at this psalm as prophetic, it could be as Ron Allen titles it “When Creation Sings.” The curse has been lifted! We are speaking of the millennial kingdom.

Hosea 10:12: “Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, until he comes and showers righteousness on you” (NIV).

In 2 Samuel 21 there is a famine for 3 successive years following Absalom’s rebellion. After the Gibeonites slay 7 descendants of Saul for what Saul had done during his administration, the rain poured down from heaven. We learn that when sin is confessed, the curse is lifted and the rains of revival are on the way. That’s what we’re celebrating in Psalm 65.

**Verse 1:** “Praise awaits you, O God, in Zion; to you our vows will be fulfilled.”

The picture in verse 1 is silent submission. We are saying with our lips “I surrender.” It is Esther saying “If I perish, I perish.” It is Job saying “Though he slay me yet will I trust in him.” It is Jacob saying “If I am bereaved, I am bereaved.”

Every new day provides us with further opportunities to praise God for His goodness and His grace.

The picture in verse 1 is of humanity, silent and submissive before a sovereign God.

C. H. Spurgeon says this about the “vows”: “Perhaps a special vow made during a season of drought and political danger...A vow unkept will burn the conscience like a hot iron.”

The lesson we learn in verse 1 is silent, sweet surrender, and submission to a sovereign God.

Spurgeon says: “Praise is the honey of life which a devout heart extracts from every blossom of providence and grace.”

**Verse 2:** “O you who hear prayer, to you all men will come.”

Our Lord not only “hear[s] prayer,” He also answers prayer.

Isaiah 65:24: “Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear” (NIV).

Abraham Lincoln said: “I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom, and that of all about me seemed insufficient for the day.”

François Fénelon says: “Growth in prayer is indicated by a growth in simplicity and steadiness in our attitude. Our conversation with God resembles that with a friend. At first there are a thousand things to be told, and just as

many to be asked. After a time, however, these diminish, while the pleasure of being together does not. Everything has been said, but the satisfaction of seeing each other, of feeling that one is near the other, can be felt without conversation. The silence is eloquent and mutually understood. Each feels that the other is in perfect harmony with him, and that their two hearts are continuously being poured into each other, becoming one.” (*Fénelon*, 10)

**Verse 3:** “When we were overwhelmed by sins, you forgave our transgressions.”

The focus of verse 3 is upon grace and forgiveness.

In *The Valley of Vision* we read these words: “May his shed blood make me more thankful for thy mercies, more humble under thy correction, more zealous in thy service, more watchful against temptation, more contented in my circumstances, more useful to others.” (46)

**Verse 4:** “Blessed are those who choose and bring near to live in your courts! We are filled with the good things of your house, of your holy temple.”

There are 2 things true of these who have been “blessed” by the Lord: (1) “Blessed are those you choose” and (2) “Blessed are those...you bring near to live in your courts!”

Ephesians 1:4: “just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love” (NASB). David dramatically changes the words here in verse 4: “we are filled with the good things of your house, of your holy temple.”

What a magnificent picture of God’s grace that is extended to us. Yes indeed, we are filled with the good things of your house, of your holy temple!

I know it’s just August, but I feel like singing a couple of verses of “**Joy to the World**”: “*No more let sins and sorrows grow, Nor thorns infest the ground; He comes to make His blessings flow Far as the curse is found, Far as the curse is found, Far as, far as the curse is found. He rules the world with truth and grace, And makes the nations prove The glories of His righteousness, And wonders of His love, And wonders of His love, And wonders wonders of His love.*”

#### **August 4 — God’s Greatness (Ps. 65:5-8)**

**Psalm 65:5:** “*You answer us with awesome deeds of righteousness, O God our Savior, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas,*”

**Psalm 65:6:** “*who formed the mountains by your power, having armed yourself with strength,*”

**Psalm 65:7:** “*who stilled the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, and the turmoil of the nations.*”

**Psalm 65:8:** “*Those living far away fear your wonders; where morning dawns and evening fades you call forth songs of joy.*”

I find myself wanting to sing this morning before we even meditate further on Psalm 65:5-8. Join me in a verse of “How Great Thou Art!”: *“O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made, I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder, Thy pow’r thru-out the universe displayed! Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee; How great Thou art, how great Thou art! Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to Thee; How great Thou art, how great Thou art!”*

**Verse 5:** “You answer us with awesome deeds of righteousness, O God our Savior, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas,”

Back in verse 2 it was “O you who hear prayer.” Now here in verse 5 it is “You answer us with awesome deeds of righteousness, O God...”

Isaiah 66:2: “‘Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?’ declares the Lord. ‘This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word’” (NIV).

Those “awesome deeds of righteousness” are references to the cross and the resurrection.

These are the greatest acts in the saving of a soul.

**Verse 6:** “who formed the mountains by your power, having armed yourself with strength,”

Back in verse 5 God is referred to as “Savior, the hope of all the ends of the earth.” Now here in verse 6 He is the Creator and Sustainer of this universe.

**Verse 7:** “who stilled the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, and the turmoil of the nations.”

Mark 4:37-39: “And there arose a fierce gale of wind, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling up. And He Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they awoke Him and said to Him, ‘Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?’ And being aroused, He rebuked the wind and said to the sea, ‘Hush, be still.’ And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm” (NASB).

“Yes He whispered peace be still to me, my heart obeyed His will, His word may calm the rolling sea when He said peace be still.”

Isaiah 57:20-21: “But the wicked are like the tossing sea, which cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and mud. ‘There is no peace,’ says my God, ‘for the wicked’” (NIV).

**Verse 8:** “Those living far away fear your wonders; where morning dawns and evening fades you call forth songs of joy.”

Lamentations 3:22-23: “It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness” (KJV).

Let’s sing a couple of verses of “**Jesus Shall Reign**”: *“Jesus shall reign where’er the sun Does his successive journeys run; His kingdom spread from shore to shore, Till moons shall wax and wane no more. To Him shall endless prayer be made, And endless praises crown His head; His name like sweet*

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*perfume shall rise with every morning sacrifice.”*

**August 5 — God’s Goodness (Ps. 65:9-13)**

**Psalm 65:9:** *“You care for the land and water it; you enrich it abundantly. The streams of God are filled with water to provide the people with grain, for so you have ordained it.”*

**Psalm 65:10:** *“You drench its furrows and level its ridges; you soften it with showers and bless its crops.”*

**Psalm 65:11:** *“You crown the year with your bounty, and your carts overflow with abundance.”*

**Psalm 65:12:** *“The grasslands of the desert overflow; the hills are clothed with gladness.”*

**Psalm 65:13:** *“The meadows are covered with flocks and the valleys are mantled with grain; they shout for joy and sing.”*

**Verse 9:** “You care for the land and water it; you enrich it abundantly. The streams of God are filled with water to provide the people with grain, for so you have ordained it.”

There are 3 important phrases here in these verses.

The last phrase in verse 8: “you call forth songs of joy.”

The first phrase in verse 9: “You care for the land and water it.”

The second phrase in verse 9: “you enrich it abundantly.”

What the Creator is doing for His creation, He wants to do for us individually. It delights His heart when we are singing the songs of joy.

“The streams of God are filled with water to provide the people with grain.” The reason for this is because “you have ordained it.”

It is a law of life that the blessings are stopped up because of sin. The Spirit of God is grieved and quenched and we are dry.

**Verse 10:** “You drench its furrows and level its ridges; you soften it with showers and bless its crops.”

Here the psalmist is celebrating the provision of water for the crops. There are 6 observations in verses 10 and 11: (1) “You drench”; (2) “You...level its ridges”; (3) “you soften it with showers”; (4) “you...bless its crops”; (5) “You crown the year with your bounty”; and (6) “your carts overflow with abundance.”

**Verse 11:** “You crown the year with your bounty, and your carts overflow with abundance.”

The key words are “bounty” and “abundance.”

**Verse 12:** “The grasslands of the desert overflow; the hills are clothed with gladness.”

I never read this verse but I began to think of the words to “The Sound of Music”: *“The hills are alive with the sound of music!”*

**Verse 13:** “The meadows are covered with flocks and the valleys are mantled with grain; they shout for joy and sing.”

To God be the glory, great things He has done! Great things He is doing,

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and great things He is going to yet do at that glorious time of His coming kingdom!

Lord, thank You that a day is coming when creation is released from the curse. This release will be accompanied with shouts and songs.

I find myself singing a couple of verses of **“There Shall Be Showers of Blessing”**: *“There shall be showers of blessing: Precious reviving again; Over the hills and the valleys, Sound of abundance of rain. There shall be showers of blessing: Send them upon us, O Lord; Grant to us now a refreshing, Come, and now honor Thy Word. Showers of blessing, Showers of blessing we need, Mercy drops round us are falling, But for the showers we plead.”*

#### **August 6 — The Psalmist at Prayer (Ps. 86:1-2)**

**Psalm 86:1:** *“Hear, O Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and needy.”*

**Psalm 86:2:** *“Guard my life, for I am devoted to you. You are my God; save your servant who trusts in you.”*

Because of the nature of the petitions and the type of prayer that is being prayed, this psalm was probably written during the time of Absalom’s rebellion against David and the kingdom.

If this is true, it’s late in the game for David. He’s probably 65 years of age and dies when he’s 70.

What we have in the psalm is the tragedy of 11 years of estrangement between David and his family.

As we begin our verse-by-verse study of Psalm 86, we need to be reminded of the fact that there are 13 petitions here in David’s prayer journal. I would like to highlight these petitions before we actually dig into the verses.

Petition #1: “Hear, O Lord, and answer me.”

Petition #2: “Guard my life.”

Petition #3: “Save your servant.”

Petition #4: “Have mercy on me.”

Petition #5: “Bring joy to your servant.”

Petition #6: “Hear my prayer, O Lord.”

Petition #7: “Listen to my cry for mercy.”

Petition #8: “Teach me your way, O Lord.”

Petition #9: “Give me an undivided heart.”

Petition #10: “Turn to me and have mercy on me.”

Petition #11: “Grant your strength to your servant.”

Petition #12: “Save the son of your maid-servant.”

Petition #13: “Give me a sign of your goodness.”

**Verse 1:** “Hear, O Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and needy.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 1: “Bend an ear, Yahweh; answer me. I’m one miserable wretch!”

Petition #1 is: “Hear, O Lord, and answer me.” David is asking for 2 things: access and an answer.

Because of the pressing nature of this heartache, that is the rebellion of

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his son Absalom, and the temporary takeover of the kingdom by he and his forces, David is urgent in this request.

He is saying basically: “Father, could You email it to me? I need an answer yesterday.”

The reason for request #1 is seen in the statement: “for I am poor and needy.”

David has been stripped of everything as he has left his kingdom behind and he obviously has some great needs.

**Verse 2:** “Guard my life, for I am devoted to you. You are my God; save your servant who trusts in you.”

Petition #1 we saw in verse 1: “Hear, O Lord, and answer me.” Now we have petition #2 here in verse 2: “Guard my life.”

It is the prayer of journeying mercies. David is literally fleeing for his life from Absalom and his forces. This is the petition for protection. “Guard my life.” The reason he makes this petition is “for I am devoted to you.”

Lord, I’m on your team, I’m totally sold out to Your program, so Lord, I’m asking You to guard my life.

David continues to say “You are my God.”

“God, I’ve made the decision, I’ve stepped over the line. I’m Yours, and I am asking You to guard my life.”

He then follows with petition #3: “save your servant.”

Lord, Your property is in danger. My plea is that You will save Your servant. Not only has he made a decision and a commitment to be loyal to God himself, but he has also made a commitment to be His servant.

Lord, “save your servant who trusts in you.” Lord, I trust You in every situation and I ask You to act here to save Your servant in these difficult circumstances.

Lord, like a trusting child I’m jumping from the pier into Your waiting arms.

Corrie Ten Boom said: “There is no panic in heaven.”

She also said: “Jesus was victor, Jesus is victor, Jesus will be victor! So don’t wrestle, Just nestle.”

David is probably going to want to join us in singing our hymn for this morning, **“Throw Out the Life-Line”**: *“Throw out the Life-Line across the dark wave, There is a brother whom someone should save; Somebody’s brother! O who then, will dare To throw out the Life-Line, his peril to share? Throw out the Life-Life! Throw out the Life-Line! Someone is drifting away; Someone is sinking today.”*

### **August 7 — Pray for our Country (Donna)**

2 Chronicles 7:14: “If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (NIV).

My husband and I attended a prayer breakfast this morning. The speaker was very challenging and inspirational. He was from out of town so he was staying



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at a hotel. He received his USA Today newspaper and thought the National Day of Prayer would be on the cover of the newspaper. It was not. He looked through the entire paper and did not see any reference to the National Day of Prayer. The speaker's comment, "There is no prayer in THE USA TODAY." The double meaning of his words spoke to my heart.

Would you join me in praying in THE USA TODAY for America? The above verse is an excellent prayer guideline. Pray that we in America will humble ourselves, pray and seek God's face and turn from our wicked ways so God will forgive our sins and heal our land.

After the prayer breakfast my husband and I went for a cup of coffee to talk about our day and decisions we needed to discuss. In the restaurant was a young Marine and his girlfriend. My husband asked the waitress for this young couple's check. Mark paid their bill and went over and told this couple, "I just came from the National Day of Prayer Breakfast and we prayed for the troops." Mark asked him where he was serving and told him, "I will pray for you today."

Every day I look for a person to encourage through prayer. Will you join me? Let's have much prayer in the USA TODAY.

At a location where I have the privilege of being a Chaplain, one of the employees will often tell me as he passes by someone, "Sister, this person needs double knee prayers!" Of course he is kidding with his fellow employee. The truth of the matter is, America is in need of double knee prayers. Let's double up on our prayers for America. (Guest contributor, Donna Anderson Skorheim)

### **August 8 — Mercy Like a River and Joy Like an Ocean (Ps. 86:3-4)**

**Psalms 86:3:** *"Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I call to you all day long."*

**Psalms 86:4:** *"Bring joy to your servant, for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul."*

**Verse 3:** "Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I call to you all day long."

Petition #4: "Have mercy on me." David uses the word "mercy" in 3 of these 13 requests.

*"Yes, mercy there was great, and grace was free; Pardon there was multiplied to me; ...at Calvary."*

"Have mercy on me, O Lord...I've let the relationship with Absalom be estranged for 11 years. I'm getting what I deserve. Please Lord! Remember mercy!"

It helps us sense the emotional intensity of David as he is praying: "Have mercy on me, O Lord." The reason being: "for I call to you all day long."

1 Thessalonians 5:17: "pray without ceasing;" (NASB).

**Verse 4:** "Bring joy to your servant, for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul."

Petition #5: "Bring joy to your servant." Refreshment comes when we get serious.

Lamentations 3:41: "Let us lift up our hearts and our hands to God in heaven..." (NIV).

Joy is the evidence that the King is in residence. Whereas, back in

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Petition #3, it was: “Save your servant.” Now, here in Petition #5 it is: “Bring joy to you servant.”

Joy is the evidence of blessing. Psalm 51:12: “Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me” (NIV).

Psalm 30:5: “...weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning” (NIV).

Psalm 126:5-6: “Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him” (NIV).

Isaiah 65:14: “My servants will sing out of the joy of their hearts...” (NIV).

Psalm 25:1: “To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul” (NIV).

Spiritual health is manifested by joy in our hearts.

Please join me in singing a couple of verses of “**Pass Me Not**”: “*Pass me not, O gentle Savior, Hear my humble cry; While on others Thou art calling, Do not pass me by. Let me at Thy throne of mercy Find a sweet relief; Kneeling there in deep contrition, Help my unbelief. Savior, Savior, Hear my humble cry; While on others Thou art calling, Do not pass me by.*”

**August 9 — Lord, You are Forgiving and Good (Psalm 86:5-6) Psalm 86:5:**

*“You are forgiving and good, O Lord, abounding in love to all who call to you.”*

**Psalm 86:6: “Hear my prayer, O Lord; listen to my cry for mercy.”**

**Verse 5:** “You are forgiving and good, O Lord, abounding in love to all who call to you.”

In verse 5 the psalmist now turns from the petition to the person—God Himself. The focus is now on the “Lord.” The first 5 petitions have been made, now he turns from these petitions for a brief moment to words of praise.

“You are forgiving and good, O Lord, abounding in love to all who call to you.”

It’s interesting that these things David tells the Lord that He’s famous for, are all the things that David wasn’t to Absalom.

There are 3 things that he says about the Lord: “You are forgiving,” “You are...good,” and “You are...abounding in love.”

The psalmist is saying to God that he is like this to “all who call to you.”

John 16:24: “Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be made full” (NASB).

**Verse 6:** “Hear my prayer, O Lord; listen to my cry for mercy.”

Petition #6: “Hear my prayer, O Lord.” Back in petition #1 we had: “Hear, O Lord, and answer me.”

1 John 5:14-15: “And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him” (NASB).

Petition #7: “listen to my cry for mercy.”

Prayer has been characterized by 3 words thus far: (1) “call”; (2) “lift up my soul”; and (3) “cry.”

This is the central petition. There have been 6 preceding this one and there will be 6 following it. It is similar to the central cry from the cross. Jesus speaks 7 times, and the fourth cry is “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” which is translated “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46 NASB).

Oswald Chambers said: “Our Lord did not say, “Go” or “Do.” He said, “Watch and pray.”

Let’s sing that chorus “**Holy Ground**”: “*We are standing on holy ground, And I know that there are angels all around. Let us praise Jesus now. We are standing in His presence on holy ground.*”

### **August 10 — Lord, You are Awesome! (Ps. 86:7-10)**

**Psalm 86:7:** “*In the day of my trouble I will call to you, for you will answer me.*”

**Psalm 86:8:** “*Among the gods there is none like you, O Lord; no deeds can compare with yours.*”

**Psalm 86:9:** “*All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, O Lord; they will bring glory to your name.*”

**Psalm 86:10:** “*For you are great and do marvelous deeds; you alone are God.*”

**Verse 7:** “In the day of my trouble I will call to you, for you will answer me.”

In verse 7 David stops to explain his procedure to the Father: “In the day of my trouble I will call to you.”

Then he gives the reason: “for you will answer me.” There is an increased anticipation that the Lord is going to move in his behalf. Back in petition #1 he prayed: “Hear, O Lord, and answer me.” Now he says: “I will call to you, for you will answer me.”

“In the day of my trouble” reminds me of Tony Evans when he says: “You’re either in the middle of a trial, just coming out of one, or just heading into one. Better be ready!... Jesus has you on His radar screen, and He will come just when you need Him. And He has no problem getting to you.” (*Time To Get Serious*, 229, 231)

Vance Havner says: “Whether He spare or share He will be there.” (*Though I Walk Through the Valley*, 96)

**Verse 8:** “Among the gods there is none like you, O Lord; no deeds can compare with yours.”

Exodus 15:11: “Who among the gods is like you, O Lord? Who is like you— majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?” (NIV).

Lord, You are the real King, the eternal King! I don’t need to be king! Just being Your servant satisfies me.

**Verse 9:** “All the nations you have made will come and worship before

you, O Lord; they will bring glory to your name.”

**Verse 10:** “For you are great and do marvelous deeds; you alone are God.”

There are 3 reasons why the “nations...will bring glory to your name” and they are recorded in verse 10: (1) “you are great”; (2) “you do marvelous deeds”; and (3) You alone are God.”

This takes us back to verse 5 when David is focusing on God’s person: “You are forgiving...good...abounding in love” (NIV).

Let’s sing a couple of verses of that great old hymn “**All For Jesus**”: *“All for Jesus, all for Jesus All my being’s ransomed pow’rs: All my tho’ts and words and doings, All my days and all my hours. All for Jesus! All for Jesus! All my days and all my hours. Let my hands perform His bidding, Let my feet run in His ways; Let my eyes see Jesus only, Let my lips speak forth His praise. All for Jesus! All for Jesus! Let my lips speak forth His praise.”*

### **August 11 — I Want to Do It Your Way! (Ps. 86:11)**

**Psalm 86:11:** “*Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart that I may fear your name.*”

**Verse 11:** “*Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart that I may fear your name.*”

Petition #8: “Teach me your way, O Lord.”

Isaiah 30:21: “Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, ‘This is the way; walk in it’” (NIV).

Proverbs 3:5-7: “Trust God from the bottom of your heart; don’t try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for God’s voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he’s the one who will keep you on track. Don’t assume that you know it all” (MSG).

Job 34:32: “Teach me what I cannot see; if I have done wrong, I will not do so again!” (NIV).

Following petition #8 we have the words of commitment: “and I will walk in your truth.”

Colossians 2:6: “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him” (NASB).

Petition #9: “give me an undivided heart that I may fear your name.”

Lord, grant that my heart might have a single focus, to glorify You by reflecting Jesus in my life.

Psalm 27:4: “One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple” (NIV).

Matthew 6:24: “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and Mammon” (NASB).

James 4:8: “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded” (NASB).

Petition #9: “give me an undivided heart.” Lord, keep me focused, keep me

single-minded in my determination to follow Your will.

The purpose for having an “undivided heart” is that “I may fear your name.”

Derek Kidner quotes Thomas Ken regarding the fear of the Lord: “Direct, control, suggest, this day, All I design, or do, or say, That all my powers, with all their might, In Thy sole glory may unite.”

François Fénelon said: “[God] wants the ‘Isaac’ of your heart—the only son, the beloved. He wants you to yield up to Him all that you hold most dear. Until you do this you will have no rest. ‘Who is He that has resisted the Almighty and been at peace?’ Do you want God to bless you? Give up everything to Him and He will be with you. What comfort, what freedom, what strength, what growth when self-love no longer stands between you and God.”

Corrie Ten Boom said: “I have learned to hold everything loosely. That way it doesn’t hurt when God takes them from me.”

I think it would be appropriate for us to sing verses 3 and 4 of the hymn we sang yesterday, **“All For Jesus”**: *“Since my eyes were fixed on Jesus, I’ve lost sight of all beside; So enchained my spirit’s vision, Looking at the Crucified. All for Jesus! All for Jesus! Looking at the Crucified. Oh, what wonder! How amazing! Jesus, glorious King of kings, Deigns to call me His beloved, Lets me rest beneath His wings. All for Jesus! All for Jesus! Resting now beneath His wings.”*

## **August 12 — I Will Glorify Your Name Forever (Ps. 86:12-13)**

**Psalm 86:12:** *“I will praise you, O Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever.”*

**Psalm 86:13:** *“For great is your love toward me; you have delivered me from the depths of the grave.”*

**Verse 12:** “I will praise you, O Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever.”

Here the psalmist turns to an attitude of gratitude. His heart is filled with praise.

“I will praise you, O Lord my God.” And I will do it “with all my heart.” There are no other first things in my life. You are Lord of all.

There are times in our devotional periods that we just have to stop and sing before we proceed. My heart is filled with that wonderful chorus of worship “He Is Lord”: *“He is Lord; He is Lord; He is risen from the dead, and He is Lord. Ev’ry knee shall bow, ev’ry tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.”*

Perhaps the reason we have such difficulty with praise toward our Creator is because we are guilty of the divided heart. We are filled with botched-up priorities, and other things are more important than our relationship to Him. Because of that, the praise is stifled.

This is the second time in the psalm David calls the Lord “my God.” The first time was back in verse 2 in the agony of prayer. Now here in verse 12 it is the ecstasy of praise. If anything can make man pray and praise, it is the knowledge that the Lord is his God.

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**Verse 13:** “For great is your love toward me; you have delivered me from the depths of the grave.”

Peterson paraphrases this verse beautifully: “You’ve always been great toward me—what love! You snatched me from the brink of disaster!”

The reason for his “praise” is given here in verse 13: “For great is your love toward me; you have delivered me from the depths of the grave.”

Let’s sing a couple of verses of “**Jesus Is the Sweetest Name I Know**”:

*“There have been names that I have loved to hear, But never has there been a name so dear To this heart of mine, as the name divine, The precious, precious name of Jesus. And some day I shall see Him face to face To thank and praise Him for His wondrous grace, Which He gave to me, when He made me free, The blessed Son of God called Jesus. Jesus is the sweetest name I know, And He’s just the same as His lovely name, And that’s the reason why I love Him so; Oh, Jesus is the sweetest name I know.”*

### **August 13 — Don’t Underestimate the Opposition (Ps. 86:14-15)**

**Psalm 86:14:** “*The arrogant are attacking me, O God; a band of ruthless men seeks my life—men without regard for you.*”

**Psalm 86:15:** “*But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.*”

**Verse 14:** “The arrogant are attacking me, O God; a band of ruthless men seeks my life—men without regard for you.”

David had 2 times in his life when he was hunted for the purpose of taking his life. The first was by Saul and the second by his own son, Absalom, when he overthrew the Davidic kingdom for a brief period. I prefer to see this as the later occasion when the psalm was written.

Proverbs 24:10: “If you falter in times of trouble, how small is your strength!” (NIV).

Ephesians 6:10-13: “Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm” (NASB).

**Verse 15:** “But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.”

The word “But” forms the contrast to these arrogant men. “But you, O Lord” are characterized in 5 ways: (1) you’re compassionate; (2) you’re gracious; (3) you’re slow to anger; (4) you’re abounding in love; and (5) you’re abounding in faithfulness.

This is the third time that David, in this psalm, has turned away from the petition to the person to whom he’s making the request. (1) “You are forgiving and good, O Lord, abounding in love to all who call to you”—verse 5; (2) “You



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are great and do marvelous deeds; you alone are God”—verse 10; and (3) “You, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness”—verse 15.

What a great tribute! It can certainly form the foundation and framework for our own praise of our Father.

How about let’s sing the chorus **“His Name is Wonderful”**: *“His Name is Wonderful, His Name is Wonderful, His Name is Wonderful, Jesus my Lord. He is the mighty King, Master of ev’rything, His Name is Wonderful, Jesus my Lord. He’s the Great Shepherd, the Rock of all Ages, Almighty God is He. Bow down before Him, Love and adore Him. His Name is Wonderful, Jesus my Lord.”*

### **August 14 — Wisdom (Donna)**

I am wise! How can I make this bold statement? My eye doctor told me I was wise!

Last week I went for an eye appointment. Dr. Smith took some in-depth pictures of my eyes and they appeared on his computer! What amazing technology!

Dr. Smith showed me the pictures of my eyes. I had large groups of floaters in both eyes. I asked him what caused the floaters. His answer was, “wisdom.”

There you have it! A medical professional diagnosed me with wisdom!

Actually he went on to explain the cause for the floaters. It was something about eyes over 50. I stopped listening!

The Scriptures give a different litmus test for wisdom. Unfortunately for me it is not eye floaters! Read the following verses and notice what characterizes a wise person in God’s eyes.

James 3:13: “Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.”

James 3:15-17 describes 2 types of wisdom.

Verses 15-16 describe wisdom #1: “The wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.”

Verse 17 describes wisdom #2: “But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.”

When we read these four verses from James we all have an overwhelming desire for wisdom #2 and an increased awareness that we are so lacking in wisdom from above. There is hope.

James 1:5: “But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

We can ask God for wisdom and He will give it to us generously. In other words, He will help us to be wise and to have the characteristics described in James 3:17. We need to ask Him. He then promises to give us His wisdom. I can do that! Will you join me?!

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A word to the wise: Wisdom has nothing to do with age and everything to do with God. (Guest contributor, Donna Anderson Skorheim)

**August 15 — His Strength is Made Perfect in Our Weakness (Ps. 86:16-17)**

**Psalm 86:16:** *“Turn to me and have mercy on me; grant your strength to your servant and save the son of your maidservant.”*

**Psalm 86:17:** *“Give me a sign of your goodness, that my enemies may see it and be put to shame, for you, O Lord, have helped me and comforted me.”*

**Verse 16:** “Turn to me and have mercy on me; grant your strength to your servant and save the son of your maidservant.”

There are 3 petitions in verse 16.

Petition #10: “Turn to me and have mercy on me.”

Petition #11: “grant your strength to your servant.”

Petition #12: “save the son of your maidservant.”

Let’s meditate for a moment on petition #10: “Turn to me and have mercy on me.” This is the third petition in the psalm that centers on “mercy.”

Petition #4: “Have mercy on me.” Petition #7: “Listen to my cry for mercy.” And now petition #10: “Turn to me and have mercy on me.”

Petition #11: “grant your strength to your servant.” The focus of petition #11 is God’s strength.

Isaiah 40:31: “but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint” (NIV).

Philippians 4:13: “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me” (NASB).

2 Corinthians 12:9: “And He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me” (NASB).

This is the third time that the psalmist has referred to himself as a “servant” in these petitions.

Petition #3: “save your servant.” Petition #5: “bring joy to your servant.” And now petition #11: “grant your strength to your servant.”

It’s strength to keep hanging in there and to keep on going.

Petition #12: “save the son of your maidservant.” The focus of petition #12 is upon relationship.

**Verse 17:** “Give me a sign of your goodness, that my enemies may see it and be put to shame, for you, O Lord, have helped me and comforted me.”

Petition #13: “Give me a sign of your goodness.”

His purpose in petitioning the Lord, with regard to a sign of his goodness, is seen in the next phrase: “that my enemies may see it and be put to shame.” He then states the reason: “for you, O Lord, have helped me and comforted me.”

This petition is asking for evidence that God is at work. This is doing something consistent with His goodness.

Back in petition #9 he asked the Lord to “Give [him] an undivided heart.” Now in petition #13, “give me a sign of your goodness.”

Remember in Genesis 24 when Abraham’s servant went to get a bride for Isaac. He arrives at the well and beginning with Genesis 24:12 we read: “Then he prayed, ‘O Lord, God of my master Abraham, give me success today, and show kindness to my master Abraham. See, I am standing beside the spring, and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water. May it be that when I say to a girl, “Please let down your jar that I may have a drink,” and she says, “Drink, and I’ll water your camels too”—let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac. By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master.’ Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder” (24:12-15a NIV).

Ephesians 3:20: “Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us” (NASB).

Isaiah 41:13: “For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you” (NIV).

2 Corinthians 1:3-4: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God” (NASB).

1 Chronicles 16:31: “Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let them say among the nations, ‘The Lord reigns!’” (NIV).

It is reported that Moody’s farewell words to his sons as he lay upon his deathbed were: “If God be your partner, make your plans large.” (*God’s Little Instruction Book: Volumes I, II & II*, 210)

As we conclude Psalm 86, shouldn’t we ask the question: “When we die, what kind of a prayer journal are we leaving behind?”

How about let’s sing the second verse of that great old hymn, “**Follow, I Will Follow Thee**”: “*Jesus calls me, I must follow, Follow ev’ry hour, Know the blessing of His presence, Fullness of His pow’r. Follow, I will follow Thee, my Lord, Follow ev’ry passing day; My tomorrows are all known to Thee, Thou wilt lead me all the way.*”

## August 16 — We Are All Terminal (Ps. 90:1-2)

**Psalm 90:1:** “*Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.*”

**Psalm 90:2:** “*Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*”

Psalm 90 is the psalm of death. It was written by Moses. So much of the background to this particular psalm would be found in the 40 year wandering in the wilderness by the children of Israel.

At least 600,000 people died during those 40 years of wandering. When you figure that out, it would be a funeral every 20 minutes. The journey was

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continually plagued with physical death.

In the wilderness, Moses experienced the death of his sister Miriam and also his brother Aaron. Then in his anger, he hit the rock and would not make it to the Promised Land.

At the end of the book of Deuteronomy he gives his final address: “The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms...” (33:27 NIV). **Verse 1:** “Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.”

Moses refers to Him as “Lord” or Sovereign. To these who have wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, have found a shelter in the Lord: “you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.” **Verse 2:** “Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.”

Moses does not have any problem with the fact that God created the mountains and “brought forth the earth and the world.” He is the one who recorded the record of creation in the book of Genesis.

Isaiah 64:1: “Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains would tremble before you!” (NIV).

Isaiah 66:2: “‘Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?’ declares the Lord. ‘This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word’” (NIV).

Isobel Kuhn served faithfully in China along with her husband John. The time of her death had come:

During her last months, Isobel found many joys. “The edelweiss of God,” she called them, thinking of the bright-eyed, woolly plants that grow on rough mountain slopes. Loving friends; good books; letters, cards, flowers, and gifts—all these she counted as edelweiss.

That last New Year of 1957, the Lord gave her a verse from Isaiah 46, and she shared it with John, always at her bedside: *I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning...My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.*

His pleasure, His will, had become her own; and she had proved the truth of Dante’s words, *In His will is our peace.*

Still confident in God, still trusting, she rested her heart upon His will as she drew near to the summit; and there, on March 20, 1957, she met Him face to face. (*Gloria Repp, Nothing Daunted: The Story of Isobel Kuhn*, 163)

I would like to conclude today’s meditation with the words of a song sung by B. J. Thomas called **“Home Where I Belong”**: *“They say that heaven’s pretty / And living here is too / But if they said that I / would have to choose between the two / I’d go home, going home, where I belong / And sometimes when I’m*

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*dreaming / It comes as no surprise / That if you look and see / The homesick feeling in my eyes / I'm going home, going home, where I belong / While I'm here I'll serve him gladly / And sing him all my songs / I'm here, but not for long / And when I'm feeling lonely / And when I'm feeling blue / It's such a joy to know that / I am only passing through / I'm headed home, going home, where I belong / And one day I'll be sleeping, / When death knocks on my door / And I'll awake and find that / I'm not homesick anymore / I'll be home, going home, where I belong."*

#### **August 17 — Our Ground Time Will Be Brief (Ps. 90:3-6)**

**Psalm 90:3:** *"You turn men back to dust, saying, 'Return to dust, O sons of men.'"*

**Psalm 90:4:** *"For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night."*

**Psalm 90:5:** *"You sweep men away in the sleep of death; they are like the new grass of the morning—"*

**Psalm 90:6:** *"though in the morning it springs up new, by evening it is dry and withered."*

**Verse 3:** "You turn men back to dust, saying, 'Return to dust, O sons of men.'"

Genesis 3:19: "By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return" (NIV).

Life is brief circle. You go back to where you came from.

**Verse 4:** "For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night."

"A watch in the night" was approximately 4 hours.

Psalm 63:6: "On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night" (NIV).

Life is short, death is sure. Sin is the cause, Christ is the cure!

2 Peter 3:8-9: "But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (NASB).

**Verse 5:** "You sweep men away in the sleep of death; they are like the new grass of the morning—"

The word "sweep" has in it the picture of a flash flood. Back in verse 3 we read: "You turn men back to dust." Now in verse 5, "You sweep men away in the sleep of death."

Psalm 39:4-5: "Show me, O Lord, my life's end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting is my life. You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Each man's life is but a breath. Selah" (NIV).

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Psalm 103:15-16: “As for man, his days are like grass, he flourishes like a flower of the field; the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more” (NIV).

**Verse 6:** “though in the morning it springs up new, by evening it is dry and withered.”

H.C. Leupold says: “Life flees away; [but] God endures.”

Spurgeon gives the following history of “grass”: “[It is] sown, grown, blown, mown, gone...” Another of B. J. Thomas’ songs that I really enjoy is called

**“Happy Man”:** “*When*

*I die there won’t be much to salvage from my earnings / I never had a lot of land or houses to my name / I’ve never been a corporate prince on Madison and New York / I never held a diamond in my hand / But I’ve seen children laughing / As only children can / And I’ve known my creator / And I’ve been a happy man / I never really loved the way I saw it in the movies / But I had myself a woman of my own / The place we lived was modest / And we kept the yard together / I never traveled far from my hometown / But I’ve heard music playing / That made me understand / And touched the hearts of heaven / And I’ve been a happy man / Life has had its hard times / When I’ve felt the chill of winter / I can’t forget the night when my sweet Julie slipped away / But growing old is different / Than I always thought it would be / The sweetness of my youth / Just grew with age / ‘Cause I’ve known wealth and beauty / Beneath his guiding hand / And knowing soon I’ll see him / Has made me a happy man / And knowing soon I’ll see him / Has made me a happy man.”*

### **August 18 — Prepare for Immediate Departure (Ps. 90:7-9)**

**Psalm 90:7:** “*We are consumed by your anger and terrified by your indignation.*”

**Psalm 90:8:** “*You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence.*”

**Psalm 90:9:** “*All our days pass away under your wrath; we finish our years with a moan.*”

**Verse 7:** “We are consumed by your anger and terrified by your indignation.”

Moses says in verse 7: “We are consumed by your anger and terrified by your indication.” There’s a natural instinctive dread of death that all of us face. In verse 3: “You turn men back to dust.” In verse 5: “You sweep men away in the sleep of death.” Now in verse 7: “We are consumed by your anger [and we are] terrified by your indignation.”

“We are consumed”—that is finished, spent, there’s nothing left—“by your anger.”

Moses is describing what it is like to be living under certain divine judgment that is going to be carried out by a holy, sovereign God.

Don’t ever forget about grace! When it runs out, this is what happens.



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Adam Clarke, a Christian saint and Biblical expositor at 84 said: “I have passed through the springtime of my life. I have withstood the heat of its summer. I have culled the fruits of fall. I am even now enduring the rigors of its winter, but at no great distance I see the approach of a new, eternal springtime. Hallelujah!” (*Parson’s Technology*)

**Verse 8:** “You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence.”

There are 2 things here in verse 8: (1) “You have set our iniquities before you” and

(2) “our secret sins [are] in the light of your presence.”

Job 34:21: “His eyes are on the ways of men; he sees their every step” (NIV)

Proverbs 5:21: “For a man’s ways are in full view of the Lord, and he examines all

his paths” (NIV).

Jeremiah 16:17: “My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from me, nor is their sin concealed from my eyes” (NIV).

Hebrews 4:13: “And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.”

Proverbs 15:3: “The eyes of the Lord are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good” (NIV).

**Verse 9:** “All our days pass away under your wrath; we finish our years with a moan.”

The word “All” is in the emphatic position.

This certainly is true of the children of Israel because they refused to believe God and go into the land. As a result, all the remaining days of their lives are being spent under God’s heavy hand of judgment.

W. Graham Scroggie says: “It is sin that is at the bottom of life’s brevity and tragedy!”

How different is the perspective of the believer who is facing impending death.

1 Corinthians 15:57: “...but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (NASB).

Let’s sing together **“The Savior Is Waiting”**: *“The Savior is waiting to enter your heart; Why don’t you let Him come in? There’s nothing in this world to keep you apart, What is your answer to Him? If you’ll take one step t’ward the Savior, my friend; You’ll find His arms open wide. Receive Him and all of your darkness will end, Within your heart He’ll abide. Time after time, He has waited before, And now He is waiting again. To see if you’re willing to open the door, Oh, how He wants to come in.”*

**August 19 — We Are In Our Final Approach (Ps. 90:10-11)**

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**Psalm 90:10:** “*The length of our days is seventy years—or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away.*”

**Psalm 90:11:** “*Who knows the power of your anger? For your wrath is as great as the fear that is due you.*”

**Verse 10:** “The length of our days is seventy years—or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away.”

Because the nation Israel is under God’s divine judgment, Moses declares that a lifespan is: “seventy years—or eighty, if we have the strength.”

He then describes this “span” of years in 2 ways. They are: “trouble” and “sorrow.” He then gives the final reasons: “for they quickly pass” and “we fly away.”

Life flies away in death like a fleeting bird frightened from its roost.

Job 20:8: “Like a dream he flies away, no more to be found, banished like a vision of the night” (NIV).

C. H. Spurgeon says: “The cable is broken and the vessel sails upon the sea of eternity; the chain is snapped and the eagle mounts to its native air above the clouds.”

Barbara Johnson said: “A friend once closed a letter to me with the quip ‘Until He comes or until I go!’ Given a choice, many of us would agree with Joni Eareckson Tada’s eighty-year-old friend who said she was eagerly anticipating heaven but hoped to ‘stay around for Jesus’ return’ because, she said, ‘I never like to miss a good party.’” (Barbara Johnson, *He’s Gonna Toot and I’m Gonna Scoot*, 5. Joni Eareckson Tada, *Heaven... Your Real Home*, 198)

David Roper said: “Once we grasp the fact that ‘we’re not long for this world,’ we may begin to wise up. Hopefully, we’ll add up the days of our lives, reckon their number to be few and determine by God’s grace to make them count while we can. In the words of a plaque that used to hang over my mother’s desk: ‘Only one life will soon be past; Only what’s done for Christ will last. And when I am dying how glad I will be, That the lamp of my life has been burned out for Thee.’” (*In Quietness and Confidence*, 135).

I find myself singing this morning “*Some glad morning when this life is o’er, I’ll fly away; To a home on God’s celestial shore, I’ll fly away. I’ll fly away, O Glory, I’ll fly away, ...To a land where joy shall never end, I’ll fly away.*”

**Verse 11:** “Who knows the power of your anger? For your wrath is as great as the fear that is due you.”

Verse 11 opens with a question: “Who knows the power of your anger?”

Moses is the one who recorded the record of the flood. He saw men dying all around him. May I say that we ain’t seen nothin’ yet in comparison to the

judgment that's going to come!

Calvin says: "They are not touched with the feeling of God's wrath, because they do not stand in awe of Him."

Let's enjoy singing one of Fanny Crosby's great old hymns, "**My Saviour First of All**": *"When my life work is ended, and I cross the swelling tide, When the bright and glorious morning I shall see; I shall know my Redeemer when I reach the other side, And His smile will be the first to welcome me. I shall know Him, I shall know Him, As redeemed by His side I shall stand; I shall know Him, I shall know Him, by the print of the nails in His hand."*

### **August 20 — He's Fixin' to Promenade Home (Ps. 90:12-13)**

**Psalm 90:12:** *"Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom."*

**Psalm 90:13:** *"Relent, O Lord! How long will it be? Have compassion on your servants."*

**Verse 12:** "Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom."

"Teach us to number our days aright."

Psalm 39:4-5: "Show me, O Lord, my life's end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting is my life. You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Each man's life is but a breath. Selah" (NIV).

François Fénelon said: "We misuse our time, not only when we do wrong or do nothing, but also when we do something else than what we *should* have done at that moment, even though it may be the means of good. We are strangely ingenious in perpetually seeking our own interest, and what the world does nakedly and without shame, those who desire to be devoted to God do in a refined manner and under the cover of some pretext which serves as a veil to hide the deformity of their conduct from them."

There are couple of bumper stickers that I've seen: "Time is the best teacher—unfortunately it kills all its students" and "Warning! Dates in calendar are closer than they appear!"

Vance Havner, who lost his wife, said: "I would say to every husband and wife, 'Count no day unimportant if you still have each other, for the day will come when you would give everything for just one day, any ordinary day, you once shared together.'"

*(Though I Walk Through the Valley, 121).*

Benjamin Franklin said: "Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time, for that's the stuff life is made of."

**Verse 13:** "Relent, O Lord! How long will it be? Have compassion on your servants."

The key word was "teach" in verse 12 and now it is "relent" in verse 13.

Question #2: "How long will it be?"

Question #1 was back in verse 11: "Who knows the power of your anger?"

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Winston Churchill said: *“Curse ruthless time! Curse our mortality! How cruelly short is the allotted span for all we must cram into it! We are all worms. But I do believe that I am a glow worm.”* (Churchill on Leadership, 21)

Yes, the day of our departure is at hand. Our flight has already been scheduled. There will be no mechanical difficulties to cancel the flight. It will be on time and arrive safely.

Let’s conclude today’s study with singing verses 3 and 4 of Fanny Crosby’s hymn **“My Saviour First of All.”** Please remember as you sing these verses of this great hymn that she was blind and this would be the sight that she would have. *“Oh, the dear ones in glory, how they beckon me to come, And our parting at the river I recall; To the sweet vales of Eden they will sing my welcome home, But I long to meet my Saviour first of all. Thro’ the gates to the city in a robe of spotless white, He will lead me where no tears shall ever fall; In the glad song of ages I shall mingle with delight; But I long to meet my Saviour first of all. I shall know Him, I shall know Him, As redeemed by His side I shall stand; I shall know Him, I shall know Him, by the print of the nails in His hand.”*

### **August 21 — Operation Lifesaver (Donna)**

Recently I had the occasion to attend a Railroad safety meeting entitled “Operation Lifesaver.” It is presented to civic groups, schools, etc.

The presenter made a comment about the obvious, but it is something I had not thought of before. He showed the slide of a train engine compartment and asked us what was missing. The answer eventually came out—a steering wheel! He went on to explain a train goes straight ahead on the tracks. It cannot turn off the tracks.

I presently am studying the book of Ezekiel in preparation to teach it this fall in a Bible Study group. God gave Ezekiel a vision of heaven. In Ezekiel chapter 10 he is describing 4 living creatures. Something struck me as I read about these living creatures. Like a train, they go straight ahead. As they are mentioned in the book of Ezekiel over and over, similar phrases describe them.

Ezekiel 10:11: “without turning as they went; but they followed in the direction which they faced, without turning as they went.”

Ezekiel 10:22: “Each one went straight ahead.”

These living creatures around the throne of God go straight ahead. They are focused on the command or direction God has given them and they do not detour from the mission/direction God has sent them.

What a powerful example for us. Do you find yourself on a detour? Get back on TRACK with God and do not waste your energy going in directions you know He has not planned for you.

Hebrews 12:1-2: “And let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus.”

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(Guest contributor, Donna Anderson Skorheim)

## August 22 — He's Fixin' to Gather Up Over Yonder (Ps. 90:14-15)

**Psalm 90:14:** *“Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.”*

**Psalm 90:15:** *“Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us, for as many years as we have seen trouble.”*

**Verse 14:** “Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.”

Whereas the key word in verse 12 was “Teach,” verse 13 “relent,” now in verse 14 “Satisfy us” comes to our attention.

“Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love.”

The reason he is asking for this is 2-fold: (1) “that we may sing for joy” and (2) “we may be...glad all our days.”

His love never fluctuates, never falters, and never fails. Yes, it is truly “unfailing love.” He is the only One who can give this!

John 10:10: “the thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly” (NASB).

Psalm 30:5: “For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning” (NIV).

**Verse 15:** “Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us, for as many years as we have seen trouble.”

The key word in verse 12 was “Teach,” verse 13 “relent,” verse 14 “Satisfy us,” and now verse 15 “Make us glad.” As the Lord is telling Moses of the disciplinary action against them, we read in Numbers 14:34-35: “For forty years—one year for each of the forty days you explored the land—you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you. I, the Lord, have spoken, and I will surely do these things to this whole wicked community, which has banded together against me. They will meet their end in this desert; here they will die” (NIV).

2 Corinthians 4:16-18: “Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal” (NASB).

Ruth Myers in her book *The Perfect Love* says: “One of the poems that comforted me when your daddy died now returns to mind: I am leaving, I am leaving for the country of my King! Let not words of grief be spoken, Let not loving hearts be broken, Rather let the joybells ring, For earth's wintery life is changing into everlasting spring.”

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Let's sing that wonderful little chorus "**The Longer I Serve Him**": *"Since I started for the Kingdom, Since my life He controls, Since I gave my heart o Jesus, The longer I serve Him, the sweeter He grows. Ev'ry need He is supplying; Plenteous grace He bestows. Ev'ry day my way gets brighter; The longer I serve Him, the sweeter He grows. The longer I serve Him, the sweeter He grows. The more that I love Him, more love He bestows. Each day is like heaven; my heart overflows. The longer I serve Him, the sweeter He grows."*

**August 23 — Afore Your Lamp is Blowed Out (Ps. 90:16-17)**

**Psalm 90:16:** *"May your deeds be shown to your servants, your splendor to their children."*

**Psalm 90:17:** *"May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us—yes, establish the work of our hands."*

**Verse 16:** "May your deeds be shown to your servants, your splendor to their children."

Kenneth Wyatt in his book *Christ and the Cowboy* writes this little poetic piece: *"Keep remembering this fact / That love is comin' back when / Christ returns with a shout! / And there are many things / You must do and get done— / Afore your lamp is blowed out.* (123)

Moses' prayer in verse 16 is 2-fold: "May your deeds be shown to your servants" and "May...your splendor to their children."

Matthew Henry said: "Let thy work appear, and in it thy glory will appear to us and those that shall come after us."

Psalm 49:15: "But God will redeem my life from the grave; he will surely take me to himself. Selah" (NIV).

Moses continues to pray in verse 17.

**Verse 17:** "May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us—yes, establish the work of our hands."

Psalm 85:6-7: "Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you? Show us your unfailing love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation" (NIV).

J. Vernon McGee said: "O! to do something in this life that will have value in eternity."

Before he died, Tom Landry said: "I just hope when it's all over that I've helped some people have a better life because they've known me somewhere along the way. I don't care if I'm in the hall of fame or whether I'm remembered for any reason other than that."

Fénelon said: "I yield myself, O my God, into thy hands. Turn and turn again this clay. Give it a form. Then break it. It is thine. It has nothing to say. It is enough for me that it serve thine every design, and that nothing resist thy good pleasure, for which I was made."

Our goal as believers should be to receive a big hug and a "well done" from our blessed Lord Jesus.



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Let's sing a verse of **"Ring the Bells of Heaven"**: *"Ring the bells of heaven—there is joy today For a soul returning from the wild! See, the Father meets him out upon the way, Welcoming His weary, wand'ring child. Glory! Glory! How the angels sing! Glory! Glory! How the loud harps ring! 'Tis the ransomed army, like a mighty sea, Pealing forth the anthem of the free."*

**August 24 — It's An Honor to Serve (Ps. 91:1-2)**

**Psalm 91:1:** *"He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty."*

**Psalm 91:2:** *"I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.'"*

Psalm 91 is a military psalm. The psalm is a beautiful testimony about security in life. David was a military man first, last, and always. His military career was filled with memories of great success and victory on the field of battle.

I am convinced that the greatest failing in David's life was precipitated because of a decision he made militarily.

2 Samuel 11:1: "In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem" (NIV).

Late in David's military career, when the time comes for military operations against his son Absalom, David does not want to make the same mistake again.

My thought is that David had been forced into retirement from the military as a result of this occasion. There is just a few brief years left in his life here on earth.

I look on this psalm as a tribute at the time of his forced retirement from the military. A tribute to the God whom he had served and Who had been faithful to him—To protect him and to provide for him in all of the military campaigns of his career as king over Israel.

If David was a teenager in the Valley of Elah when he fought Goliath, then he would be celebrating his golden anniversary militarily—50 years of service. This would make him 68 years of age when this tribute is written. He still has 2 years left in his life-journey.

**Verse 1:** "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty."

This verse really states the theme of the psalm. "He who dwells...will rest." "He who dwells in the shelter...will rest in the shadow." You've got to get close to be in the shadow.

Isaiah 51:15-16: "For I am the Lord your God, who stirs up the sea, causing its waves to roar. My name is the Lord Almighty. And I have put my words in your mouth and hidden you safely within my hand. I set all the stars in space and established the earth. I am the one who says to Israel, 'You are mine!'" (NIV).

C. H. Spurgeon says: "The Omnipotent Lord will shield all those who

dwell with him, they shall remain under his care as guests under the protection of their host.” **Verse 2:** “I will say of the Lord, ‘He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.’”

The theme is in verse 1: “He who dwells...will rest.” The testimony is in verse 2. David says: “I will say [this] of the Lord,” He is 3 things to me: (1) “my refuge”; (2) “my fortress”; and (3) “my God, in whom I trust.”

Note the word “my” occurs 3 times here. “I will say of the Lord, ‘He [that is the Lord] is my refuge, my fortress, my God.’”

It was Corrie Ten Boom’s sister, Betsie, who said: “The center of God’s will is our only safety.”

I think an appropriate hymn for us to sing at the conclusion of this meditation is that great old hymn **“The Haven of Rest”**: *“My soul, in sad exile, was out of life’s sea So burdened with sin and distress, Till I heard a sweet voice saying, ‘Make me your choice,’ And I entered the haven of rest. I’ve anchored my soul in the haven of rest, I’ll sail the wide seas no more; The tempest may sweep o’er the wild, stormy deep, In Jesus I’m safe evermore.”*

## August 25 — Be Strong and Courageous (Ps. 91:3-4)

**Psalm 91:3:** *“Surely he will save you from the fowler’s snare and from the deadly pestilence.”*

**Psalm 91:4:** *“He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.”*

**Verse 3:** “Surely he will save you from the fowler’s snare and from the deadly pestilence.”

The psalmist affirms here that the Lord will “save you” from 2 things: (1) “the fowler’s snare” and (2) “the deadly pestilence.” To update that militarily, the Lord will save you from landmines and chemical warfare or landmines and terrorist acts of suicide bombings.

The Lord is intimately involved here so David could be strong and courageous in the battle.

William Plumer said: “...the snare of the fowler [is] mischief plotted by Satan...”

Thomas á Kempis says: “The devil sleepeth not, neither is the flesh as yet dead, therefore cease not to prepare thyself for the battle, for on thy right hand on thy left are enemies who never rest.” (John Eldredge, *The Journey of Desire*, 163)

C. H. Spurgeon said: “Satan will not leave a stone unturned to ruin your soul for ever. ‘Amidst a thousand snares I stand Upheld and guarded by Thy hand.’”

“Surely he will save you.” You can count on it!

“Lord, be thou within in, to strengthen me; without me, to keep me; above me, to protect me; beneath me, to uphold me; before me, to direct me; behind me, to keep me from straying; round about me, to defend me.”

**Verse 4:** “He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you

will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.”

Notice first the words “cover” and “under.” “He will cover you with his feathers...under his wings you will find refuge.”

Matthew 23:37: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling” (NASB).

The word “refuge” takes us back to verse 2: “I will say of the Lord, ‘he is my refuge.’” The focus in the last part of verse 4 is on the word “faithfulness.” “His faithfulness will be” 2 things: (1) “your shield” and (2) “your...rampart” or your armor.

Genesis 15:1: “After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: ‘Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward’” (NIV).

David Livingston said: “I am immortal until the will of God for me is accomplished.”

It would be most appropriate for us to sing a verse of “**Under His Wings**”: *“Under His wings, O what precious enjoyment! There will I hide till life’s trials are o’er; Sheltered, protected, no evil can harm me, Resting in Jesus I’m safe evermore. Under His wings, under His wings, Whom from His love can sever? Under His wings my soul shall abide, Safely abide forever.”*

#### **August 26 — The Lord Will Fight For Us (Ps. 91:5-8)**

**Psalm 91:5:** “*You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day.*”

**Psalm 91:6:** “*nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday.*”

**Psalm 91:7:** “*A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you.*”

**Psalm 91:8:** “*You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked.*”

**Verse 5:** “You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day.”

There are 4 things that are outlined in verses 5 and 6, as things that we “will not fear” in the night or in the day. They are going to be 2 for night and 2 for day. The first 2 are mentioned here in verse 5: (1) “the terror of night” and (2) “the arrow that flies by day.”

The Lord is totally equipped. He has a night scope so He can see clearly “the terror” that would come in a night attack. “The arrow that flies by day,” He has a patriot missile to intercept anything that’s coming in militarily by day.

William Barclay said: “God never goes back on the man who stakes his all on Him.”

**Verse 6:** “nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday.”

You will notice in verse 6 that it's just a continuation of the things we "will not fear" by giving us 2 more. Back in verse 5, "You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day." Now in verse 6, "You will not fear...the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday."

This has reference to disease or disaster. The Lord is taking care of every military operation so there is no need to fear. The victory is on the way.

**Verse 7:** "A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you."

1 Samuel 18:14: "In everything he did he had great success, because the Lord was with him."

There are 3 key phrases: (1) "it will not come near you"—verse 7; (2) "no harm will befall you"—verse 10; and (3) "no disaster will come near your tent"—verse 10.

**Verse 8:** "You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked."

Isaiah 66:24: "And they will go out and look upon the dead bodies of those who rebelled against me; their worm will not die, nor will their fire be quenched, and they will be loathsome to all mankind" (NIV).

Let's do a verse of "**Faith Is the Victory**": *"On ev'ry hand the foe we find  
Drawn up in dread array; Letents of ease be left behind, And onward to the  
fray; Salvation's helmet on each head, With truth all girt about, The earth  
shall tremble 'neath our tread, And echo with our shout. Faith is the victory!  
Faith is the victory! O, glorious victory, That overcomes the world."*

## August 27 — It's Your Choice (Ps. 91:9-10)

**Psalm 91:9:** *"If you make the Most High your dwelling—even the Lord, who is my refuge—"*

**Psalm 91:10:** *"then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent."*

**Verse 9:** "If you make the Most High your dwelling—even the Lord, who is my refuge—"

Verse 9 takes us back to verses 1 and 2: "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty"—verse 1; "I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust'"—verse 2.

The word "if" at the beginning of the verse is the most crucial word in this verse. It all hinges on a decision, a choice. "If you make the Most High your dwelling—even the Lord, who is my refuge." There are consequences which are wonderful.

If you choose not to do so, the consequences have already been described in verse

8: "You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked." Make the choice to live life God's way is the critical issue

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that surfaces here in verse 9: “If you make the Most High your dwelling.”

Even as David had spelled out the benefits of this decision in verses 1 and 2, so now the onus (the decision) is upon us to make the right choice. (1) “He is my refuge”—verse 2; (2) “He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge”—verse 4; and (3) “Even the Lord, who is my refuge”—verse 9. I have and that explains 50 years of military service.

Psalm 31:19: “How great is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you, which you bestow in the sight of men on those who take refuge in you” (NIV).

Proverbs 14:32: “The wicked are crushed by their sins, but the godly have a refuge when they die” (NIV).

**Verse 10:** “then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent.”

This is the consequence of the decision in verse 9. “If you make the most High your dwelling”—verse 9—“then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent”—verse 10.

In verse 7 there were 3 key phrases that relate to the consequences of making a right decision to allow the Lord to have full sway in our lives. These phrases are in: (1) verse 7—“it will not come near you,” that is the tragedies of the thousands and thousands of deaths; (2) verse 10—“no harm will befall you”; and (3) verse 10—“no disaster will come near your tent.”

Let’s sing together a couple of verses of “**In Times Like These**”: *“In times like these you need a Savior, In times like these you need an anchor; Be very sure, be very sure Your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock! This Rock is Jesus, Yes, He’s the One; This Rock is Jesus, The only One! Be very sure, be very sure Your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock! In times like these I have a Savior, In times like these I have an anchor; I’m very sure, I’m very sure My anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock!”*

### **August 28 — The Cross of Christ (Donna)**

A friend of ours related the following story that happened in a Good Friday worship service.

The pastor was preaching on the cross of Christ. During his sermon, looking out at the congregation, he very emphatically said, “YOU are the one who drove the nails in His hands! YOU are the one who pushed the crown of thorns on His head!” He continued, “YOU are the one responsible for the death of Jesus!”

A little four-year-old boy in the back of the church sitting with his parents had been listening, and piped up with all sincerity, “I didn’t do it! I didn’t do it!”

Throughout history it has been hotly debated, Who was responsible for the death of Jesus? Was it the Jews? Romans? Pilate? Judas? Or the crowd? The list is endless when it comes to casting blame. Down through the ages the words of the little tyke in the church echo on, “I didn’t do it!”

The truth of the matter is that each of us is responsible for Christ's death.

Isaiah 53:45: "Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed."

Today take a moment and thank Christ for taking the punishment for YOU.

In England, it formerly was customary for a wealthy family to have a "whipping boy." Every time a child in the family misbehaved and punishment was to be meted out, they called the whipping boy, and he received the punishment. Each time I think of that custom, the unfairness upsets me.

What should upset each of us is that Christ literally was our "whipping boy" and took the punishment we deserved. Let the unfairness of the fact that He was punished for YOU and for ME sink into our minds. (Guest contributor, Donna Anderson Skorheim)

### **August 29 — The Lord's Special Forces (91:11-13)**

**Psalm 91:11:** *"For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways;"*

**Psalm 91:12:** *"they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone."*

**Psalm 91:13:** *"You will tread upon the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent."*

**Verse 11:** "For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways;"

Peterson paraphrases verse 11: "He ordered his angels to guard you wherever you go."

Now in verse 11, because the verse starts with the word "For," we have a statement of the reason why: "no harm will befall you" and "no disaster will come near your tent."

The reason is: "he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways."

Matthew 26:53: "Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?"

There are 6,000 soldiers in each legion, that is a total of 72,000 angels that are on alert status, waiting for a word from the Lord Jesus on this occasion.

Psalm 34:7: "The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them."

At critical times in the life of the Lord Jesus, we see the presence of angels. At His birth, at the temptation scene, at His resurrection, and at His ascension.

Angels will be much involved as well in the second coming of Christ to set up His kingdom.

The job description of the angels: They are God's Secret Service. They are to have us under constant and careful surveillance at all times.



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**Verse 12:** “they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”

The word “they” points us back to the angels who have the charge of protection.

**Verse 13:** “You will tread upon the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent.”

“The lion and the cobra”—serpent represents Satan in the scripture. He is a serpent in the Garden of Eden and he is a roaring lion in 1 Peter 5, going about seeking whom he may devour.

Romans 16:20: “And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet...”

Martin Luther wrote it in a great hymn, “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”:  
*“The Prince of Darkness grim, We tremble not for him; His rage we can endure, For lo, his doom is sure; One little word shall fell him.”*

Let’s sing together verse 3 of “**A Mighty Fortress Is Our God**”: *“And tho this world, with devils filled, Should threaten to undo us, We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us: The Prince of Darkness grim, We tremble not for him; His rage we can endure, For lo, his doom is sure; One little word shall fell him.”*

**August 30 — The Lord’s Benediction and Blessing Upon His Servant (Ps. 91:1416)**

**Psalm 91:14:** *“‘Because he loves me,’ says the Lord, ‘I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.’”*

**Psalm 91:15:** *“He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him.”*

**Psalm 91:16:** *“With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation.”*

**Verse 14:** “‘Because he loves me,’ says the Lord, ‘I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.’”

What a fabulous ending to this fantastic Psalm, marking the conclusion of David’s years of military service! Here the Lord steps in and spells out His contract of protection that David has experienced over all these years. So the Psalm concludes with a revelation from the Lord.

Just like the Lord appeared to Jacob as he was preparing to go into Egypt, as he appeared to Job at the end of his trials and circumstances. Now we conclude this Psalm with the Lord’s benediction and blessing upon His servant.

In his contract of protection, the Lord describes His servant in 2 ways: (1) “Because he loves me” and (2) “he acknowledges my name.”

You will notice there are 8 points in this contract and they all begin with “I will”:

(1) “I will rescue him”; (2) “I will protect him”; (3) “I will answer him”; (4) “I will be with him”; (5) “I will deliver him”; (6) “I will...honor him”; (7) “I [will] satisfy him”; and (8) “I [will] show him my salvation.”

What more could you ask from the Lord? **Verse 15:**

“He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him.”

Whereas we found 2 statements of commitment in verse 14, there are 4 more here in verse 15: (1) “I will answer him”; (2) “I will be with him”; (3) “I will deliver Him”; and (4) “I will...honor him.”

**Verse 16:** “With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation.”

Now the final 2 promises come under consideration here in the last verse of the Psalm: (1) “I [will] satisfy him” and (2) “I [will] show him my salvation.”

The old soldier is marching off the field of battle for the last time. The words spoken on this final occasion remind me of Psalm 20:7: “Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God” (NIV).

I think we should celebrate David’s military career by singing “**The Battle Hymn of the Republic**”: *“I have seen Him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps; They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and damps; I can read His righteous sentence by the dim and flaring lamps; His day is marching on. He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never sound retreat; He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgment seat; O be swift, my soul, to answer Him! Be jubilant, my feet! Our God is marching on. Glory! Glory, hallelujah! Glory! Glory, hallelujah! Glory! Glory, hallelujah! Our God is marching on.”*

**August 31 — Hallelujah! (Ps. 113:1-3)**

**Psalm 113:1:** “*Praise the Lord. Praise, O servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord.*”

**Psalm 113:2:** “*Let the name of the Lord be praised, both now and forevermore.*”

**Psalm 113:3:** “*From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets, the name of the Lord is to be praised.*”

What does it mean when the scripture demands us to “Praise the Lord”? How do we do that? Why is it that so much of our praise we give personally or corporately to the Lord never really seems to get off the ground?

Psalm 113-118 are the *Hallel* Psalms. They were sung at the feasts, the Passover, the dedication, the new moons. Psalm 113 and 114 were sung before the meal. Psalm 115-118 were sung after the meal.

1 Thessalonians 5:18: “in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (NASB).

Ron Allen says: “Praise is due God irrespective of our circumstances or setting in life....We are under an enduring obligation of gratitude to Him.”

**Verse 1:** “Praise the Lord. Praise, O servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord.”

The Psalm begins and ends with the words “Praise the Lord.”

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This business of praise is not something we can just decide we are going to do in our relationship without some actions on our part that precede this discipline. Pure praise that delights the heart of God must be preceded by repentance and brokenness.

Isaiah 25:1: “O Lord, you are my God; I will exalt you and praise your name, for in perfect faithfulness you have done marvelous things, things planned long ago” (NIV).

Colossians 3:2: “Set your affections on the things above...” (KJV).

When you have learned how to serve, it is easy to praise.

**Verse 2:** “Let the name of the Lord be praised, both now and forevermore.”

*“When we’ve been ten thousand years, Bright shining as the sun, We’ve no less days to sing God’s praise Than when we first begun.”*

Leupold said: “Since His deeds are so manifold, His praise should be continuous and unending.”

A. W. Tozer said: “Most Christians are not joyful persons because they are not holy persons, and they are not holy persons because they are not filled with the Holy Spirit, and they are not filled with the Holy Spirit because they are not separated persons. The Spirit cannot fill whom He cannot separate, and whom He cannot fill, He cannot make holy, and whom He cannot make holy, He cannot make happy!” (*Renewed Day by Day*, 11/30)

**Verse 3:** “From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets, the name of the Lord is to be praised.”

Ron Allen says: “Wherever the sun does its duty, you and I are to do ours. Our task—our happy obligation—is to give praise to our Lord.”

Fénelon said: “You can love God simply for who He is, and not for what He does for you....The more I love you, the more You pursue me with Your relentless love. Oh God, I adore You. You have made me for Yourself alone. I exist for You.” (*The Seeking Heart*, 179, 181)

I think it would be most appropriate for us to sing the “**Doxology**” as we conclude this study: “*Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him all creatures here below. Praise Him above ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.*”

## **September 1 — Praising God for His Greatness (Ps. 113:4-6)**

**Psalm 113:4:** “*The Lord is exalted over all the nations, his glory above the heavens.*”

**Psalm 113:5:** “*Who is like the Lord our God, the One who sits enthroned on high,*”

**Psalm 113:6:** “*who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth?*”

**Verse 4:** “The Lord is exalted over all the nations, his glory above the heavens.”

Peterson paraphrases this verse: “God is higher than anything and anyone, outshining everything you can see in the skies.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: “He is incomparable—no one

is like Him..." (875)

Habakkuk 3:3b: "His brilliant splendor fills the heavens, and the earth is filled with his praise! What a wonderful God he is!" (NLT).

Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth'" (NASB).

Isaiah 40:15: "Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust" (NIV).

Steven Lawson defines praise in 6 ways: "A declaration of His greatness. A celebration of His goodness. A submission before His sovereignty. An adoration of His person. A self-renunciation before His glory. An exaltation of His name." (*Heaven Help Us!*, 66)

**Verse 5:** "Who is like the Lord our God, the One who sits enthroned on high,"

Romans 11:33: "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!" (NASB).

There are 6 verbs in these remaining 5 verses of this Psalm that give us great insight into our God: (1) "[He is] the One who sits enthroned on high"—verse 5; (2) "who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth"—verse 6; (3) "He raises the poor from the dust"—verse 7; (4) "[He] lifts the needy from the ash heap"; (5) "he seats them with princes"—verse 8; and (6) "He settles the barren woman in her home"—verse 9.

**Verse 6:** "who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth?"

This concludes a question that began in verse 5: "Who is like the Lord our God, the One who sits enthroned on high, who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth?"

Let's sing a couple of verses of "**Crown Him with Many Crowns**":

*"Crown Him with many crowns, The Lamb upon His throne; Hark! How the heavenly anthem drowns All music but its own! Awake, my soul, and sing Of Him who died for thee, And hail Him as thy matchless King Through all eternity. Crown Him the Son of God Before the worlds began, And ye, who tread where He hath trod, Crown Him the Son of Man; Who ev'ry grief hath known That wrings the human breast, And takes and bears them for His own, That all in Him may rest."*

**September 2 — Hallelujah! What a Savior! (Ps. 113:7-9) Psalm 113:7: "He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap;"**

**Psalm 113:8: "he seats them with princes, with the princes of their people."**

**Psalm 113:9: "He settles the barren woman in her home as a happy mother of children. Praise the Lord."**

We are focusing on these 6 verbs in these last 5 verses: (1) "[He is] the One

who sits enthroned on high”—verse 5; (2) “who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth”—verse 6. Now here in verse 7: (3) “He raises the poor from the dust” and (4) “[He] lifts the needy from the ash heap.”

It was Hannah, after she had prayed for a child and the Lord had graciously granted her the gift of a son, who expressed in song some of the very same words that are here in this verse.

1 Samuel 2:8: “He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he seats them with princes and has them inherit a throne of honor. ‘For the foundations of the earth are the Lord’s; upon them he has set the world’” (NIV).

**Verse 7:** “He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap;”

What a graphic picture verse 7 is of our own justification by faith.

*“Amazing grace! how sweet the sound, That saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found, Was blind, but now I see.”*

I also feel like singing with Bill and Gloria Gaither’s song “Something Beautiful”: *“Something beautiful, something good, All my confusion He understood. All I had to offer Him was brokenness and strife, But He made something beautiful out of my life.”*

**Verse 8:** “he seats them with princes, with the princes of their people.”

This reminds us of David’s kindness toward Mephibosheth, the handicapped son of Jonathan, whom he brought to the palace and allowed him to sit at the king’s table.

**Verse 9:** “He settles the barren woman in her home as a happy mother of children. Praise the Lord.”

We now have all 6 verbs that we’ve been tracing through the Psalm: (1) “[God is] the One who sits enthroned on high”—verse 5; (2) “who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth”—verse 6; (3) “He raises the poor from the dust”—verse 7 and (4) “[He] lifts the needy from the ash heap”—verse 7; (5) “he seats them with princes”—verse 8; and (6) “He settles the barren woman in her home as a happy mother of children”—verse 9.

When we think of barren women we think of Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Hannah, Samson’s mother, and Elizabeth.

With Paul Harvey, here is the rest of Hannah’s story: “And the Lord was gracious to Hannah; she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile, the boy Samuel grew up in the presence of the Lord” (1 Sam. 2:21 NIV).

The big question that confronts us in verse 9: Is the Lord bearing fruit through our lives in the lives of others?

Horatius Bonar said: “We do not live a holy life in order to be justified; but we are justified that we may live a holy life. (*The Everlasting Righteousness*, 181)

Our Psalm ends with the word “Hallelujah!”—“Praise the Lord.” I could not

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help but think of the time the word “Hallelujah” occurs in rapid succession in Revelation 19 at the time of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to set up His kingdom.

Let’s conclude our meditation on Psalm 113 by singing that great hymn **“Hallelujah! What a Saviour!”**: *“‘Man of Sorrows!’ what a name For the Son of God who came Ruined sinners to reclaim! Hallelujah! what a Saviour! Bearing shame and scoffing rude, In my place condemned He stood; Sealed my pardon with His blood; Hallelujah! what a Saviour! Guilty, vile, and helpless, we: Spotless Lamb of God was He: ‘Full atonement!’ Can it be? Hallelujah! what a Saviour! ‘Lifted up’ was He to die, ‘It is finished,’ was His cry; Now in heav’n exalted high; Hallelujah! what a Saviour! When He comes, our glorious King, All His ransomed home to bring, Then anew this song we’ll sing; Hallelujah! what a Saviour!”*

**September 3 — When God Says “No” He Has a Better Plan (Ps. 138:1-3)**

**Psalm 138:1:** *“I will praise you, O Lord, with all my heart; before the ‘gods’ I will sing your praise.”*

**Psalm 138:2:** *“I will bow down toward your holy temple and will praise your name for your love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word.”*

**Psalm 138:3:** *“When I called, you answered me; you made me bold and stouthearted.”*

The background for Psalm 138 is recorded in 2 Samuel 7. When David has a desire to build the temple for the Lord. The Lord says no, but He is going to give him an eternal kingdom. We need to remember that when God says “no” it always obligates Him to a better plan.

**Verse 1:** “I will praise you, O Lord, with all my heart; before the ‘gods’ I will sing your praise.”

There’s 2 things he will do: (1) “I will praise you, O Lord, with all my heart” and

(2) “I will sing your praise.” Focus on the phrase “with all my heart.” David is blown away with God’s greater purpose that has been revealed. It’s good for us to remember that repentance and brokenness must precede acceptable worship and praise. I often find myself praying, “Lord, do something so big in my life that it is obviously from You!”

A great mission statement for our lives would be Psalm 104:33: “I will sing to the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live” (NIV).

**Verse 2:** “I will bow down toward your holy temple and will praise your name for your love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word.”

David in verse 1 said: “I will praise you, O Lord, with all my heart” and “I will sing your praise.” Now he continues on in this vein in verse 2: “I will bow down toward your holy temple” and “I will praise your name.”



The reasons he will do that are: (1) “your love and your faithfulness” and (2) “you have exalted above all things your name and your word.”

Notice the emphasis upon “your love” and “your faithfulness.” Neither one of these words characterize David right at the moment, having just come through the tragic circumstances of the affair with Bathsheba.

In essence, David is saying, “You have outdone yourself.”

When we get to heaven our first statements will probably be: (1) “You saved the best till now” and (2) “I knew You meant it when You said it.”

A promise made is a promise kept. 1 Thessalonians 5:24: “Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass” (NASB).

**Verse 3:** “When I called, you answered me; you made me bold and stouthearted.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 3: “The moment I called out, you stepped in; you made my life large with strength.”

It is strength, faith and confidence in God Himself.

Hebrews 4:16: “Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (NASB).

John Wayne will always be remembered for this statement: “Courage is being scared to death but saddling up anyway.”

Roger Hornsby, a major league infielder, said: “When I was in the batter’s box, I felt sorry for the pitcher.”

Courage is faith that has said its prayers.

I feel it is time for us to lift our voices and sing a couple of verses of **“The Love of God”**: *“The love of God is greater far Than tongue or pen can ever tell; It goes beyond the highest star, And reaches to the lowest hell. The guilty pair, bowed down with care, God gave His Son to win; His erring child He reconciled, And pardoned from his sin. Could we with ink and ocean fill, And were the skies of parchment made. Were ev’ry stalk on earth a quill, And ev’ry man a scribe by trade, To write the love of God above Would drain the ocean dry. Nor could the scroll contain the whole, Tho’ stretched from sky to sky. O love of God, how rich and pure! How measureless and strong! It shall forevermore endure The saints’ and angels’ song.”*

#### **September 4 — Unreasonable Fear (Donna)**

Recently I made a chaplain visit at a Palestine, Texas hospital. I was visiting the mother of an employee from a client company. Bless her heart, the mother was in ICU. She had been bitten by a copperhead snake. I visited with her awhile. I was sitting by her bed and her very swollen leg was on top of the covers. I could see where the snake had bitten her. My face was about a foot from her leg.

I have always had a fear of snakes. Of course making this visit increased my fears. I was driving home from Palestine and was praying for this dear lady and her family. I could not get her off my mind and kept thinking about her swollen

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leg. As I was driving and thinking about this, I thought I felt something brush against my leg. In laymen's terms, I freaked out! My heart started racing. I was trying to calm myself down. I knew it was probably my skirt moving from the air conditioning, but for the life of me I could not convince my mind. It was playing tricks on me. I knew this was unreasonable fear. The chance of a copperhead snake in my car was slim to nothing.

I would like to say I prayed about this, but truthfully I called my mom and told her about it. My mom has a wonderful way of trying to mask her laughter when we are pouring out problems to her that in her mind are funny. I heard stifled laughter! I could tell she wanted to get off the phone and have a good laugh. She told me, "Donna, now that you have verbalized your fear, just put it out of your mind." Okay, verbalizing my fear and how unrealistic it was helped!

The fear of snakes is probably not high on your list of fears, but in this day and time it seems fear is rampant. Read the following verses. Verbalizing our fears in prayer to the Lord will bring us the freedom we so desire for unrelenting fears.

Psalm 34:4-6: "I prayed to the Lord, and he answered me, freeing me from all my fears. Those who look to him for help will be radiant with joy; no shadow of shame will darken their faces. I cried out to the Lord in my suffering, and he heard me. He set me free from all my fears." (Guest contributor, Donna Anderson Skorheim)

#### **September 5 — Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will Be Done (Ps. 138:4-6)**

**Psalm 138:4:** *"May all the kings of the earth praise you, O Lord, when they hear the words of your mouth."*

**Psalm 138:5:** *"May they sing of the ways of the Lord, for the glory of the Lord is great."*

**Psalm 138:6:** *"Though the Lord is on high, he looks upon the lowly, but the proud he knows from afar."*

**Verse 4:** "May all the kings of the earth praise you, O Lord, when they hear the words of your mouth."

Ron Allen translates verse 4: "All the Kings of the earth will praise You, O Yahweh, When they will have heard the words of Your mouth."

Revelation 11:15: "And the seventh angel sounded; and there arose loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever'" (NASB).

Yes, this is a picture of the kingdom come. This is a picture of the King of kings and the Lord of lords upon the throne.

Philippians 2:9-11: "Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (NASB).

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**Verse 5:** “May they sing of the ways of the Lord, for the glory of the Lord is great.”

In verse 4 it was “May all the kings of the earth praise you.” Now in verse 5: “May [these kings of the earth] sing of the ways of the Lord.”

In verse 4 it is: “when they hear the words of [the Lord].” In verse 5 it is: “they [will] sing of the ways of the Lord.”

The reason for a double request in this Psalm is in the last phrase: “for the glory of the Lord is great.”

The central phrase in the Psalm concludes verse 5: “for the glory of the Lord is great.”

**Verse 6:** “Though the Lord is on high, he looks upon the lowly, but the proud he knows from afar.”

In verse 5 we learned: “the glory of the Lord is great.” Now here in verse 6 we learn “the Lord is on high.” Although He “is on high” he does not disassociate Himself with us. He is aware of our every need. “Though the Lord is on high, he looks upon the lowly.”

Isaiah 57:15: “For this is what the high and lofty One says—he who lives forever, whose name is holy: ‘I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite’” (NIV).

James 4:6: “...God is resisting the proud, but is giving grace to the humble” (DAV).

“He knows from afar”—that is, “to whom he is distant.” These are persons who are self-sufficient and believe that they can well do without the Almighty.

*Our Daily Bread* on July 6, 2010 had this final lesson: “Pride is the stone over which many people stumble.”

The old cowboy said: “He’s going through life with his horn stuck!” or “He’s waiting for a vacancy in the Trinity!”

Yes, pride is the hardest thing for man to handle.

Howard Hendricks says: “Lie low and exalt grace. You can’t exalt God and yourself at the same time.”

I think it would be very good for us to conclude this devotional today by singing that great old hymn “**Jesus, I Come**”: “*Out of my bondage, sorrow and night, Jesus, I come, Jesus, I come; Into Thy freedom, gladness and light, Jesus, I come to Thee. Out of my sickness into Thy health, Out of my want and into Thy wealth, Out of my sin and into Thyself, Jesus, I come to Thee. Out of unrest and arrogant pride, Jesus, I come, Jesus, I come; Into Thy blessed will to abide, Jesus, I come to Thee. Out of myself to dwell in Thy love, out of despair into raptures above, Upward for aye on wings like a dove, Jesus, I come to Thee.*”

## **September 6 — Through It All (Ps. 138:7-8)**

**Psalm 138:7:** “*Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes, with your right*

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*hand you save me.”*

**Psalm 138:8:** *“The Lord will fulfill [his purpose] for me; your love, O Lord, endures forever—do not abandon the works of your hands.”*

**Verse 7:** “Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes, with your right hand you save me.”

“Though I walk in the midst of trouble” You do 3 things for me: (1) “you preserve my life”; (2) “you stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes”; and (3) “you save me.”

Isaiah 43:2: “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze” (NIV).

Psalm 54:7: “For he has delivered me from all my troubles, and my eyes have looked in triumph on my foes” (NIV).

I am reminded of Norman Macleod’s poetic piece “Do the Right!”: “Courage, brother, do not stumble, / Though your path be dark as night, / There’s a star to guide the humble, / Trust in God, and do the right. / Perish policy and cunning, / Perish all that fears the light, / Whether losing, whether winning, / Trust in God, and do the right. / Some will hate you, some will love you, / Some will flatter, some will slight; / Cease from man, and look about you, / Trust in God, and do the right.”

It would be good on occasion if the Lord could send us an email. I didn’t say it would be easy, I said it would be worth it.

**Verse 8:** “The Lord will fulfill [his purpose] for me; your love, O Lord, endures forever—do not abandon the works of your hands.”

Philippians 1:6: “For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus” (NASB).

W. Graham Scroggie said: “None will ever be able to say of the Lord, ‘He was not able to finish.’” Romans 8:28: “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (NASB). Deuteronomy 31:8: “The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged” (NIV). The purpose in verse 8 equals the eternal kingdom for David. The purpose for you and me is Christlikeness.

To express our gratitude, let’s sing verses 1 and 4 of **“Come, Ye Thankful People, Come”**: *“Come, ye thankful people, come; Raise the song of harvest home. All is safely gathered in Ere the winter storms begin. God, our Maker, doth provide For our wants to be supplied. Come to God’s own temple, come; Raise the song of harvest home. Even so, Lord, quickly come To Thy final harvest home; Gather Thou Thy people in, Free from sorrow, free from sin;*

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*There forever purified, In Thy presence to abide. Come, with all Thine angels come; Raise the glorious harvest home."*

**September 7 — The Lord I Love, He Is Omniscient (Ps. 139:1-6)**

**Psalm 139:1:** *"O Lord, you have searched me and you know me."*

**Psalm 139:2:** *"You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar."*

**Psalm 139:3:** *"You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways."*

**Psalm 139:4:** *"Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O Lord."*

**Psalm 139:5:** *"You hem me in—behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me."*

**Psalm 139:6:** *"Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain."*

David has the eternal kingdom on his mind, recognizing the Lord Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords. We have studied that in Psalm 138.

Revelation 19:6: "And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude and as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, 'Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns'" (NASB).

There is a revelation of God in each of the 4 stanzas of this Psalm.

For these next 4 mornings, I want to tell you about the Lord I love, He is omniscient (verses 1-6) is what we are considering this morning.

This Psalm is a time of worship and reflection following the Messianic promises of 2 Samuel 7 and Psalm 138. These 4 things about God have to be true in light of the promises He made to David.

Omniscient means that He has total knowledge. He knows everything.

**Verse 1:** "O Lord, you have searched me and you know me."

Here in verse 1 David states the fact that the Lord had searched him and He knows him.

The Hebrew word "searched" originally meant to dig and is applied to the search for precious metals. It refers to winnowing and sifting.

He knows the corruptions, the infirmities, the mistakes, the thoughts, the motivations, the cares, and the sorrows. He has total knowledge. We are stripped totally naked.

**Verse 2:** "You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar."

Peterson paraphrases verse 2: "I'm an open book to you; even from a distance, you know what I'm thinking."

David confesses that the Lord has him under constant surveillance. Everything he does, everything he thinks, and everything he says is known by the omniscient Lord.

**Verse 3:** "You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways."

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Peterson paraphrases verse 3: “You know when I leave and when I get back; I’m never out of your sight.”

**Verse 4:** “Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O Lord.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 4: “You know everything I’m going to say before I start the first sentence.”

**Verse 5:** “You hem me in—behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me.”

He loves us so much He can’t keep His hands off of us!

Scroggie said: “His hand is laid upon us, to compel, to restrain, to steady, to direct, to protect.”

**Verse 6:** “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 6: “This is too much, too wonderful—I can’t take it all in!”

The word “wonderful” is in the emphatic position at the beginning of the sentence. It overwhelms me! I can’t take it in! I’m amazed and astounded!

Please join me in singing a verse of “**All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name**” after each of these 4 meditations on Psalm 139: “*All hail the pow’r of Jesus’ name! Let angels prostrate fall; Bring forth the royal diadem, And crown Him Lord of all; Bring forth the royal diadem, And crown Him Lord of all!*”

### **September 8 — The Lord I Love, He is Omnipresent (Ps. 139:7-12)**

**Psalm 139:7:** “*Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?*”

**Psalm 139:8:** “*If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.*”

**Psalm 139:9:** “*If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea,*”

**Psalm 139:10:** “*even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.*”

**Psalm 139:11:** “*If I say, ‘Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,’*”

**Psalm 139:12:** “*even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.*”

“The Lord I Love” in Psalm 139: (1) He is omniscient—verses 1-6. He knows all about me but He loves me still. We can see this in the woman at the well in John 4, and the woman caught in adultery in John 8.

Now we come to: (2) He is omnipresent—verses 7-12. Your response reveals your heart. If there’s fear, there are things that need to be addressed. If there’s peace and joy, there’s intimate relationship.

God’s omniscience in verses 1-6 tells us that He knows everything. Now God’s omnipresence in verses 7-12 tells us He is everywhere.

**Verse 7:** “Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?”



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Jeremiah 23:24: “Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?” declares the Lord. “Do not I fill heaven and earth?” declares the Lord” (NIV).

Omnipresent means He is present everywhere simultaneously.

**Verse 8:** “If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.”

2 Chronicles 16:9: “For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him...” (NIV).

The word “If” occurs 5 times in the next 4 verses, giving us these examples:

(1) “If I go up to the heavens, you are there” and (2) “if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.”

**Verse 9:** “If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea,”

(3) “If I rise on the wings of the dawn.” *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says: “...if he could fly at the speed of light...from the east across the sky to the west...he could not escape from the Lord.” That would be 186,000 miles per second.

(4) “if I settle on the far side of the sea”—the remotest part of the world, the outback, no-man’s land—still the Lord would be there.

**Verse 10:** “even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.”

In verse 5 we read: “you have laid your hand upon me”—speaking of love. “Your hand will guide me”—learning to walk. “Your right hand will hold me fast”—refers to protection and comfort.

John 10:28-29: “and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand” (NASB).

**Verse 11:** “If I say, ‘Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,’”

(5) “If I say, ‘Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around

me.” **Verse 12:** “even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.”

I would like to conclude this meditation with Romans 8:38-39: “For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (NASB).

Let’s join in singing verse 2 of “**All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name**”: “*Ye chosen seed of Israel’s race, Ye ransomed from the fall, Hail Him who saves you by His grace, And crown Him Lord of all; Hail Him who saves you by His*

grace, And crown Him Lord of all!”

**September 9 — The Lord I Love, He is Omnipotent (Ps. 139:13-18)**

**Psalm 139:13:** *“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb.”*

**Psalm 139:14:** *“I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.”*

**Psalm 139:15:** *“My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth,”*

**Psalm 139:16:** *“your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”*

**Psalm 139:17:** *“How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!”*

**Psalm 139:18:** *“Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand. When I awake, I am still with you.”*

Thus far in our study of “The Lord I Love” we have noted He is: omniscient—He knows everything; omnipresent—He sees everything; and omnipotent—He is all-powerful.

Amos 5:12: “For I know how many are your offenses and how great your sins...” (NIV).

He knows and He was there when you compromised your convictions. When you said those words. When you did those acts. He is all-powerful. He’s got the strength to pull it off.

**Verse 13:** “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb.”

Peterson paraphrases this verse: “Oh yes, you shaped me first inside, then out; you formed me in my mother’s womb.”

The Lord I love is the Creator and the Sustainer of the universe. Revelation 4:11: “Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created” (NASB).

Omnipotent means having unlimited or universal power, authority or force. He is all-powerful.

**Verse 14:** “I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.”

This outburst of praise takes us back to verse 6: “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.”

“Fearfully” means he is shuddering with astonishment, he’s trembling with awe.

“All that have life and breath, come now with praises before Him!” (John Neander)

**Verse 15:** “My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth,”

“My frame” would refer to my skeleton.

**Verse 16:** “your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”

Psalm 90:12: “Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom” (NIV).

Kim Jones taught a sorority Bible study at TCU on Psalm 139, September 14, 1999 and died at Wedgewood Baptist church the evening of September 15. She, along with others, was shot by a deranged person.

“Your eyes saw my unformed [embryo].” God is aware and grieved at each little life that is taken.

**Verse 17:** “How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!”

This is the third time that we have had a beautiful expression by the psalmist: (1) “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain”—verse 6; (2) “I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well”—verse 14; and now (3) “How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!”—verse 17.

**Verse 18:** “Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand. When I awake, I am still with you.”

The psalmist fell asleep counting grains of sand, recounting precious thoughts.

That reminds us of the last verse of Psalm 138, verse 8: “The Lord will fulfill [his purpose] for me; your love, O Lord, endures forever—do not abandon the works of your hands” (NIV).

“When I awake, I am still with You!” Have you ever dozed off and woke up and were still in class when you were going to school?

J. Sidlow Baxter said: “What God chooses He cleanses. What God cleanses He molds. What God molds He fills. What God fills He uses.”

Let’s sing verse 3 of “**All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name**”: “*Let ev’ry kindred, ev’ry tribe, On this terrestrial ball, To Him all majesty ascribe, And crown Him Lord of all; To Him all majesty ascribe, And crown Him Lord of all!*”

**September 10 — The Lord I Love, He is Omniholy (Ps. 139:19-24)**

**Psalm 139:19:** “*If only you would slay the wicked, O God! Away from me, you bloodthirsty men!*”

**Psalm 139:20:** “*They speak of you with evil intent; your adversaries misuse your name.*”

**Psalm 139:21:** “*Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord, and abhor those who rise up against you?*”

**Psalm 139:22:** “*I have nothing but hatred for them; I count them my enemies.*”

**Psalm 139:23:** “*Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.*”

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**Psalm 139:24:** *“See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”*

We have been considering in this Psalm “The Lord I Love,” He is: (1) omniscient—verses 1-6; (2) omnipresent—verses 7-12; (3) omnipotent—verses 13-18; and now (4) omniholy—verses 19-24. I believe the outburst in the next verses can be explained in terms of the overwhelming awareness of the greatness of God in His omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, and above all, His omniholiness.

Let us meditate for a moment on some of the passages where individuals have become aware of the holiness of God and what they have to say.

Isaiah 6:5: “‘woe to me!’ I cried. ‘I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty’” (NIV).

Job 42:5-6: “My ears have heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes” (NIV).

Habakkuk 2:20: “But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him” (NIV).

Romans 7:24: “Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?” (NASB).

**Verse 19:** “If only you would slay the wicked, O God! Away from me, you bloodthirsty men!”

Oswald Chambers raises the question: “Am I becoming more and more in love with God as a holy God, or with the conception of an amiable being who says, ‘Oh, well, sin doesn’t matter much?’”

**Verse 20:** “They speak of you with evil intent; your adversaries misuse your name.”

**Verse 21:** “Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord, and abhor those who rise up against you?”

**Verse 22:** “I have nothing but hatred for them; I count them my enemies.”

It has been a very personal experience as David reflects on his God’s omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, and now he concludes with thoughts focusing on His holiness. This precipitates the prayer as he concludes this Psalm in verses 23 and 24.

**Verse 23:** “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.”

Here David returns to the words he used in verse 1: “O Lord, you have searched me and you know me.”

Peterson paraphrases this verse: “Investigate my life, O God, find out everything about me; Cross-examine and test me, get a clear picture of what I’m about.”

Psalm 26:2-3: “Test me, O Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind; for your love is ever before me, and I walk continually in your truth”

(NIV).

Lord, show me! Lord, give me a teachable spirit to understand Your revelation.

**Verse 24:** “See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

The first word in verse 23 was “Search.” The first word in verse 24 is “See.” It is a “Search” and “See.” This is David’s prayer. “See if there is any offensive way in me.”

When our lives are dominated by the flesh, it is an offensive smell to the Lord. Our service, as a result, is a stench in the nostrils of God!

In the language of the cowboy: “He would stink, stank, stunk and smell like a skunk with a capital ‘S’.”

I think it would be good for us to ask the Lord often if we are stinking up the place.

David has had this fresh experience of becoming aware of God’s omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, and now His omniholiness. He wants to make sure that his own life is pure before the Lord.

2 Corinthians 7:1: “Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (NASB).

“Search” and “See” are the first words. “know” and “lead” are the second words. David concludes his prayer: “lead me in the way everlasting.”

Join me please in singing verse 4 of **“All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name”**:  
*“O that with yonder sacred throng We at His feet may fall! We’ll join the everlasting song, And crown Him Lord of all; We’ll join the everlasting song, And crown Him Lord of all!”*

### **September 11 — The World Does Not Overcome Jesus (Donna)**

My husband and I spent a week in Colorado celebrating our wedding anniversary. While there we attended a Sunday worship service at the Air Force Academy Chapel. It was very meaningful. The chaplain during his sermon made the statement, “The world does not overcome Jesus, Jesus overcomes the world.” I quickly jotted down the chaplain’s words. Thought provoking—“The world does not overcome Jesus.”

The chaplain’s scripture text was John 16:33: “These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”

As I sat in the beautiful Air Force Chapel, these words were a balm in my heart. I have been discouraged about the world around me. I needed the peace and courage that Jesus spoke of in John 16:13. “I have overcome the world.” Are you like me and need courage concerning this world in which we live? May our hearts take courage as we realize Jesus overcame the world.

A simple but much needed reminder. Jesus is superior, far superior!

There is a song entitled “Above All Powers.” Part of the words speak of

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Jesus, “*Above all powers the world has ever known.*” Jesus is the Overcomer! He has never been overcome by the world—not in the least.

Let’s keep an accurate perspective when it comes to the world. This world is passing away.

1 John 2:17: “The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.”

Thank God this world is not our forever home! We will not be home until we are with Jesus and that will be out of this world! Now that is something that will give us peace and courage!

If your mind has been troubled lately, spend some time meditating on John 16:33. Write this verse on a card and put it somewhere where you will see it often. I am putting mine by the television set to remind myself of Jesus’ words every time I watch the news! I pray those words of Jesus’ come to be as meaningful to you as they have to me. Words for our time. (Guest contributor, Donna Anderson Skorheim)

### **September 12 — A Cry From the Cave (Ps. 142:1-2)**

**Psalm 142:1:** “*I cry aloud to the Lord; I lift up my voice to the Lord for mercy.*”

**Psalm 142:2:** “*I pour out my complaint before him; before him I tell my trouble.*”

Let’s just recount the significant events as far as David is concerned, that lead up to the writing of this Psalm. Saul’s hatred had intensified so greatly that it was necessary for David to leave the palace, to leave his very close friend Jonathan. David had no place to go and no one to turn to. He goes to Ahimelech, the priest, and he asks Ahimelech for bread and a weapon. He gives David the Bread of the Presence. The only weapon available was the sword of Goliath.

One of Saul’s servants, Doeg the Edomite, witnessed the whole transaction. He went immediately to report to Saul. When he did this, Saul sent men to bring Ahimelech and condemned him to death.

Doeg the Edomite then turned upon the priests at the king’s command and killed 85 men who wore the linen ephod. He also put to the sword at Nob, the town of the priests, with its men and women, its children and infants, and its cattle, donkeys and sheep.

Meanwhile, David does a stupid thing. He heads to Gath, the hometown of Goliath, the land of the Philistines. He is proudly wearing the sword from his conflict with the most famous Philistine of Gath, Goliath.

The fact that David has been so hated and hunted through this whole sorry mess and escaped with his life miraculously a number of times, you can sense that he is almost totally disoriented.

Achish, the king of Gath, realizes that there is something suspicious about the whole deal. In order for David to be able to escape with his life he has to feign insanity. He acts like a madman making marks on the doors of the gate and letting saliva run down his beard.



Exiled from Gath, he flees to the cave of Adullam. I believe that while he is here in the cave of Adullam—all by himself with none of his family or the malcontents who are going to join him shortly—he writes Psalm 142.

Psalm 57 and 142 are the psalms of the cave.

**Verse 1:** “I cry aloud to the Lord; I lift up my voice to the Lord for mercy.”

Let me remind you once again that the intensity of this prayer is seen in the words that David uses to describe his petitions: “I cry...I lift up...I pour out...I tell.” Two more times in verses 5 and 6 he uses the word “cry.”

All alone in the cave he can cry as loud as he wants. It is outward, verbally, and loudly. The “cry” in verses 1 and 5 means to shriek from anguish or danger. The “cry” in verse 6 is to cry for help. In other words, it is sincere intensity as he endeavors to lay hold of God.

Ron Allen says: “The intensity of David’s prayer is demonstrated in the verbs ‘I scream out,’ ‘I implore favor,’ ‘I pour out,’ and ‘I make known.’ These verbs are further emphasized by the adverbial forms of verse 1, ‘aloud’ (given twice.) David was not mumbling in his beard to God; he was praying in earnest, for life was at stake.”

Joseph Stowell in his book *Tongue in Check* says: “When life gets tight, we often pray for relief instead of grace. We are like wet watermelon seeds under the pressure of someone’s thumb—we tend to quickly squirt out. And, if we can’t escape the pressure, we become angry with the forces that hold us there.” (93)

**Verse 2:** “I pour out my complaint before him; before him I tell my trouble.”

David’s “cry” to the Lord is for “mercy” in verse 1. David is pouring out his complaint and he is telling of his trouble in verse 2.

Oesterley said: “The gushing forth of words from an overfull heart.”

Elisabeth Elliot said: “Does our faith depend on having every prayer answered as we think it should be answered, or does it rest rather on the character of a sovereign Lord? We can’t really tell, can we, until we’re in real trouble.” (*Keep a Quiet Heart*, 192)

Steve Brown said that he began complaining to Jesus about the problems he was facing of criticism and people being upset with him. The Lord told him that He understood. He’d been there, done that, and had the T-shirt. (*Follow the Wind*, 100, paraphrased)

There is a great comfort when we know that the Lord is there for us and with us and that He’s been through the storms each of us face.

Would it not be appropriate for us to sing a positive hymn rather than one of complaint? What about **“All the Way My Saviour Leads Me”**: “*All the way my Saviour leads me; What have I to ask beside? Can I doubt His tender mercy Who through life has been my Guide? Heavenly peace, divinest comfort, Here by faith in Him to dwell! For I know, whate’er befall me, Jesus doeth all things well.*”

**September 13 — Overwhelmed, Disoriented, and Weary (Ps. 142:3-5)**

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**Psalm 142:3:** “*When my spirit grows faint within me, it is you who know my way. In the path where I walk men have hidden a snare for me.*”

**Psalm 142:4:** “*Look to my right and see; no one is concerned for me. I have no refuge; no one cares for my life.*”

**Psalm 142:5:** “*I cry to you, O Lord; I say, ‘You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.’*”

**Verse 3:** “When my spirit grows faint within me, it is you who know my way. In the path where I walk men have hidden a snare for me.”

Ron Allen translates verse 3: “When my spirit was overwhelmed within me—But You, You know my path!—In any way I might walk They have set a trap for me.”

Psalm 61:2: “From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I” (NIV).

Three times David looks heavenward and lights the night sky with another Roman candle of faith. The first summit is here in verse 3: “it is you who knows my way.”

Max Lucado said: “Bright and beautiful as the night sky on the fourth of July radiant with explosions of cheer!”

When I hit the wall in the marathon of life, it is You who knows the way to the finish line!

Job 23:10: “But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold” (NIV).

My way has been mined.

C. H. Spurgeon quotes Charlotte Elliott who wrote the hymn “Just As I am”: “*Nay, all by thee is ordered, chosen, planned, Each drop that fills my daily cup, thy hand Prescribes for ills, none else can understand, All, all is known to thee.*”

**Verse 4:** “Look to my right and see; no one is concerned for me. I have no refuge; no one cares for my life.”

There are 3 “No’s” in this verse. They spell out why David feels so alone: (1) “no one is concerned for me”; (2) “I have no refuge”; and (3) “no one cares for my life.”

I can just hear the Lord saying: “David, I’m here! You’re just not aware! Just wait till you see what I have planned for you! Your family is going to come, 400 misfits before God, and Jonathan also! I’m taking care of you!”

**Verse 5:** “I cry to you, O Lord; I say, ‘You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.’”

There are 3 that reveal themselves during this Psalm. We’ve already looked at the first one back in verse 3: “it is you who know my way.” The second summit is here in verse 5: “You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.”

The two key words here are “refuge” and “portion.” “You are my refuge [and] my portion in the land of the living.”

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David is isolated, hated, hunted, and all alone in the cave of Adullam. Lord, how in the world did I ever end up here?

He finds he can lay hold of His strength and His promise. The question : Is God adequate? Is God faithful?

Psalm 119:57: “You are my portion, O Lord; I have promised to obey your words” (NIV).

How about let’s sing a couple of verses of “**God Leads Us Along**”: *“Tho’ sorrows befall us, and Satan oppose, God leads His dear children along; Through grace we can conquer, defeat all our foes, God leads His dear children along. Away from the mire, and away from the clay, God leads His dear children along; Away up in glory, eternity’s day, God leads His dear children along. Some thro’ the waters, some thro’ the flood, Some thro’ the fire, but all thro’ the blood; Some thro’ great sorrow, but God gives a song; In the night season and all the day long.”*

#### **September 14 — Lord, I Needed Your Help Yesterday (Ps. 142:6-7)**

**Psalm 142:6:** *“Listen to my cry, for I am in desperate need; rescue me from those who pursue me, for they are too strong for me.”*

**Psalm 142:7:** *“Set me free from my prison, that I may praise your name. Then the righteous will gather about me because of your goodness to me.”*

**Verse 6:** “Listen to my cry, for I am in desperate need; rescue me from those who pursue me, for they are too strong for me.”

There are 2 phrases that stand out in verse 6: “I am in desperate need” and “they are too strong for me.”

God will never give you more than you can handle with His resources.

**Verse 7:** “Set me free from my prison, that I may praise your name. Then the righteous will gather about me because of your goodness to me.”

This is our third and final summit statement found throughout this Psalm. (1) “it is you who know my way”—verse 3; (2) “You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living”; and (3) “Set me free from my prison, that I may praise your name. Then the righteous will gather about me because of your goodness to me”—verse 7.

The reason David is so anxious was seen in the previous verse: (1) “I am in desperate need” and (2) “they are too strong for me.” If David is ever going to taste freedom it will be because the Lord took action.

I love Charles Wesley’s great old hymn “And Can It Be That I Should Gain”: *“Long my imprisoned spirit lay Fast bound in sin and nature’s night; Thine eye diffused a quick’ning ray, I woke, the dungeon flamed with light; My chains fell off, my heart was free; I rose, went forth and followed Thee. Amazing love! How can it be That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me.”*

The life in the cave was his prison life.

Warren Wiersbe said: “Perhaps you are in a cave of discouragement today. Your hope lies not within yourself or with your circumstances. Look to the Lord

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and obey His Word. Then look ahead with confidence, for God's promises are sure and His Word is true."

It was Dag Hammarskjöld who said: "For all that has been, thanks. For all that shall be, yes." (Brennan Manning, *Reflections for Ragamuffins*, 61)

Why don't you join me in singing the fourth verse of that great hymn "**And Can It Be That I Should Gain**": *"Long my imprisoned spirit lay Fast bound in sin and nature's night; Thine eye diffused a quick'ning ray, I woke, the dungeon flamed with light; My chains fell off, my heart was free; I rose, went forth and followed Thee. Amazing love! How can it be That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me."*

### **September 15 — I Will Praise the Lord Forever (Ps. 146:1-2)**

**Psalm 146:1:** *"Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord, O my soul."*

**Psalm 146:2:** *"I will praise the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live."*

Psalm 146 is the beginning of the 5 Psalm Hallelujah chorus, taking us to the end of the Psalms.

The word "Praise" is found 37 times in these Psalms. Each one of these Psalms begins and ends with a "Hallelujah." There are 10 "Hallelujahs."

Ron Allen quotes from Isaac Watts "While I Live" to begin this series of Psalms: "I'll praise my Maker while I've breath And when my voice is lost in death, Praise shall employ my nobler pow'rs. My days of praise shall ne'er be past, While life and thought and being last, Or immortality endures."

**Verse 1:** "Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord, O my soul."

The Psalm opens with this double imperative, these 2 commands: (1) "Praise the Lord" and (2) "Praise the Lord, O my soul."

The first command is outward, "Praise the Lord." The second command is inward, "Praise the Lord, O my soul."

Revelation 4:11: "Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created" (NASB).

The 4 living creatures in Revelation 4:8: "day and night they do not cease to say, 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come'" (NASB).

**Verse 2:** "I will praise the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live."

Ron Allen translates this verse: "I am determined to praise Yahweh while I live, I am determined to sing to my God while I have life."

Psalm 104:33-34: "I will sing to the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. May my meditation be pleasing to him, as I rejoice in the Lord" (NIV).

The 2 key phrases in verse 2 are: "all my life" and "as long as I live."

Patrick and Lowth said: "The best resolution thou canst make is this; I will praise the Lord all my life long; and never cease to give thanks unto my God,

who never ceases to bestow his benefits on me.”

Praise is a powerful priority. In the wedding vows we say “For richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, in joy and in sorrow, as long as we both shall live.” This likewise is a statement of priority in our relationship to the Lord. The big question: Is praise a priority in your life? Is prayer a priority in your life? Prayer has to do with our relationship and praise has to do with our responsibility. By the way, your marriage will be transformed by these 2 things as well.

Our minds turn back to Psalm 103:1-2: “Bless Yahweh, O my soul; and let all that is within me bless His holy name. Bless Yahweh, O my soul; and forget not all His benefits.”

C. H. Spurgeon says: “Praise is the honey of life which a devout heart extracts from every bloom of providence and grace.” Join me if you will in singing that little prayer chorus, “**Father, I Adore You**”:

*“Father, I adore You, Lay my life before You. How I love You! Jesus, I adore You, Lay my life before You. How I love you! Spirit, I adore You, Lay my life before You. How I love You!”*

### **September 16 — Praise That Is Focused on the Father (Ps. 146:3-5)**

**Psalm 146:3:** “*Do not put your trust in princes, in mortal men, who cannot save.*”

**Psalm 146:4:** “*When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing.*”

**Psalm 146:5:** “*Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God,*”

**Verse 3:** “Do not put your trust in princes, in mortal men, who cannot save.”

Ron Allen translates that verse: “Do not trust in princes, In mortal man, in whom there is no salvation.”

James 4:14: “Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away” (NASB).

Psalm 104:29: “When you hide your face, they are terrified; when you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust.”

All the religions of the world have dead leaders except Christianity.

Psalm 18:46: “The Lord lives! Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be God my Savior!” (NIV).

John 11:25: “Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies’” (NASB).

In summary, verse 3 is a negative command: “Do not put your trust in princes, in mortal men, who cannot save.”

**Verse 4:** “When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing.”

Ron Allen translates verse 4: “When their spirit departs, they return to the

ground; In that very day their plans come to nothing.”

A man is writing a million dollar check and he dies before he signs it!

Luke 12:19-20: “And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?’” (NASB).

**Verse 5:** “Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God,”

Ron Allen translates verse 5: “O how happy is he whose help is the God of Jacob, Whose hope is in Yahweh his God.”

We find here in verse 5 the last beatitude of this psalter: happiness, help, and hope is in the “God of Jacob.”

Tom Landry said: “My faith’s a rock...It is my strength; it gives me inner peace. Without my faith, I’d be in real bad shape. Faith gives a man hope and hope is what life is all about.”

Join me in singing a couple of verses of that great old hymn “**Come, Thou Fount**”: *“Come, Thou Fount of ev’ry blessing, Tune my heart to sing Thy grace; Streams of mercy, never ceasing, Call for songs of loudest praise. Teach me some melodious sonnet, Sung by flaming tongues above; Praise His name! I’m fixed upon it! Name of God’s redeeming love. Hither to Thy love has blest me; Thou hast bro’t me to this place; And I know Thy hand will bring me, Safely home by Thy good grace. Teach me some melodious sonnet, Sung by flaming tongues above; He, to rescue me from danger, Bought me with His precious blood.”*

## September 17 — Faithful Forever (Ps. 146:6-7)

**Psalm 146:6:** *“the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them—the Lord, who remains faithful forever.”*

**Psalm 146:7:** *“He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets prisoners free,”*

**Verse 6:** “the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them—the Lord, who remains faithful forever.”

Peterson paraphrases that verse: “God made sky and soil, sea and all the fish in it. He always does what he says.”

God is the maker of 4 things: (1) “heaven”; (2) “earth”; (3) “the sea”; and (4) “everything in them.”

Isaiah 66:2: “‘Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?’ declares the Lord. ‘This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word’” (NIV).

To my way of thinking, the key phrase in the whole Psalm is the final phrase in verse 6: “The Lord, who remains faithful forever.”

This is the reason we praise Him. This is the reason we do not put our trust in princes, or in mortal men.

In our last study while David was in the cave we read in Psalm 142:4: “Look



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to my right and see; no one is concerned for me. I have no refuge; no one cares for my life” (NIV).

It seems like the Lord isn’t there in caring for David in those circumstances, but then we read in Psalm 142:5: “I cry to you, O Lord; I say, ‘You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living’” (NIV).

1 Thessalonians 5:24: “Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass” (NASB).

Lamentations 3:22-23: “Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness” (NIV).

Isaiah 25:1: “O Lord, you are my God; I will exalt you and praise your name, for in perfect faithfulness you have done marvelous things, things planned long ago” (NIV).

Warren Wiersbe says: “Any God great enough, wise enough and strong enough to create and sustain and run this universe can take care of our problems today.”

**Verse 7:** “He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets prisoners free,”

Here in verse 7 “He upholds the cause of the oppressed,” He “gives food to the hungry,” and He “sets prisoners free.”

You see the magnitude of the Lord’s administration here in this verse: (1) “He upholds the cause of the oppressed.” Isaiah 54:17: “no weapon forged against you will prevail...” (NIV). (2) “[He] gives food to the hungry.” He gave them manna in the wilderness and now He gives us the Bread of life. (3) “[He] sets the prisoners free.” Pearl experiences this almost daily as prisoners write in for *Life Recovery Bibles and Life Recovery Workbooks*. Prisoners enslaved to pornography, drugs, alcohol, materialism, money, etc.

John 8:32: “and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (NASB).

I think it would be good, in the presence of the King of kings and Lord of lords, that we would sing **“Jesus Is Lord of All”**: *“All my tomorrows, all my past—Jesus is Lord of all. I’ve quit my struggles, contentment at last! Jesus is Lord of all. King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Jesus is Lord of all; All my possessions and all my life—Jesus is Lord of all.”*

### **September 18 — Hebrews 4:16 (Donna)**

One of my favorite verses in the Bible is Hebrews 4:16: “Let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

A precious friend of mine found out that she still has some cancer in her body after surgery. It has been caught early, but she is looking at another surgery and treatment.

She told me when she got home from the doctor’s office that she went for a walk and she prayed, expressing to God her need of Him and His help. When

she finished her walk she took out one of her favorite old Bibles—*The Living Bible*. She opened it and the following verse was on a devotional she had stuck in her Bible: “He will not fear bad news, his heart is confident, trusting in the Lord” (Ps. 112:7).

God met her in His Word and ministered to His fearful, precious child. This touched me so deeply. God is so faithful, so tender, so gracious, so caring, so loving...

Her life and example should speak to all of us. Where do we go for help in time of need? Where do we go when we receive bad news? Actually I should change that, to *Whom* do we go?

It is my great honor to serve as a corporate chaplain. If there is to be any real help, in time of need, it is because I have brought the person and their need to the throne of grace.

Recently I read about King Hezekiah who received bad news in the form of a letter (or today it would be in the form of a text or email). His response to the bad news reminds me of my friend.

2 Kings 19:14-15: “Then Hezekiah took the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it, and he went up to the house of the Lord and spread it out before the Lord. Hezekiah prayed before the Lord.”

May Hezekiah of old and my friend of today be a reminder; it makes all the difference to *Whom* we go in time of need and bad news. (Guest contributor, Donna Anderson Skorheim)

## September 19 — Praise Him! Praise Him! (Ps. 146:8-10)

**Psalm 146:8:** “*the Lord gives sight to the blind, the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down, the Lord loves the righteous.*”

**Psalm 146:9:** “*The Lord watches over the alien and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.*”

**Psalm 146:10:** “*The Lord reigns forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the Lord.*”

**Verse 8:** “the Lord gives sight to the blind, the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down, the Lord loves the righteous.”

Whereas we see “the oppressed,” “the hungry,” and “the prisoners” in verse 7, now here in verse 8 he does 3 things as well. He: (1) “gives sight to the blind”; (2) “lifts up those who are bowed down”; and (3) “loves the righteous.”

Isaiah 42:16: “I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them” (NIV).

“Lifts up those who are bowed down.” Raises up the defeated. Joseph Alexander said: “All the verbs are of the participial form, opening, raising, loving, i.e. continually doing so.”

Eric Williams, after catching a pass from Troy Aikman, grabs him by the mask and with a big smile on his face says: “You da man!”

“The Lord loves the righteous.” Psalm 34:17-19: “The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles. The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. A righteous man may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all” (NIV).

**Verse 9:** “The Lord watches over the alien and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.”

The final 4 groups are here in verse 9. (1) “The alien.” I thought of Ruth 1:16-17: “But Ruth replied, ‘Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me’” (NIV).

(2) “The fatherless.” I thought of David speaking to Mephibosheth. 2 Samuel 9:7: “‘Don’t be afraid,’ David said to him, ‘for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table’” (NIV).

(3) “the widow” reminds me of the widow of Zarephath in 1 Kings 17:15: “She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family” (NIV).

(4) “he frustrates the ways of the wicked.” Peterson paraphrases this “make short work of the wicked.” Ron Allen translates it: “the way of the wicked He twists.”

Everything goes wrong for him who goes wrong. You will remember when the chariots of Pharaoh were in the bed of the Red Sea, He made the wheels of their chariots swerve. The way of the wicked is a crooked mountain road. They are traveling until they miss a curve.

**Verse 10:** “The Lord reigns forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the Lord.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 10: “God’s in charge—always. Zion’s God is God for good! Hallelujah!”

Ron Allen translates it: “Yahweh reigns forever...”

Psalm 9:7: “The Lord reigns forever; he has established his throne for judgment” (NIV).

Psalm 93:1: “The Lord reigns...” (NIV).

Psalm 96:10: “...The Lord reigns...” (NIV).

Psalm 97:1: “The Lord reigns...” (NIV).

Psalm 99:1: “The Lord reigns...” (NIV).

Ron Allen said: “The last verse of Psalm 146 presents the concluding thought of the passage as *the psalmist demands the praise of Yahweh, who reigns for all time.*”

The world began without man and it will end without him.

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Fénelon says: “I don’t know what tomorrow brings. God will do what seems good to Him. Sometimes what He wants is hard to accept. Listen to God—there is true freedom, peace, and joy in Him.” (*The Seeking Heart*, 19)

Let’s sing a couple of verses of “**Praise Him! Praise Him!**”: “*Praise Him! Praise Him! Jesus, our blessed Redeemer! Sing, O Earth, His wonderful love proclaim! Hail Him! Hail Him! Highest archangels in glory; Strength and honor give to His holy name! Like a shepherd Jesus will guard His children, In His arms He carries them all day long. Praise Him! Praise Him! Jesus, our blessed Redeemer! For our sins He suffered, and bled and died; He our Rock, our hope of eternal salvation, Hail Him! Hail Him! Jesus the Crucified. Sound His praises! Jesus who bore our sorrows; Love unbounded, wonderful, deep and strong; Praise Him! Praise Him! tell of His excellent greatness; Praise Him! Praise Him! ever in joyful song!*”

### **September 20 — The Coming Kingdom (Ps. 2:1-3)**

**Psalm 2:1:** “*Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain?*”

**Psalm 2:2:** “*The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One.*”

**Psalm 2:3:** “*‘Let us break their chains,’ they say, ‘and throw off their fetters.’*”

The thoughts and reactions to God’s kingdom: (1) from mankind—verses 1-3. This is obviously a Messianic Psalm because it is often quoted in the New Testament— Acts, Hebrews and Revelation.

It would be well to trace the life of David who authored the Psalm, and see it applying to him as well. As you remember, David was wanted by Samuel to be the future king of Israel. He was anointed at 16 and fought Goliath when he was 17. There are 13 years of difficult times. He finally becomes king when he is 30 years old. His kingship is divided into 2 parts. He was king in Hebron for 7 years over the tribe of Judah. He was king in Jerusalem for 33 years over Israel. He dies at 70. What thrill and excitement must have been his at God’s faithfulness in finally allowing him to assume the reigns of leadership over the entire nation.

As we look at these first 3 verses, let’s be reminded of the words of our resurrected Lord in Matthew 28:18-20: “And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age’” (NASB).

How does mankind respond to this message?

**Verse 1:** “Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain?”

The psalmist begins his writing with a question: “Why?” There are 2 key words in this question: “conspire” and “plot.” “Why do the nations conspire?” and “Why do . . . the peoples plot in vain?”

The one who is behind all of this opposition—"conspiring of the nations"—and the plots that are in vain, is Satan himself. This is his last shot at a kingdom. He's not going to miss the opportunity.

Isaiah 14:24: "The Lord Almighty has sworn, 'Surely, as I have planned, so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will stand'" (NIV).

Satan is the supreme terrorist of them all!

**Verse 2:** "The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One."

The key words in verse 1 were "conspire" and "plot." The key words in verse 2 are "take their stand" and "gather together against."

"The kings...take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One."

John 1:11: "He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him" (NASB).

Luke 19:14: "But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us'" (NASB).

John 19:15: "They therefore cried out, 'Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him!' Pilate said to them, 'Shall I crucify your King?' The chief priests answered, 'We have no king but Caesar'" (NASB).

1 Chronicles 16:31: "Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let them say among the nations, 'The Lord reigns!'" (NIV).

**Verse 3:** "Let us break their chains," they say, "and throw off their fetters."

Our key words in verse 3 are "break" and "throw off." These "chains" that are binding them are the chains of a Godly civilization, marriage, family, morality, values, and justice. It is their resolve and desire to do away with any restraints.

Judges 21:25: "In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit" (NIV).

Louisa May Alcott said: "My Kingdom / A little kingdom I possess, / Where thoughts and feelings dwell; / And very hard the task I find / Of governing it well... / I do not ask for any crown / But that which all may win; / Nor try to conquer any world / Except the one within." (*God's Little Treasury of Virtues*, 159)

It's the proud, unbroken spirit of sinful man that forms the resistance against God's kingdom and His coming King, the Lord Jesus Christ.

How about singing a verse of Fanny Crosby's great hymn, "**Rescue the Perishing**": "*Rescue the perishing, Care for the dying, Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave; Weep o'er the erring one, Lift up the fallen, Tell them of Jesus the mighty to save. Rescue the perishing, Care for the dying; Jesus is merciful, Jesus will save.*"

**September 21 — The Response of God the Father to the Kingdom (Ps. 2:4-6)**

**Psalms 2:4:** "*The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at*

them.”

**Psalm 2:5:** “*Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,*”

**Psalm 2:6:** “*I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill.*”

Isaiah 14:26-27: “This is the plan determined for the whole world; this is the hand stretched out over all nations. For the Lord Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?” (NIV).

In verses 4-6 of Psalm 2 we see the response of God the Father to the opposition.

It is God the Father who is speaking in these 3 verses.

**Verse 4:** “The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.”

The key words in verse 4 are “laughs” and “scoffs.”

When I think of this verse I think of that cartoon picture of a mouse standing on his hind feet shaking his fist at a swooping eagle. The title of the picture: “The last great act of defiance.”

Proverbs 1:26: “I in turn will laugh at your disaster; I will mock when calamity overtakes you” (NIV).

Job 9:4: “His wisdom is profound, his power is vast. Who has resisted him and come out unscathed?” (NIV).

Warren Wiersbe says: “God laughs at them because He knows man cannot survive without submitting to His authority.”

**Verse 5:** “Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,”

The word “Then” tells us what he does after he “laughs” and “scoffs at them” in verse 4. The 2 key words in verse 5 are: “rebukes” and “terrifies.”

He who spits against the wind spits in his own face!

I found this statement on an email: “It’s better to lose your pride to the one you love than to lose the one you love because of pride.”

**Verse 6:** “I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill.”

The word “I” is emphatic: “I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill.”

Psalm 110:5-6: “The Lord is at your right hand; he will crush kings on the day of his wrath. He will judge the nations, heaping up the dead and crushing the rulers of the whole earth.”

A legitimate offer of the kingdom was made at the birth of Jesus. The baby king was born. Their rejection, however, did not affect the promise.

Just as the Lord Jesus Christ was right on schedule the first time, so you can count on the fact He is going to be right on schedule when He comes to set up His kingdom.

What a tragedy! What a heart break! What a loss! My suppositions were incorrect!

Habakkuk 1:5: “Look at the nations and watch—and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if



you were told” (NIV).

In response to God the Father’s message about the kingdom, let us continue with singing verse 2 of **“Rescue the Perishing”**: *“Tho they are slighting Him, Still He is waiting, Waiting the penitent child to receive; Plead with them earnestly, Plead with them gently, He will forgive if they only believe. Rescue the perishing, Care for the dying; Jesus is merciful, Jesus will save.”*

**September 22 — In the Fullness of Time, God Sent Forth His Son (Ps. 2:7-9)**

**Psalm 2:7:** *“I will proclaim the decree of the Lord: He said to me, ‘You are my Son; today I have become your Father.’”*

**Psalm 2:8:** *“Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.”*

**Psalm 2:9:** *“You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery.”*

We are pursuing a 4-point outline of Psalm 2. We have looked together at the thoughts and rejections to God’s kingdom: by mankind—verses 1-3; by God the Father’s perspective—verses 4-6; and now by God the Son—verses 7-9.

**Verse 7:** “I will proclaim the decree of the Lord: He said to me, ‘You are my Son; today I have become your Father.’”

Acts 13:33: “that God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, ‘Thou art My Son; today I have begotten Thee’” (NASB).

Hebrews 1:8-9: “But of the Son He says, ‘Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, And the righteous scepter is the scepter of His kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy companions’” (NASB).

Romans 1:4: “who was declared with power to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord” (NASB).

**Verse 8:** “Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.”

“Ask of me” reminds me of Jesus’ words in the Sermon the Mount: “Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you” (Matt. 7:7 NASB).

J. Vernon McGee said: “The scepter of this universe will be held by a Man with nail-pierced hands. He is the One who is yet to rule.” **Verse 9:** “You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery.”

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9: “dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and

from the glory of His power” (NASB).

Matthew 25:41: “Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels’” (NASB).

You really see this picture of destruction and ruling with an “iron scepter” in Solomon more than in David in his battle with Adonijah, Joab, and Shimei.

Matthew 25:46: “And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life” (NASB).

Let’s sing verse 3 of Fanny Crosby’s hymn **“Rescue the Perishing”**: *“Down in the human heart, Crushed by the temper, Feelings lie buried that grace can restore; Touched by a loving heart, Wakened by kindness, Chords that are broken will vibrate once more. Rescue the perishing, Care for the dying; Jesus is merciful, Jesus will save.”*

### **September 23 — God the Holy Spirit Comes on the Scene (Ps. 2:10-12)**

**Psalm 2:10:** *“Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth.”*

**Psalm 2:11:** *“Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling.”*

**Psalm 2:12:** *“Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.”*

Jesus, in some of His last words to the disciples, in John 16:8-11 describes the ministry of the Holy Spirit: “And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you no longer behold Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged” (NASB).

**Verse 10:** “Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth.”

“Therefore” points us back to verse 2 where we have read “The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One.”

Now, in view of all that has been said in the intervening verses, here comes the recommendation: “you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth.”

The 2 key phrases in verse 10 are: “be wise” and “be warned.”

Whereas we have focused on mankind in verses 1-3, the message from God the Father in verses 4-6, the message from God the Son in verses 7-9, now it is the response of God the Holy Spirit in verses 10-12. His words may be summarized here in verse 10 in the 2 commands: “be wise” and “be warned.”

1 Corinthians 2:14: “But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them,

because they are spiritually appraised” (NASB).

The secret to rightly responding to the initiatives of the King of kings and the Lord of lords is to cultivate a listening ear to the voice of the Spirit. Then also be quick to obey! Isaiah 30:21: “Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, ‘This is the way; walk in it’” (NIV).

**Verse 11:** “Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling.”

The 2 key words in verse 11 are “serve” and “rejoice.” When you put verses 10 and 11 together you have a 4-fold recommendation: (1) “be wise”; (2) “be warned”; (3) “serve with fear”; and (4) “rejoice with trembling.”

Philippians 2:12-13: “So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure” (NASB).

**Verse 12:** “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.”

Let’s take just a moment to put these 5 commands together in these 3 verses: (1) “be wise”; (2) “be warned”; (3) “serve with fear”; (4) “rejoice with trembling”; (5) “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry.”

What the Spirit of God is saying to us is to respond to His lordship in an act of humble contrition, worship, and obedience.

The reason is stated in the next phrase: “for his wrath can flare up in a moment.”

I am reminded of 3 circumstances that verify the quickness of His judgment and justice. We see it with: (1) the sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, when they offered strange fire; (2) the time of bringing the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. Uzzah reached out his hand and touched the Ark; and (3) Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5 when they lied to the Spirit of God about their real estate deal.

This teaches us that God means business. Judgment can come quickly in the face of our lack of humble, broken response to His truth. “Kiss the Son.” Pay homage, surrender, honor, worship Him.

We come now to our final statement in the Psalm: “Blessed are all who take refuge in him.”

The real secret of an unsatisfied life lies too often in an unsundered will. Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3: “you must be born again.”

Revelation 3:20: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me” (NASB).

Matthew 6:10: “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven” (NASB).

Let’s conclude our study of Psalm 2 by singing the final verse of **“Rescue the Perishing”**: *“Rescue the perishing, Duty demands it; Strength for thy labor*

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*the Lord will provide; Back to the narrow way Patiently win them; Tell the poor wanderer a Saviour has died. Rescue the perishing, Care for the dying; Jesus is merciful, Jesus will save.”*

### **September 24 — The Landscape of a War (Ps. 3:1-2)**

**Psalm 3:1:** *“O Lord, how many are my foes! How many rise up against me!”*

**Psalm 3:2:** *“Many are saying of me, ‘God will not deliver him.’ Selah”*

This Psalm was written by David when he is 64 years old. He has 6 years of life left. He made that difficult journey north and east to Mahanaim, fleeing from Absalom and his forces who have taken over Jerusalem. After traveling all night and the next day, they reach Mahanaim. Early that evening he is exhausted. It is after spending the night in Mahanaim that David awakens the next morning and pens the words of Psalm

3.

2 Samuel 17:27-29: “When David came to Mahanaim, Shobi son of Nahash from Rabbah of the Ammonites, and Makir son of Ammiel from Lo Debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim brought bedding and bowls and articles of pottery. They also brought wheat and barley, flour and roasted grain, beans and lentils, honey and curds, sheep, and cheese from cows’ milk for David and his people to eat. For they said, ‘The people have become hungry and tired and thirsty in the desert’” (NIV).

This is his prayer. We have a chance to step behind the veil and hear King David pray.

**Verse 1:** “O Lord, how many are my foes! How many rise up against me!”

David is overwhelmed here as he begins his prayer. We find the word “many”

occurring 3 times in these 2 verses. Satan’s tactic is always to magnify the crisis. This helps you understand who is controlling the press of our country. Breaking verse 1 into 2 parts, David opens his prayer with: “how many are my foes!” and “How many rise up against me!”

These are not questions in verse 1 but an exclamation of surprise and grief over how extensive the rebellion really is.

I am reminded of Elijah as he flees from the threats of Jezebel: “He replied, ‘I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too’” (1 Kings 19:10 NIV).

The Lord responds a little later in 1 Kings 19:18: “Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him” (NIV).

In essence, the Lord could respond quickly to David’s prayer by saying: “So what else is new? It goes with the territory!”

John 15:18-19: “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me

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before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you” (NASB).

Yes, the united testimony of the faithful is: “I’ve been there, done that, got the t-shirt!” The old timers changed it a little: “I’ve been there, done that and can’t remember most of it!”

**Verse 2:** “Many are saying of me, ‘God will not deliver him.’ Selah”

Not only are there “many foes...many who rise up against me” but “Many [who] are saying of me, ‘God will not deliver him.’”

Lord, the vocal majority are saying that I have been ultimately forsaken and that You will not intervene in these circumstances.

David almost sounds like Job 3:25-26: “What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me. I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, but only turmoil” (NIV).

Lord, with all this negative press, I need some assurance from You that You will never leave me nor forsake me. That You haven’t given up on me.

“Many are saying of me, ‘God will not deliver him’” reminded me of a similar experience in the life of King Hezekiah. In 2 Kings 18 the enemy says: “...Do not listen to Hezekiah, for he is misleading you when he says, ‘The Lord will deliver us’”

(18:32 NIV). Now for the rest of the story: “That night the angel of the Lord went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp” (2 Kings 19:35 NIV).

There will come times in our lives when the majority will write us off and their counsel is that God has given up on us so we might as well give up on ourselves.

I am reminded of a military man who suffered greatly on the battlefield in Vietnam. This is the story that he tells:

After an agonizing month of waiting, I made the long med-evac flight home to be reunited with my wife. As she entered my hospital ward for the first time, my words to her were “Dea, honey, it’s me. Baby, I know I’m not a pretty sight, but I’m happy to be alive and home.”

There I lay, a pathetic 115 pounds, with bandages covering the left eye and both ears. My head was shaved, face full of stitches. I had the stump of my left arm bound and my right arm in a cast and motionless. My left leg was open and draining with the bone exposed, and the right leg covered with shrapnel wounds.

“You’re beautiful!” she cried. Running to me, she gently wrapped her arms around my frail form, afraid of hurting me. “Don’t worry,” she assured me.

“We’re going to make the best of everything.” (This story was originally pub

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lished in *Vietnam: The Other Side of Glory* by William Kimball, was updated

following a recent interview with Clebe McClary by the author. He may be contacted at PO Box 535 Pawleys Island South Carolina 29585 (843) 237-2582.)

Just remember, when you get down and think that nobody cares, everybody is against you, the Lord is still there in the trenches with you. He still believes in you and He will never give up on you.

I think it would be good for us to sing a couple of verses of that hymn we sang in childhood, **“Jesus Loves Me”**: *“Jesus loves me! This I know, For the Bible tells me so; Little ones to Him belong, They are weak but He is strong. Jesus loves me! He will stay Close beside me all the way; Thou hast bled and died for me, I will henceforth live for Thee. Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.”*

### **September 25 — Secret Weapon of Prayer (Donna)**

“For apart from Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).

I have changed the emphasis of this verse and in the margin of my Bible I have written, “For apart from Me you can do NO thing.”

This is a busy time of the year. In reality I know your lives are busy all year. Your schedules are hectic and you have a lot of demands on your time.

Let me share a secret weapon for a long to-do list. It is very simple and important. Begin your day with prayer to the Lord. Before you get out of bed, ask the Lord to walk with you step-by-step through your day. His power to strengthen, guard, and guide your steps and provide all you need to accomplish what you need to accomplish that day.

My mother has a quote on her desk: “A man who fails to pray limits himself to his own ability.” Before you step into your day, express your dependence on Him. Then, as you face difficulty, send up a quick prayer: “Lord, help.” My favorite is, “Lord, I need You.”

I had only been a chaplain a few months when my father had surgery in Dallas. A chaplain was sent to the hospital. After she prayed with our family I walked out with her. I asked if we could visit for a few minutes. As an experienced chaplain, what advice would she give a new chaplain like me? Her first words of wisdom were “Do not ever visit until first spending time in prayer. Otherwise you will have little to give spiritually, and only in your own power.”

Her advice in a nutshell: Only step into your day dependent on God through prayer.

I have shared this with every chaplain I have had the opportunity to train. This is not just for chaplains, this is the key for a busy life. Do you think Jesus had a busy schedule? So many times throughout the gospels we read of Jesus praying early in the morning or late at night. He taught by example the importance of depending upon our Heavenly Father in prayer before we begin



a day.

Spend the extra moments expressing your need and dependence on the Lord. Give your day and schedule to Him and ask Him to enter in and organize and make sense of it. I promise you will see a difference and be convinced to daily use the secret weapon of prayer.

“I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me” (Phil. 4:13). (Guest contributor, Donna Anderson Skorheim)

## **September 26 — You Are My Shield and Exceeding Great Reward (Ps. 3:3-4)**

**Psalm 3:3:** *“But you are a shield around me, O Lord; you bestow glory on me and lift up my head.”*

**Psalm 3:4:** *“To the Lord I cry aloud, and he answers me from his holy hill. Selah”*

**Verse 3:** “But you are a shield around me, O Lord; you bestow glory on me and lift up my head.”

Verse 3 begins with the words “But you.” Now it’s time to deal God into the equation.

David is saying in this prayer: “They all keep on making the same assertion.” All the press releases are saying the same thing. “But you,” Lord are not saying the same thing: (1) “you are a shield around me”; (2) “you bestow glory on me”; and (3) “you...lift up my head.”

At this time of David’s greatest humiliation, the Lord is there to be for David what he needs Him to be.

My mind is drawn back to David’s first public military campaign in the Valley of Elah against Goliath. 1 Samuel 17:45: “David said to the Philistine, ‘You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied’” (NIV).

There are 3 things that the Lord is to David for this moment: (1) “you are a shield around me. Lord, You are a divine protector on the field of battle and conflict. Genesis

15:1: “After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: ‘Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward’” (NIV). Psalm 5:12: “For surely, O Lord, you bless the righteous; you surround them with your favor as with a shield” (NIV).

(2) “you bestow glory on me.” The glory that David talks about is the evidence of His presence with us and in us. (3) “you lift up my head.” David hopes his kingdom will be restored.

1 Peter 5:6: “Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time” (NASB).

I may be down but I’m not out!

**Verse 4:** “To the Lord I cry aloud, and he answers me from his holy hill. Selah”

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Psalm 62:8: “Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge” (NIV).

Harry Ironside: David said: ...I am putting the whole thing into the hands of God and He stands between me and the foe.”

Let’s sing a verse of “**He Is Able to Deliver Thee**”: “*‘Tis the grandest theme thro’ the ages rung; ‘Tis the grandest theme for a mortal tongue; ‘Tis the grandest theme that the world e’er sung, ‘Our God is able to deliver thee.’ He is able to deliver thee, He is able to deliver thee; Tho’ by sin opprest, Go to Him for rest: ‘Our God is able to deliver thee.’*”

**September 27 — Sweet Sleep (Ps. 3:5-6) Psalm 3:5: “I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the Lord sustains me.”**

**Psalm 3:6: “I will not fear the tens of thousands drawn up against me on every side.”**

**Verse 5:** “I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the Lord sustains me.”

Peterson paraphrases this verse: “I stretch myself out; I sleep. Then I’m up again—rested, tall and steady.”

David gives us the reason that he can “lie down and sleep [and] wake again”: “because the Lord sustains me.”

2 Corinthians 12:9: “And He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me” (NASB).

Lord, You are a shield. Lord, You are a sustainer. Lord, You are a deliverer. I am going to leave all these matters in Your hands and go to sleep!

Psalm 121:3-4: “He will not let your foot slip—he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep” (NIV).

Proverbs 3:24: “when you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet” (NIV).

A sign on a pastor’s desk read: “Don’t feel totally, personally, irrevocably responsible for everything; that’s my job—God.”

Fénelon said: “The reason you feel so agitated is that you do not accept everything that happens to you with complete trust in God. Put everything in His hand, and offer yourself to Him as a sacrifice. The moment you stop wanting things to be your way, you will be free from so much worry and concern. You won’t have to hide anything or make up excuses for anything.” (*The Seeking Heart*, 175)

**Verse 6:** “I will not fear the tens of thousands drawn up against me on every side.”

When you have the divine perspective, it changes everything. Here David says: “I will not fear the tens of thousands drawn up against me on every side.”

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Although he is surrounded by the enemy, he says in verses 5 and 6 he is going to do 2 things: (1) verse 5—"I [will] lie down and sleep" and (2) verse 6—"I will not fear."

Philippians 4:6-7: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (NASB).

Let's sing verse 2 of "**He Is Able to Deliver Thee**": "*'Tis the grandest theme in the earth or main; 'Tis the grandest theme for a mortal strain; 'Tis the grandest theme, tell the world again, 'Our God is able to deliver thee.' He is able to deliver thee, He is able to deliver thee; Tho' by sin oppress, Go to Him for rest: 'Our God is able to deliver thee.'*"

### **September 28 — Lord, I'm Asking You for the Victory (Ps. 3:7-8)**

**Psalm 3:7:** "*Arise, O Lord! Deliver me, O my God! Strike all my enemies on the jaw; break the teeth of the wicked.*"

**Psalm 3:8:** "*From the Lord comes deliverance. May your blessing be on your people. Selah*"

**Verse 7:** "Arise, O Lord! Deliver me, O my God! Strike all my enemies on the jaw; break the teeth of the wicked."

We have the record of David's departure from Jerusalem and the uncertainty about the future when he speaks to Zadok the priest, recorded in 2 Samuel 15:25-26: "Thenthe king said to Zadok, 'Take the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the Lord's eyes, he will bring me back and let me see it and his dwelling place again. But if he says, 'I am not pleased with you,' then I am ready; let him do to me whatever seems good to him'" (NIV).

The military man is barking the commands here in verse 7: "arise," "Deliver," "Strike," and "break."

**Verse 8:** "From the Lord comes deliverance. May your blessing be on your people. Selah"

The word "From" at the beginning of verse 8 shows us the source of deliverance. The 2 things that David speaks of in this final verse are: (1) "deliverance" and (2) "blessing." The word "deliverance" takes us back to: (1) verse 7—"Arise, O Lord! Deliver me, O my God!" and (2) verse 2—"Many are saying to me, 'God will not deliver him.'" God truly is a God of "deliverance."

I was just meditating on several of the scriptures that illustrate this point. These 6 thoughts came to mind when the Lord is Lord of "deliverance": (1) the children of Israel from Egypt; (2) Noah and his family from the flood; (3) Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fiery furnace; (4) Daniel from the lion's den; (5) Jesus' death upon the cross; and (6) His kingdom will be an ultimate deliverance from sin, death, and hell.

Isaiah 43:11: "I, even I, am the Lord, and apart from me there is no savior" (NIV).

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The prayer-wish that concludes this Psalm is: “May your blessing be on your people. Selah.”

This reminds me of the prayer of Jabez in 1 Chronicles 4:10. Let us ask God as we conclude this meditation to bless us with the same prayer.

(1) Lord, bless me a lot. Would You do something so big in my life that it's obviously from You?

(2) Lord, would You enlarge my coast, my sphere of influence, my ministry? Give me more ministry. Increase my influence and opportunities for You.

(3) Lord, that Your hand might be with me. Give me a sense of Your continual presence and direction. I realize that this cannot be done unless I am walking by means of the Spirit and that I am filled with the Spirit. The only way that can be done is if I am not grieving the Spirit by sin or saying “No” to the Spirit with my stubborn resistance.

(4) Lord, would you protect me, keep me from evil and keep me from falling into Satan's traps?

Thank You, Lord, that You said “Yes” to Jabez and that You granted what he requested. I am trusting in faith You'll do the same for each of us as a result of this prayer. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Hudson Taylor loved the words of this hymn: “Both Thine arms are clasped around me, And my head is on Thy breast; And my weary soul hath found Thee Such a perfect, perfect rest! Blessed Jesus, Now I know that I am blest.” (*One With Christ*, 80)

Let's sing the last verse of “**He Is Able to Deliver Thee**”: “*'Tis the grandest, let the tidings roll, To the guilty heart, to the sinful soul; Look to God in faith, He will make thee whole, 'Our God is able to deliver thee.' He is able to deliver thee, He is able to deliver thee; Tho' by sin oppress, Go to Him for rest: 'Our God is able to deliver thee.'*”

### **September 29 — The Psalm of the Steadfast (Ps. 11:1)**

**Psalm 11:1: “In the Lord I take refuge. How then can you say to me: ‘Flee like a bird to your mountain.’”**

Psalm 11 is the Psalm of the steadfast. This Psalm is for people who are hanging in there or staying by the stuff. They have their house built upon the Rock.

The verse for the steadfast is 1 Corinthians 15:58: “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not *in vain* in the Lord” (NASB).

If we are going to finish our course with joy and victory, there are 2 words that will have to characterize the remaining days of our lives: (1) steadfastness and (2) perseverance.

Raymond Edman said: “It is always too soon to quit.”

You've got to keep on walking. You don't know, the Lord may be standing up right now!

This Psalm obviously comes from a crisis. There are 2 major possibilities in the life of David. It could come during the time of fleeing from Saul for those nearly 13 years of going from crisis to crisis. Or it could also be with regard to Absalom when they fled from Jerusalem to Mahanaim.

I personally prefer to see this is a reference to the time that he fled from Absalom.

I think it would be good for us to meditate a brief moment as we begin our study on Psalm 112:7-8: "He will have no fear of bad news; his heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord. His heart is secure, he will have no fear; in the end he will look in triumph on his foes" (NIV).

**Verse 1:** "In the Lord I take refuge. How then can you say to me: 'Flee like a bird to your mountain.'"

Psalm 68:19: "Praise the Lord; praise God our Savior! For each day he carries us in his arms" (NLT).

Isaiah 40:11: "He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young" (NIV).

Thank goodness David doesn't have the Southwest Airlines option. "You want to get away? You are now free to move about the country."

Job 23:10-11: "But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold. My feet have closely followed his steps; I have kept to his way without turning aside" (NIV).

George Bernard Shaw said: "You don't hold your own in the world by standing on guard, but by attacking and getting well hammered yourself."

Mike Ditka said: "You never really lose until you quit trying."

David begins Psalm 11 with the words: "In the Lord I take refuge. How then can you say to me: 'Flee like a bird to your mountain.'"

Let's sing a verse of **"My Anchor Holds"**: *"Tho' the angry surges roll O'er my tempest-driven soul, I am peaceful, for I know, Wildly though the winds may blow, I've an anchor safe and sure, That shall evermore endure. And it holds, my anchor holds; Blow your wildest then, O gale, On my bark so small and frail, By His grace I shall not fail, For my anchor holds, my anchor holds."*

### September 30 — Hunkered Down in a Hailstorm (Ps. 11:2-3)

**Psalm 11:2:** *"For look, the wicked bend their bows; they set their arrows against the strings to shoot from the shadows at the upright in heart."*

**Psalm 11:3:** *"When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?"*

**Verse 2:** "For look, the wicked bend their bows; they set their arrows against the strings to shoot from the shadows at the upright in heart."

Here is the reason for the previous recommendation that David retreat: "flee like a bird to your mountain."

"For look"—the reason is David's life is in jeopardy because—"the wicked [are already bending] their bows; they set their arrows against the

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strings,” and they are going to “shoot from the shadows.”

Their target is “the upright in heart”—the strait of heart, the sincere.

The threat of war is very real here in the picture that’s described. This is the reason I prefer to have this Psalm written from Mahanaim. David and his forces are waiting for Absalom and his forces to come north from Jerusalem.

**Verse 3:** “When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?”

This could have reference to the experience of Ahimelech, the priests and their families. All their possessions were destroyed by Doeg the Edomite at the command of King Saul. This could also have reference to the fact that the foundation for David’s kingdom has been destroyed. “What can the righteous do” in this situation?

Peterson paraphrases verse 3: “The bottom’s dropped out of the country; good people don’t have a chance?”

When we talk about the foundations of a country, we are speaking about morality, marriage, family, honesty, integrity, justice, and faithfulness.

Charles Wesley wrote the following: “Other refuge have I none, Hangs my helpless soul on thee; Leave, ah! Leave me not alone, Still support and comfort me. All my trust on thee is stayed, All my help from thee I bring; Cover my defenseless head With the shadow of thy wing.”

Jesus spoke of foundations in Matthew 16:18: “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it” (NASB).

He also concluded the Sermon on the Mount on Matthew 7:24-27 with 2 different men. One building his house upon the sand and one building his house upon the rock: “...and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and yet it did not fall; for it had been founded upon the rock. And every one who hears these words of Mine, and does not act upon them, will be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and it fell, and great was its fall” (NASB).

Paul speaks of foundation too in 1 Corinthians 3:11: “For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (NASB).

“What can the righteous do?” They can do 3 things: (1) Psalm 34:3—“Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt his name together” (NIV); (2) Matthew 5:16—“Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (NASB); and (3) 1 Peter 3:15—“but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence” (NASB).

Let’s sing verse 4 of **“My Anchor Holds”**: *“Troubles almost ‘whelm the soul; Griefs like billows o’er me roll; Tempters seek to lure astray, Storms*



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*obscure the light of day; But in Christ I can be bold, I've an anchor that shall hold. And it holds, my anchor holds; Blow your wildest then, O gale, On my bark so small and frail, By His grace I shall not fail, For my anchor holds, my anchor holds."*

#### **October 1 — The Lord is Fully Aware (Ps. 11:4-5)**

**Psalm 11:4:** *"The Lord is in his holy temple; the Lord is on his heavenly throne. He observes the sons of men; his eyes examine them."*

**Psalm 11:5:** *"The Lord examines the righteous, but the wicked and those who love violence his soul hates."*

**Verse 4:** "The Lord is in his holy temple; the Lord is on his heavenly throne. He observes the sons of men; his eyes examine them."

There are 4 things said about the Lord here in verse 4: (1) "The Lord is in his holy temple"; (2) "the Lord is on his heavenly throne"; (3) "[the Lord] observes the sons of men"; and (4) "his eyes examine them." The question that you raise at this point is, do you think the Lord is aware?

"What can the righteous do?" the fainthearted had asked (v. 3). David responded that the righteous can trust in the real Source of secure government—the Lord, whose throne is exalted in the heavens..." (*The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 800)

God is unaltered by storms. He is undeterred by problems, and He is unfrightened by suffering.

Hebrews 4:14-16: "Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need" (NASB).

Oswald Chambers said: "Lord God Omniscient, give me wisdom this day to worship and work aright and be well-pleasing to Thee. Lord, interpret Thyself to me more and more in fullness and beauty." (*If You Will Ask*, 85)

**Verse 5:** "The Lord examines the righteous, but the wicked and those who love violence his soul hates."

"The Lord examines the righteous." We know that from 2 Corinthians 5:10: "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (NASB).

It would be good then for us to follow the example of David: "Test me, O Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind; for your love is ever before me, and I walk continually in your truth" (Ps. 26:2-3 NIV). Psalm 139:23-24: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (NIV).

"But the wicked and those who love violence his soul hates." You can see

this in the home, in the marriage relationship, at work, and at school. Violence breaks out every place you turn these days.

Martha Snell Nicholson says in her piece “Treasures”: “One by one God took them from me / All the things I valued most / Till I was empty handed / Every glittering toy was lost. / And I walked earth’s highways / Grieving in my rags and poverty / Until I heard His voice inviting, / ‘Lift those empty hands to me.’ / And I turned my hands toward heaven / And He filled them with a store / Of His own transcendent riches / Till they could contain no more. / And at last I comprehended / With my stupid mind, and dull, / That God could not pour His riches / Into hands already full.” (*Ivory Palaces*)

Let’s sing a verse of “**Nearer, My God, to Thee**”: “*Nearer, my God, to Thee, Nearer to Thee! E’en though it be a cross That raiseth me; Still all my song shall be, Nearer, my God, to Thee, Nearer, my God, to Thee, Nearer to Thee!*”

### October 2 — The Message God Gave to Amos (Pearl)

Starting with verse 1, Amos made clear this is a report God spoke to him and he is only the reporter. To emphasize, he put quotation marks around the direct statements from God.

“The Sovereign Lord says: ‘I hate all your show and pretense. Away with your hymns of praise! They are only noise to my ears. I will not listen to your music, no matter how lovely it is...Instead I want to see a mighty flood of justice, a river of righteous living that will never run dry’” (Amos 5:21, 23 NLT).

“Do what is good and run from evil—that you may live! Then the Lord God almighty will truly be your helper, just as you claimed he is” (Amos 5:14 NLT).

“But Amos replied, ‘I’m not one of your professional prophets. I certainly never trained to be one. I’m just a shepherd, and I care for fig trees. But the Lord called me away from my flock and told me, “Go and prophesy to my people in Israel”’” (Amos 7:14-15 NLT).

These verses clearly show how closely God watches individual people. He has His eyes on us to see if He can use us to get out His message for His glory.

“For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him” (2 Chron. 16:9a NIV).

“Humble yourselves, therefore, under the almighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time” (1 Pet. 5:6 NASB).

### October 3 — The Lord Watches Over the Way of the Righteous, But the Way of the Wicked Will Perish (Ps. 11:6-7)

**Psalm 11:6:** “*On the wicked he will rain fiery coals and burning sulfur; a scorching wind will be their lot.*”

**Psalm 11:7:** “*For the Lord is righteous, he loves justice; upright men will see his face.*”

**Verse 6:** “On the wicked he will rain fiery coals and burning sulfur; a

scorching wind will be their lot.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 6: “Fail the test and you’re out, out in a hail of firestones, Drinking from a canteen filled with hot desert wind.”

Revelation 20:14-15: “And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire” (NASB).

Ecclesiastes 7:29: “I discovered that God created people to be upright, but they have each turned to follow their own downward path” (NLT).

Jude 7: “Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example, in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire” (NASB).

**Verse 7:** “For the Lord is righteous, he loves justice; upright men will see his face.”

Now we have the reason why the Lord is pouring out His wrath on the wicked: “The Lord is righteous.” The first phrase takes us back to verse 4. There are 3 things we can see in these 2 verses: (1) “The Lord is in his holy temple”—verse 4; (2) “the Lord is on his heavenly throne”—verse 4; and now (3) “the Lord is righteous”—verse 7. “He loves justice; upright men will see his face.”

Micah 6:8: “He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” (NIV).

Jeremiah 6:16: “This is what the Lord says: ‘Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, “We will not walk in it”’” (NIV).

Warren Wiersbe says: “Those times when you feel like quitting can be times of great opportunity, for God uses your troubles to help you grow. When you feel like running away, claim your privilege as a child of God and approach the throne of grace. There you will find the personal and tailored help you need.”

Baxter Black said: “You’ve got to keep firing those arrows in the sky. I still do that. That’s my *modus operandi*. Shoot those arrows in the sky, you’re gonna hit something.”

It would be good for us to sing **“Soon and Very Soon”**: *“Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King! Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King! Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! We’re going to see the King! No more crying there—we are going to see the King! No more crying there—we are going to see the King! No more crying there—we are going to see the King! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! We’re going to see the King! No more dying there—we are going to see the King! No more dying there—we are going to see the King! No more dying there—we are going to see the King! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! We’re going to see the King!”*

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**October 4 — O Lord Listen, O Lord Forgive, O Lord Hear and Act for Your Sake (Ps. 17:1-2)**

**Psalm 17:1** *“Hear, O Lord, my righteous plea; listen to my cry. Give ear to my prayer—it does not rise from deceitful lips.”*

**Psalm 17:2:** *“May my vindication come from you; may your eyes see what is right.”*

What a special Psalm. It is a prayer of David at a very low and difficult time in his life and experiences.

You will remember that Samuel came and anointed young David as the future king of Israel to ultimately replace the then reigning, but rejected, King Saul. David was probably 16 at the time. Then he had that great battle in the Valley of Elah with Goliath and was successful. As a result of that and other relationships, Saul’s intense jealousy turned to hatred. Now David is a vagabond wandering from cave to cave trying to escape Saul and his armies. It has been a long and arduous process. David has reached the height of frustration as we find him in prayer, here in Psalm 17. He has been fleeing from Saul for the greater part of 13 years.

This is a prayer from the lips of David at a difficult time in his early career.

The passage in 1 Samuel 23:26-29 probably describes the backdrop for this prayer that is recorded here in Psalm 17: “Saul was going along one side of the mountain, and David and his men were on the other side, hurrying to get away from Saul. As Saul and his forces were closing in on David and his men to capture them, a messenger came to Saul, saying, ‘Come quickly! The Philistines are raiding the land.’ Then Saul broke off his pursuit of David and went to meet the Philistines. That is why they call this place Sela Hammahlekoth. And David went up from there and lived in the strongholds of En Gedi” (NIV).

**Verse 1:** “Hear, O Lord, my righteous plea; listen to my cry. Give ear to my prayer—it does not rise from deceitful lips.”

The urgency of the situation can be seen in the 3 words: “hear,” “listen,” and “give ear.”

It is also reflected in the 3 words to describe how he is coming to the Lord. It’s a “plea,” “cry,” and “prayer.”

David wants the Lord to know that he is being totally honest. This “plea,” this “cry,” and this “prayer...does not rise from deceitful lips.”

1 Peter 2:21-22: “For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth” (NASB).

Deceitful lips would be illustrated like this: (1) My prayer would be: “Lord, I’m trusting You for everything!” Then underneath and inside: “Boy! I’m so concerned about this situation! It’s driving me crazy!” (2) “Lord, Your love is flowing through me!” Underneath: “That guy is so self-righteous!” (3) “Lord, I want You to be first in my life!” Inside: “I can’t wait to get home and grab my clubs and head to the course!”

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“All men need a faith that will not shrink when washed in the waters of affliction and adversity.” (*14,000 Quips and Quotes*, 131)

Oscar Wilde said: “How clever you are, my dear! You never mean a single word you say.” (*A Woman of No Importance*, act 2)

**Verse 2:** “May my vindication come from you; may your eyes see what is right.”

There are 2 prayer petitions here in verse 2: (1) “May my vindication come from you” and (2) “may your eyes see what is right.”

David has had 2 chances in the wilderness to kill Saul and yet he restrained himself.

Isaiah 54:17: “no weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and this is their vindication from me,” declares the Lord” (NIV).

Such joy comes when you have been condemned and criticized to come to the Lord and know that He sees.

I think it would be appropriate for us to sing that little chorus “**Holy Ground**”: “*We are standing on holy ground, And I know that there are angels all around. Let us praise Jesus now. We are standing in His presence on holy ground.*”

#### **October 5 — Test Me, O Lord, and Try Me (Ps. 17:3-4)**

**Psalm 17:3:** “*Though you probe my heart and examine me at night, though you test me, you will find nothing; I have resolved that my mouth will not sin.*”

**Psalm 17:4:** “*As for the deeds of men—by the word of your lips I have kept myself from the ways of the violent.*”

**Verse 3:** “Though you probe my heart and examine me at night, though you test me, you will find nothing; I have resolved that my mouth will not sin.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 3: “Go ahead, examine me from inside out, surprise me in the middle of the night—You’ll find I’m just what I say I am. My words don’t run loose.”

David invites the Lord to do 3 things: (1) “probe”; (2) “examine”; and (3) “test.” He then says the result of doing those 3 things will be: “you will find nothing.”

All David is saying is, I’m up to date because all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. But I’m not grieving or quenching, but walking by means of the Spirit and I am filled with the Spirit. I’ve addressed the relevant issues. There’s nothing unresolved.

“I have resolved [also] that my mouth will not sin.” The word “resolved” has in it the idea of desire, discipline, and determination.

Acts 23:1: “And Paul, looking intently at the Council, said, ‘Brethren, I have lived my life with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day’” (NASB).

Romans 8:33-34: “Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us” (NASB).

One thing for sure, for the Lord to respond and to answer quickly, your heart’s going to have to be right and you must be on praying ground with all known sin dealt with. Not sinlessness but sincerity and Spirit sensitive!

Job was blameless, upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.

Uprightness of heart and honesty of purpose.

**Verse 4:** “As for the deeds of men—by the word of your lips I have kept myself from the ways of the violent.”

That keeping involved desire, discipline, and determination.

Psalm 11:5: “...but the wicked and those who love violence his soul hates” (NIV). Their proud, stubborn, unbroken spirit creates the violence.

2 Corinthians 13:5: “Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you— unless indeed you fail the test?” (NASB).

1 Peter 5:10: “And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you” (NASB).

Psalm 26:2-3: “Test me, O Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind; for your love is ever before me, and I walk continually in your truth” (NIV).

Psalm 139:23-24: “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (NASB).

Isaiah 32:17: “The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever” (NIV).

A great hymn for us to sing at this time is **“It Is Well With My Soul”**: *“When peace like a river attendeth my way, When sorrows like sea billows roll; Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say, ‘It is well, it is well with my soul.’ It is well with my soul, It is well, it is well with my soul.”*

### October 6 — He Directs My Path (Ps. 17:5-6)

**Psalm 17:5:** *“My steps have held to your paths; my feet have not slipped.”*

**Psalm 17:6:** *“I call on you, O God, for you will answer me; give ear to me and hear my prayer.”*

**Verse 5:** “My steps have held to your paths; my feet have not slipped.”

The key words in verse 5 are “held” and “not slipped.”

When you go back to verse 3 and put all 4 of these words together, you recognize the desire, the discipline, and the determination necessary to be pleasing to the Lord. David has “resolved,” “kept,” “held,” and “not slipped.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 5: “I’m staying on your trail; I’m putting one foot In front of the other. I’m not giving up.”



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Jude 24-25: “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen” (NASB).

Proverbs 3:5-6: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight” (NIV).

Proverbs 4:18: “The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day” (NIV).

**Verse 6:** “I call on you, O God, for you will answer me; give ear to me and hear my prayer.”

The 3-fold reason for calling on the Lord is that He will: “answer,” “give ear,” and “hear.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 6: “I call to you, God, because I’m sure of an answer. So—answer! bend your ear! listen sharp!”

1 John 5:14-15: “And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him” (NASB).

Let’s sing verse 2 of “**It Is Well With My Soul**”: “*Though Satan should buffet, tho’ trials should come, Let this blest assurance control, That Christ has regarded my helpless estate, And hath shed His own blood for my soul. It is well with my soul, It is well, it is well with my soul.*”

### **October 7 — Lord, Show Me That You Love Me (Ps. 17:7-8)**

**Psalm 17:7:** “*Show the wonder of your great love, you who save by your right hand those who take refuge in you from their foes.*”

**Psalm 17:8:** “*Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings*”

**Verse 7:** “Show the wonder of your great love, you who save by your right hand those who take refuge in you from their foes.”

Derek Kidner translates it “Wondrously show.” H. C. Leupold translates it: “Give a marvelous display of Thy steadfast love.”

The greatest display of His steadfast love would have to be John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son...” (NASB).

Vance Havner said: “The peril of the marvelous is that we may become boastful; the peril of the mysterious that we may become bewildered; the peril of the monotonous that we may become bored. Our Lord experienced all three and was tried in all points as we are. His grace is sufficient for all three. The Triple Threat may become in Him a Triple Triumph.” (*Truth for Each Day*, 34)

**Verse 8:** “Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings”

The 3 key words in verses 7 and 8 are: “show,” “keep,” and “hide.” There

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are the 3 petitions that form the heart of David's prayer: (1) "Show the wonder of your great love"; (2) "Keep me as the apple of your eye"; and (3) "hide me in the shadow of your wings."

Psalm 91:1: "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty" (NIV).

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says: "The apple of the eye seems to refer to an eye's pupil, symbolizing, one's sight. In other words the psalmist prayed for God's direct and careful attention. (805)

So we hear the psalmist praying 3 things: (1) "Show the wonder of your great love"; (2) "Keep me as the apple of your eye"; and (3) "hide me in the shadow of your wings."

The old gospel song, "**Under His Wings**" says it well: "*Under His wings I am safely abiding Tho' the night deepens and tempests are wild; Still I can trust Him, I know He will keep me, He has redeemed me and I am His child. Under His wings, under His wings, Who from His love can sever? Under His wings my soul shall abide, Safely abide forever.*"

#### **October 8 — The Prayer of Protection (Ps. 17:9-10)**

**Psalm 17:9:** "*from the wicked who assail me, from my mortal enemies who surround me.*"

**Psalm 17:10:** "*They close up their callous hearts, and their mouths speak with arrogance.*"

**Verse 9:** "from the wicked who assail me, from my mortal enemies who surround me."

Peterson paraphrases verse 9: "From the wicked who are out to get me, from mortal enemies closing in."

The deliverance described here in verse 9 is 2-fold: (1) "from the wicked who assail me" and (2) "from my mortal enemies who surround me."

David has been chased and assailed time after time during this prolonged period of life as a fugitive. So many close calls and tragic circumstances have really left David emotionally exhausted.

What a beautiful prayer that comes from his lips.

**Verse 10:** "They close up their callous hearts, and their mouths speak with arrogance."

Peterson paraphrases verse 10: "Their hearts are hard as nails, their mouths blast hot air."

Mark 3:5: "And after looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored" (NASB).

C. H. Spurgeon said: "Luxury and gluttony beget vain-glorious fatness of heart, which shuts up its gates against all compassionate emotions and reasonable judgments."

God didn't promise days without pain, laughter without sorrow, sun without rain. But He did promise strength for the day, comfort for the tears,

and light for the way.

Let's sing the fourth stanza of **"It Is Well With My Soul"**: *"And Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight, The clouds be rolled back as a scroll, The trump shall resound and the Lord shall descend, 'Even so,' it is well with my soul. It is well with my soul, It is well, it is well with my soul."*

## October 9 — What Pleases God

### (Pearl) Justice

1 Samuel 15:22: "So Samuel said: 'Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice..." (NKJV).

Zechariah 7:9: "This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another'" (NIV).

Amos 5:24: "But let justice roll like waters, And righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (NASB).

God is pleased with our obedience.

God is pleased with kindness, compassion.

God is pleased with justice. **Kindness**

Micah 6:6, 8: "What can we bring to the Lord to make up for what we've done? Should we bow before God with offerings of yearling calves?...No, O people, the Lord has already told you what is good, and this is what he requires: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God" (NLT).

Philippians 2:3-4: "Don't be selfish; don't live to make a good impression on others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourself. Don't think only about your own affairs, but be interested in others, too, and what they are doing" (NLT).

1 Peter 5:5b-6: "God sets himself against the proud, but he shows favor to the humble. So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and in his good time he will honor you" (NLT).

Kindness is linked with forgiveness. Humility is not putting yourself down but lifting up God and others.

Lord Jesus, may we study Your life on earth and follow Your example in all we do and say.

## October 10 — The Enemy is Closing In (Ps. 17:11-12)

**Psalm 17:11:** *"They have tracked me down, they now surround me, with eyes alert, to throw me to the ground."*

**Psalm 17:12:** *"They are like a lion hungry for prey, like a great lion crouching in cover."*

**Verse 11:** "They have tracked me down, they now surround me, with eyes alert, to throw me to the ground."

Peterson paraphrases verse 11: "They are after me, nipping my heels, determined to bring me down."

The psalmist has described the "wicked" in 7 ways in verses 9-11. They: (1)

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“assail me”; (2) “surround me”; (3) “close their callous hearts”; (4) “speak with arrogance”;

(5) “track me down”; (6) “surround me”; and (7) “[have] eyes alert.” Their ultimate purpose is expressed in the later part of verse 11: “to throw me to the ground.”

George Horne says: “‘They have set, or fixed their eyes’ upon us... ‘to lay us prostrate upon the earth,’ or finally to make an end of us. Such are our spiritual enemies; such is their intention, and our danger.”

**Verse 12:** “They are like a lion hungry for prey, like a great lion crouching in cover.”

He concludes his description of the “wicked” by using the illustration from nature: “They are like a lion hungry for prey, like a great lion crouching in cover.”

Peterson paraphrases the verse: “Lions ready to rip me apart, young lions poised to pounce.”

1 Peter 5:8-9: “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world” (NASB).

Let’s sing a verse of “**A Mighty Fortress Is Our God**”: “*And tho this world, with devils filled, Should threaten to undo us, We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us: The Prince of Darkness grim, We tremble not for him; His rage we can endure, For lo, his doom is sure; One little word shall fell him.*”

**October 11 — Lord, We Don’t Know What to Do But Our Eyes Are Upon Thee (Ps. 17:13-15)**

**Psalm 17:13:** “*Rise up, O Lord, confront them, bring them down; rescue me from the wicked by your sword.*”

**Psalm 17:14:** “*O Lord, by your hand save me from such men, from men of this world whose reward is in this life. You still the hunger of those you cherish; their sons have plenty, and they store up wealth for their children.*”

**Psalm 17:15:** “*And I—in righteousness I will see your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness.*”

**Verse 13:** “Rise up, O Lord, confront them, bring them down; rescue me from the wicked by your sword.”

There are 4 things said here in David’s plea in verse 13: (1) “Rise up, O Lord”; (2) “confront them”; (3) “bring them down”; and (4) “rescue me from the wicked by your sword.”

**Verse 14:** “O Lord, by your hand save me from such men, from men of this world whose reward is in this life. You still the hunger of those you cherish; their sons have plenty, and they store up wealth for their children.”

In verses 13 and 14 you see David suggesting the Lord defeat the “wicked” by His “sword” (verse 13) and His “hand” (verse 14). David’s petitioned plan

is 5-fold: (1) “rise up”; (2) “confront”; (3) “bring them down”; (4) “rescue”; and (5) “save.”

The “wicked” are described as those “whose reward is in this life.” We can say of them, they better enjoy it because this is all they’re going to get!

The verse concludes with 3 statements that are true of “those you cherish”: (1) “You still the hunger”; (2) “their sons have plenty”; and (3) “they store up wealth for their children.”

Philippians 4:19: “And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (NASB).

**Verse 15:** “And I—in righteousness I will see your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness.”

The word “I” is emphatic in this particular verse. Psalm 11:7: “For the Lord is righteous, he loves justice; upright men will see his face” (NIV).

“I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness.”

Don Wyrzten prays: “Help me, Lord, to give up my quest to find satisfaction in anyone but You. Make me intensely aware that only You can totally satisfy.”

David is saying the 13 years have been tough. Loneliness, isolation, hatred, plots and plans to kill him. He ultimately comes to the bottom line: “I will be satisfied.” Seeing you is enough!

I love Nancé Wilson’s prayer: “Lord Jesus, Thank You that You prove Yourself strong In this—my weakest moment. Thank You that Your grace is real and sure And I have nothing left to fear. Praise God You will prepare the way And will not strike me down, make me hurt, take away my joy, and leave me comfortless. It’s beautiful To know You—even in the shadow of Your light To trust you—even now when the pain is real. To long for You—instead of turning back—For Lord, where shall we go except into Your love, comfort, protection, and loving care. Amen.” (*A Gift of Joy*, 17)

Let’s sing a worshipful song, “**Oh How I Love Jesus**”: “*There is a name I love to hear, I love to sing its worth; It sounds like music in my ear, The sweetest name on earth. It tells me of a Savior’s love—Who died to set me free; It tells me of His precious blood, The sinner’s perfect plea. Oh! How I love Jesus! Oh! How I love Jesus! Oh! How I love Jesus, Because He first loved me! It tells me what my Father has In store for every day; And tho’ I walk a darkened path, It gives sunshine all the way. It tells of One whose loving heart—Can feel my deepest woe; Who in each sorrow bears a part That none can bear below. Oh! How I love Jesus! Oh! How I love Jesus! Oh! How I love Jesus, Because He first loved me!*”

## **October 12 — Celebrate the Victory! (Ps. 21:1-2)**

**Psalm 21:1:** “*O Lord, the king rejoices in your strength. How great is his joy in the victories you give!*”

**Psalm 21:2:** “*You have granted him the desire of his heart and have not withheld the request of his lips. Selah.*”

Psalm 20 is a prayer before going into battle. Psalm 21 is a praise for victory in the battle.

Psalm 20:4: "May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed" (NIV).

Psalm 21:2: "You have granted him the desire of his heart and have not withheld the request of his lips. Selah" (NIV).

The Psalm can also be a picture of the Messianic reign of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Samuel 7 records how David is overwhelmed with God's goodness in providing Him with a promise of an eternal kingdom. The rich reward of faithfulness. Those special times when you think your heart will burst.

**Verse 1:** "O Lord, the king rejoices in your strength. How great is his joy in the victories you give!"

"O Lord, the king" is doing 2 things: (1) "[He] rejoices in your strength" and (2) "[He has great] joy in the victories you give!"

Let us meditate for a few moments on this first phrase, "O Lord, the king rejoices in your strength."

Jesus, when He was in the Garden of Gethsemane: "...Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him" (Luke 22:43 NASB).

Mary had a similar experience in Luke 1:49: "For He, the Mighty One, is holy and He has done great things for me" (NLT).

Samson in his earlier life certainly illustrates the workings of God's strength in the obedient heart.

David: "It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect" (Ps. 18:32 NIV).

Isaiah 40:31: "but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint" (NIV).

Isaiah 41:10: "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (NIV).

1 Samuel 23:16: "And Saul's son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God" (NIV).

Ephesians 6:10: "Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might" (NASB).

Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (NASB).

Colossians 1:11: "strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience, joyously" (NASB).

The verse concludes with the next phrase: "How great is his joy in the victories you give!" He is not only rejoicing in the Lord's "strength," but he is also experiencing "great... joy in the victories" that the Lord gives.



John 19:30: “When Jesus therefore had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is finished!’ And He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit” (NASB).

This is the shout of joy and victory with the breaking of the tape and finishing of the course or work which was His to accomplish.

Hebrews 12:2: “fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (NASB).

1 Corinthians 15:57: “but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (NASB).

“O Lord, the king”: (1) “rejoices in your strength” and (2) “How great is his joy in the victories you give!” The Lord is the One giving the victories.

**Verse 2:** “You have granted him the desire of his heart and have not withheld the request of his lips. Selah”

Lord, You have responded to this spoken and unspoken request. Lord, You’ve done 2 things: (1) “You have granted him the desire of his heart” and (2) “You...have not withheld the request of his lips.”

Psalm 37:5: “Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass” (KJV).

Psalm 37:4: “Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart” (NIV).

When you feel down because you didn’t get what you want, just sit tight and be happy because God has thought of something better to give you.

He loves you so much! He longs for intimacy!

Psalm 90:14: “Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days” (NIV).

Wouldn’t it be meaningful to sing **“O Say, But I’m Glad”**: *“There is a song in my heart today, Something I never had; Jesus has taken my sins away, O say, but I’m glad! O say, but I’m glad, I’m glad, O say, but I’m glad! Jesus has come and my cup’s overrun, O say, but I’m glad!”*

### **October 13 — The Blessings of Right Relationship (Ps. 21:3-5)**

**Psalm 21:3:** *“You welcomed him with rich blessings and placed a crown of pure gold on his head.”*

**Psalm 21:4:** *“He asked you for life, and you gave it to him—length of days, for ever and ever.”*

**Psalm 21:5:** *“Through the victories you gave, his glory is great; you have bestowed on him splendor and majesty.”*

**Verse 3:** “You welcomed him with rich blessings and placed a crown of pure gold on his head.”

God came to meet the king “with rich blessings.” This is a preview of heaven for the child of God.

Blessings and crowns. Wow! If that doesn’t light your fire, you’re using wet wood!

1 Corinthians 2:9: “but just as it is written, ‘Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him’” (NASB).

Ephesians 3:20: “Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us” (NASB).

Proverbs 24:25: “But it will go well with those who convict the guilty, and rich blessing will come upon them” (NIV).

**Verse 4:** “He asked you for life, and you gave it to him—length of days, for ever and ever.”

Here in verse 4 we want to focus on “He asked” and “[God] gave.” He asked for 2 things: “life” and “length of days”—or life and to live long.

The following words were on a sign outside a church in England: “It doesn’t matter where you live, as long as you live where you are.” If God is your dwelling place, you are living where you are.

**Verse 5:** “Through the victories you gave, his glory is great; you have bestowed on him splendor and majesty.”

There are 3 results of the “victories” that God gave: (1) “glory is great”; (2) “splendor”; and (3) “majesty.”

Genesis 12:1-3: “The Lord had said to Abram, ‘Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you’” (NIV).

Let’s sing a verse of “**There is Joy in Serving Jesus**”: “*There is joy in serving Jesus, As I journey on my way, Joy that fills the heart with praises, Ev’ry hour and ev’ry day. There is joy, joy, Joy in serving Jesus, Joy that throbs within my heart; Ev’ry moment, ev’ry hour, As I draw upon His pow’r, There is joy, joy, Joy that never shall depart.*”

#### **October 14 — The King Trusts in the Lord (Ps. 21:6-7)**

**Psalm 21:6:** “*Surely you have granted him eternal blessings and made him glad with the joy of your presence.*”

**Psalm 21:7:** “*For the king trusts in the Lord; through the unfailing love of the Most High he will not be shaken.*”

**Verse 6:** “Surely you have granted him eternal blessings and made him glad with the joy of your presence.”

With a heart overwhelmed with gratitude, you hear the words “Surely you have granted him” 2 things: (1) “eternal blessings” and (2) “made him glad with the joy of your presence.”

What a great God we have! He has given “eternal blessings” and He has promised His personal presence.

Proverbs 28:20: “A faithful man will be richly blessed...” (NIV).

David is referring to the “eternal blessings” of his eternal kingdom that God has promised to him. Also, he has been “made glad with the joy of [the Lord’s] presence.” It is truly the Lord’s presence that has given him the victory in the battles that he has just fought.

The book *Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World: The Extraordinary True Story of Shackleton and the Endurance* by Jennifer Armstrong is a treasure. “Bound in the ice, their ship sunk and they endured for some period of time on a small island before Shackleton and two others took the precarious chance of taking one of the boats and trying to reach help. They finally reached land and for 36 hours they climbed over unnamed mountains and glaciers of South Georgia. “As they slogged their way through the snow, a strange feeling began to grow on each of the men. The three discovered long afterward that they all had the feeling that there was a fourth. ‘Even now I again find myself counting our party—Shackleton, Crean, and I and—who was the other?’ Worsley wrote later. ‘Of course, there were only three, but it is strange that in mentally reviewing the crossing we should always think of a fourth, and then correct ourselves.’ ‘When I look back on those days,’ Shackleton added, ‘I do not doubt that Providence guided us...I know that during that long march of thirty-six hours over the unnamed mountains and glaciers of South Georgia it often seemed to me that we were four, not three.’ Later, some people found religious significance in the men’s experience. Others put ‘the Fourth Presence’ down to the psychological and physical strain the men were under.” (110)

Yes, just like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego found a fourth in the furnace with them, so these 3 men were aware that their lives were being spared by the presence of another.

**Verse 7:** “For the king trusts in the Lord; through the unfailing love of the Most High he will not be shaken.”

Verse 7 gives us the reason why the king is enjoying the “joy” of the Lord’s presence and also having been “granted...eternal blessings”: “For the king trusts in the Lord; through the unfailing love of the Most High he will not be shaken.”

There are 2 keys to the “blessings”: (1) “the king trusts in the Lord” and (2) the Lord loves with an “unfailing love.” The result is given in the final phrase: “The Most High he will not be shaken.”

C. H. Spurgeon said: “A holy confidence in Jehovah is the true mother of victories.” He will not quiver and quake in the storms because he is anchored to God’s unfailing love.

Job 13:15: “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.”

Psalm 90:14: “O satisfy us in the morning with your loving kindness, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.”

Let’s sing the second verse of “**There is Joy in Serving Jesus**”: “*There is joy in serving Jesus, Joy that triumphs over pain, Fills my soul with Heaven’s music Till I join the glad refrain. There is joy, joy, Joy in serving Jesus, Joy*

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*that throbs within my heart; Ev'ry moment, ev'ry hour, As I draw upon His pow'r, There is joy, joy, Joy that never shall depart."*

**October 15 — He Is Trampling Out the Vintage Where the Grapes of Wrath are Stored! (Ps. 21:8-10)**

**Psalm 21:8:** *"Your hand will lay hold on all your enemies; your right hand will seize your foes."*

**Psalm 21:9:** *"At the time of your appearing you will make them like a fiery furnace. In his wrath the Lord will swallow them up, and his fire will consume them."*

**Psalm 21:10:** *"You will destroy their descendants from the earth, their posterity from mankind."*

**Verse 8:** "Your hand will lay hold on all your enemies; your right hand will seize your foes."

David is continuing to trust in the Lord for victories, just as he has most recently experienced. The Bible Knowledge Commentary says: "The king was now addressed by the congregation. Because he trusted in the Lord, they knew he would defeat his enemies..." (809)

"Your hand will lay hold on all your enemies; your right hand will seize your foes."

John 15:5: "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing" (NASB).

Talk about trust and leadership! The people are so positive and affirming to the king with regard to what is going to happen under his leadership. There are 2 things that they tell him. You will: (1) "lay hold on all your enemies" and (2) "seize your foes."

**Verse 9:** "At the time of your appearing you will make them like a fiery furnace. In his wrath the Lord will swallow them up, and his fire will consume them."

Whereas back in verse 8 it was "lay hold on all your enemies" and "seize your foes," now in verse 9 it is "swallow them up" and "consume them."

This is going to be a quick and convincing defeat.

In his first military conflict, David certainly experienced this in the Valley of Elah. For as that one rock left his sling, the battle was on and the victory was secured.

Psalm 97:3: "Fire goes before him and consumes his foes on every side" (NIV).

**Verse 10:** "You will destroy their descendants from the earth, their posterity from mankind."

The key word in verse 10 is the word "destroy." The seriousness of the situation can be seen in the 2 statements in verse 9: (1) "swallow them up" and "consume them." Now in verse 10 we have: (3) "destroy their descendants from the earth."

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In contrast to what has just been said in verse 10, a criminal spoke these last words at the time of his lethal injection: “The road goes on forever and the party never ends. Rock-n-Roll.”

Proverbs 14:12: “There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death” (NIV).

Let’s sing the third verse of “**There is Joy in Serving Jesus**”: *“There is joy in serving Jesus, As I walk alone with God, ‘Tis the joy of Christ, my Savior, Who the path of suffering trod. There is joy, joy, Joy in serving Jesus, Joy that throbs within my heart; Ev’ry moment, ev’ry hour, As I draw upon His pow’r, There is joy, joy, Joy that never shall depart.”*

### **October 16 — Staring Down Fear (Pearl)**

“So we have continued praying for you ever since we first heard about you. We ask God to give you a complete understanding of what he wants to do in your lives, and we ask him to make you wise with spiritual wisdom. Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and you will continually do good, kind things for others. All the while, you will learn to know God better and better” (Col. 1:9-10 NLT).

God does not give us a happy spirit to make us happy, but the Holy Spirit to make us holy.

We can live a life worthy of God when we are filled with the knowledge of God. We don’t like to think that this also includes suffering.

Be a fast learner. Trust God when discouraging things happen. This too shall pass.

It is a trial of faith when we cannot see the promises of God coming to fruition.

If your child comes to you and says, “I want to please you,” of course you will say “We will work things one step at a time. Everything I do will be for you.”

This sounds like something God would say—and He did: “And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God’s own will. And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God...” (Rom. 8:27, 28b NLT).

Keep on praying, but be thankful that God’s answers are wiser than your prayers.

### **October 17 — Thanks Be to God Who Gives Us The Victory (Ps. 21:11-13)**

**Psalm 21:11:** *“Though they plot evil against you and devise wicked schemes, they cannot succeed;”*

**Psalm 21:12:** *“for you will make them turn their backs when you aim at them with drawn bow.”*

**Psalm 21:13:** *“Be exalted, O Lord, in your strength; we will sing and praise your might.”*

**Verse 11:** “Though they plot evil against you and devise wicked schemes,

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they cannot succeed;”

I am reminded of King Herod when he saw that: “he had been tricked by the magi, he became very enraged, and sent and slew all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its environs, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the magi” (Matt. 2:16 NASB).

I am also reminded of the wicked plan of Haman to destroy the Jewish people in the story of Esther. Having built a scaffold in order to hang Mordecai, God sovereignly intervened: “Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs attending the king, said, ‘A gallows seventy-five feet high stands by Haman’s house. He had it made for Mordecai, who spoke up to help the king.’ The king said, ‘Hang him on it!’ So they hanged Haman on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the king’s fury subsided” (Esther 7:910 NIV).

Isaiah 52:12: “But you will not leave in haste or go in flight; for the Lord will go before you, the God of Israel will be your rear guard” (NIV).

Isaiah 54:17: “no weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and this is their vindication from me,” declares the Lord” (NIV).

**Verse 12:** “for you will make them turn their backs when you aim at them with drawn bow.”

The little word “for” begins verse 12, like it did verse 7. Therefore we have a reason why “they cannot succeed.” The Lord’s victory is certain. The wicked are painfully aware that the Lord has them dead in their tracks and all hope of successful resistance has suddenly departed.

Job 42:2-3: “I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted. [You asked,] ‘Who is this that obscures my counsel without knowledge?’ Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know” (NIV).

**Verse 13:** “Be exalted, O Lord, in your strength; we will sing and praise your might.”

“Be exalted, O Lord, in your strength.” Notice the little word “we.” The king and the people will “sing and praise your might.”

Psalms 68:19: “Praise the Lord; Praise God our Savior! For each day he carries us in his arms” (NLT).

Isaiah 40:10-11: “See, the Sovereign Lord comes with power, and his arm rules for him. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young” (NIV).

You will remember that following that great victory over pharaoh and the Egyptians in Exodus 14, we see recorded in Exodus 15:1-3: “Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord: ‘I will sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted. The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea. The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will



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praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him. The Lord is a warrior; the Lord is his name" (NIV).

Don Wytzen says: "Lord, may I learn to 'throw a party' to celebrate Your glory, majesty, and unfailing love."

Let's join together in singing the last verse of "**There is Joy in Serving Jesus**": *"There is joy in serving Jesus, Joy amid the darkest night, For I've learned the wondrous secret, And I'm walking in the light. There is joy, joy, Joy in serving Jesus, Joy that throbs within my heart; Ev'ry moment, ev'ry hour, As I draw upon His pow'r, There is joy, joy, Joy that never shall depart."*

### **October 18 — The Creator Using Creation in Judgment (Ps. 29:1-2)**

**Psalm 29:1:** "*Ascribe to the Lord, O mighty ones, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.*"

**Psalm 29:2:** "*Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness.*"

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says: "David witnessed an awesome thunderstorm moving across the land of the Canaanites, and attributed it to the power of the Lord." (815)

His awesome power in nature is a vivid demonstration of His ability to handle all things. We noted back in Psalm 21 the way He handled military issues. Now we see some of the weapons He uses from His own creation. Not only in nature's storm, but in yours as well. He is in yours! Do you believe that?

The storm always bears the news that blessing is on the way.

Warren Wiersbe outlines the 11 verses: (1) Praise before the storm—verses 1-2; (2) Power in the storm—verses 3-9; and (3) Peace after the storm—verses 10-11.

C. H. Spurgeon said: "The lightnings are the glances of the eyes of God, and the thunders are the utterings of His voice."

The storm teaches us 3 things: (1) God is sovereign and in control of all things; (2) He uses storms to discipline and to judge; and (3) The storm is temporary! This too shall pass.

**Verse 1:** "Ascribe to the Lord, O mighty ones, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength."

Revelation 14:7: "and he said with a loud voice, 'Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters'" (NASB).

(1) "Ascribe to the Lord, O mighty ones." Human beings are inadequate.

(2) "Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength." God is going to get glory and His strength is adequate to get you through it.

(3) "Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name." His power is on display in the storm. We need to start glorifying God. Watch out, He will open the windows of heaven and you'll be singing "Showers of Blessings." The 2 statements we have meditated on: (1) "Ascribe to the Lord, O mighty ones" and

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(2) “ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.” **Verse 2:** “Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness.”

Whereas in verse 1 we are to “Ascribe to the Lord, O mighty ones” and “ascribe to the Lord glory and strength,” now in verse 2 it is: “Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name”—who He is and what He has done.

We offer praise by giving the glory due His name. We worship Him, the Lord, in the splendor of His holiness. Let’s sing a verse of

**“He’s Everything to Me”:** *“In the stars His handiwork I see,*

*On the wind He speaks with majesty. Though he ruleth over land and sea, What is that to me? Till by faith I met Him face to face, And I felt the wonder of His grace, Then I knew that He was more than just a God who didn’t care That lived away out there and Now He walks beside me day by day, Ever watching o’er me lest I stray, Helping me to find that narrow way, He’s ev’rything to me.”*

**October 19 — The Glory of the Lord Rides Upon the Storm (Ps. 29:3-6)**

**Psalm 29:3:** *“The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord thunders over the mighty waters.”*

**Psalm 29:4:** *“The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is majestic.”*

**Psalm 29:5:** *“The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars; the Lord breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon.”*

**Psalm 29:6:** *“He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, Sirion like a young wild ox.”*

**Verse 3:** “The voice of the Lord is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord thunders over the mighty waters.”

“The voice of the Lord” is going to be seen here 7 times in verses 3-9.

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says: “The psalmist described the Lord’s omnipotent control of nature in a terrifying storm.” (816)

Psalm 33:6: “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host.”

That voice is going to speak and billions of people long dead will be resurrected.

There are numerous references in scripture with regard to the Lord’s presence being manifested in the midst of a storm.

Job 38:1: “Then the Lord answered Job out of the storm...” (NIV).

Matthew 27:50-52: “And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, and the earth shook; and the rocks were split, and the tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised” (NASB).

**Verse 4:** “The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is

majestic.”

*Our Daily Bread*, from one of the past issues, concludes with this little poem: “The lightning of a summer storm, Its thunder roaring in reply, Reveal to us an awesome God Whose power we cannot deny.”

**Verse 5:** “The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars; the Lord breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon.”

Here you have the tornado and the lightning accompanying the storm.

There are a good number of judgment storms in Scripture. We are all familiar with the flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the seventh plague of hail in the time of Moses, and Joshua as he endeavors to occupy the land. In Joshua 10:11 we read: “...the Lord hurled large hailstones down on them from the sky...” (NIV).

**Verse 6:** “He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, Sirion like a young wild ox.”

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says: “Lebanon...and Sirion are mountains in the Anti-Lebanon range.” (816)

If you have ever been on a mountain peak at a time of a thunderstorm, you realize how dangerous and severe they can be.

Let’s sing the first verse of “**This Is My Father’s World**”: “*This is my Father’s*

*world, And to my list’ning ears, All nature sings, and round me rings The music of the spheres. This is my Father’s world, I rest me in the thought Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas His hand the wonders wrought.*”

#### **October 20 — The Voice in the Storm (Ps. 29:7-9)**

**Psalm 29:7:** “*The voice of the Lord strikes with flashes of lightning.*”

**Psalm 29:8:** “*The voice of the Lord shakes the desert; the Lord shakes the Desert of Kadesh.*”

**Psalm 29:9:** “*The voice of the Lord twists the oaks and strips the forests bare. And in his temple all cry, ‘Glory!’*”

**Verse 7:** “The voice of the Lord strikes with flashes of lightning.”

This is the fifth time “The voice of the Lord” is used: (1) verse 3—“The voice of the Lord is over the waters”; (2) verse 4—“The voice of the Lord is powerful”; (3) verse 4—“The voice of the Lord is majestic”; (4) verse 5—“The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars”; and now (5) verse 7—“The voice of the Lord strikes with flashes of lightning.”

Baxter Black the cowboy poet describes graphically for us the experience of being caught in a thunder storm: “The blackness shook like a she-bear. The lightning blinded the sun The Rain fell like bullets around me scattering dust like a gun! It was over as quick as it started leaving it peaceful instead The only sound was the beat of my heart pounding inside of my head.”

**Verse 8:** “The voice of the Lord shakes the desert; the Lord shakes the Desert of Kadesh.”

**Verse 9:** “The voice of the Lord twists the oaks and strips the forests bare. And in his temple all cry, ‘Glory!’”

The climax of the storm is manifested in the cry of glory.

Baxter Black in the last verse of his poetry about the storm gives us his response: "I took off my hat too shaken to move afraid of making a sound I felt like a man on the head of a pin with nobody else around. But the sun was already sparkling in raindrops still wet on my face. The big high and lonesome is only God's way of putting a man in his place."

The outburst of glory in verse 9 corresponds to the command of verse 2: "Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name."

Don Wytzen's personal prayer is: "Lord, give me an acute awareness of Your power and might. And give me a foretaste of heaven by letting me experience some of Your glorious presence now."

We have witnessed "The voice of the Lord" in verses 3-9 used 7 times. Let's meditate on what happens when "The voice of the Lord" is heard. "The voice of the Lord": (1) "thunders"; (2) "is powerful"; (3) "is majestic"; (4) "breaks"; (5) "strikes";

(6) "shakes"; (7) "twists"; and (8) "strips." What an awesome, awesome God we have! Glory is the voice of trust, triumph, and tribute. It is awe, acceptance, and affirmation.

Let's sing the second verse of "**This Is My Father's World**": *"This is my Father's world, The birds their carols raise, The morning light, the lily white, Declare their Maker's praise. This is my Father's world, He shines in all that's fair; In the rustling grass I hear Him pass, He speaks to me ev'rywhere."*

**October 21 — To God Be the Glory! (Ps. 29:10-11)**

**Psalm 29:10:** *"The Lord sits enthroned over the flood; the Lord is enthroned as King forever."*

**Psalm 29:11:** *"The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace."*

**Verse 10:** "The Lord sits enthroned over the flood; the Lord is enthroned as King forever."

He is alive, aware, and active in our personal lives.

Psalm 11:3-4: "'When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?' The Lord is in his holy temple; the Lord is on his heavenly throne. He observes the sons of men; his eyes examine them" (NIV).

It is good to remember that when you are in the storm, the Lord is in His holy temple, the Lord is on His heavenly throne.

The Lord commands "Peace be still!" in the storm. The Lord commands "Come Forth!" in the cemetery of Lazarus. The day is soon coming when the Lord will descend from heaven with a shout!

In the book *God's Grace From Ground Zero*, Jim Cymbala prays this prayer following 9/11: "Heavenly Father, we appreciate and worship you as we go through difficult times that are hard to understand. We surrender ourselves into your hand and pray that your name might be exalted through our lives.

Finally, help us to have faith during the hard times and to give thanks in everything. In Jesus' name, amen." (87)

**Verse 11:** "The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace."

The Lord is in the business of giving and blessing. That giving and blessing is strength and peace.

This takes us back to Psalm 29:1: "Ascribe to the Lord, O mighty ones, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength" (NIV).

Someone has said: "Peace is the deliberate adjustment of my life to the will of God."

Fénelon prays: "Lord, I don't know what to ask of you. You know what I need. You love me better than I love myself. Give your child what he doesn't know how to request."

Warren Wiersbe says: "God often speaks to you in the storm. The next time you find yourself in a storm, listen for His voice. Look for His glory and power and be reminded that He is in control."

Let's sing together verse 3 of **"This Is My Father's World"**: *"This is my Father's world, O let me ne'er forget That though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the Ruler yet. This is my Father's world, The battle is not done, Jesus who died shall be satisfied, And earth and heav'n be one."*

### **October 22 — Lord, You Spared My Life (Ps. 30:1-3)**

**Psalm 30:1:** *"I will exalt you, O Lord, for you lifted me out of the depths and did not let my enemies gloat over me."*

**Psalm 30:2:** *"O Lord my God, I called to you for help and you healed me."*

**Psalm 30:3:** *"O Lord, you brought me up from the grave; you spared me from going down into the pit."*

A quick chronology of the life of David will help us focus where Psalm 30 fits in his life. David is born in 1040 B.C. He was probably anointed by Samuel when he was 16 years old. I would guess that his experiences with Goliath were when he was 17. The next 13 years of life he spent in military service for Saul and his kingdom and staying away from Saul.

David becomes king in 1010 B.C. when he is 30 years old. He is king in Hebron over the land of Judah. This continues until 1003 B.C. At 37 years old he becomes king over all of Israel.

The next 13 years of his life until 990 B.C., when he is 50 years old, is spent in military campaigns, securing the kingdom, establishing the capital in Jerusalem, and all of the things that were necessary to stabilize the kingdom.

When he is 50 years old, he stays home and has an affair with a military wife. He was probably about 53 years old when Solomon was born.

David's family is in total disarray as a result of 11 years of estrangement from Absalom. In 976 B.C., when he is 64 years old, his kingdom is taken from him by force.

After the death of Absalom, he returns to his kingdom only to face an

economic crisis and a famine that lasts 3 years. During this time, between his being 65 to 67 years old, he makes the mistake of wanting to take a census of the fighting men. I think David is vulnerable at this point in wanting to leave a legacy. It pretty much focuses on David's ego and pride.

"I may have blown it pretty bad but look at the statistics. Look what I have been able to do!"

The census tells us that there are 1,300,000,000 fighting men. He started out with a few hundred and "Look at me now! 1,300,00 Wow!"

You will remember that Gad the prophet came to him and gave him 3 options with regard to the discipline that would take place. Either 3 years of famine—he didn't want that because he'd just been through it or 3 months of fleeing from his enemies—he certainly didn't want defeat in the battle. So he chose 3 days of plague in the land.

The plague caused the death of 70,000 of the people of Dan to Beersheba.

It is following this plague and the fact that his life has been spared that he writes Psalm 30. He's probably 67-68 years old. He dies when he is 70. This is late in the game.

**Verse 1:** "I will exalt you, O Lord, for you lifted me out of the depths and did not let my enemies gloat over me."

"I will exalt you, O Lord" for 2 reasons. We ask ourselves the question, what has the Lord done? He spared his life in the plague. Here in verse 1 he had done 2 things. He: (1) "lifted me out of the depths" and (2) "did not let my enemies gloat over me."

**Verse 2:** "O Lord my God, I called to you for help and you healed me."

Here David says: "I called....and you healed." What has the Lord done? He: (1) "lifted me out of the depths"; (2) "did not let my enemies gloat over me"; and (3) "healed me."

**Verse 3:** "O Lord, you brought me up from the grave; you spared me from going down into the pit."

Here the psalmist adds 2 more things to his life of what the Lord has done: (1) "you brought me up from the grave" and (2) "you spared me from going down into the pit." Now let's put all 5 of these together. What has the Lord done? He: (1) "lifted me out of the depths"; (2) "did not let my enemies gloat over me"; (3) "healed me"; (4) "brought me up from the grave"; and (5) "spared me from going down into the pit."

Sing with me verse 1 of **"We're Marching to Zion"**: *"Come, we that love the Lord, And let our joys be known, Join in a song with sweet accord, Join in a song with sweet accord, And thus surround the throne, And thus surround the throne. We're marching to Zion, Beautiful, beautiful Zion; We're marching upward to Zion, the beautiful city of God."*

## October 23 — Learn to Study – Study to Learn

### (Pearl) For others:

As you study and learn truth from the Bible, be a pipeline—not a cistern.



Let the learned truth flow through you—not a cistern that only holds the truth.

If you keep the truth to yourself it will be useless.

Teach (share) what you have learned and be a blessing to others.

“But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith” (1 Tim. 1:5 NLT). **For yourself:**

“Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against you” (Ps. 119:11).

“Thy words were found and I did eat them and they became the joy and rejoicing of my heart” (Jer. 15:16).

“Study to show thyself approved unto God; a workman that needs not to be ashamed—rightly dividing the truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).

“Thy word is a light unto my pathway” (Ps. 119:105).

“Let your light so shine before men that they will see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16).

#### **October 24 — Joy Comes in the Morning (Ps. 30:4-5)**

**Psalm 30:4:** “*Sing to the Lord, you saints of his; praise his holy name.*”

**Psalm 30:5:** “*For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.*”

**Verse 4:** “Sing to the Lord, you saints of his; praise his holy name.”

There are 2 commands here in verse 4: (1) “Sing to the Lord” and (2) “praise his holy name.”

Never stop singing and praising no matter what!

Bill Bright before he died wrote a book called *Promises: A Daily Guide to Supernatural Living*. He said: “I would like to share with you several reasons why I believe praise of God is so important in the life of the believer. First, God is truly worthy of praise. Second, praise draws us closer to God. Third, all who praise God are blessed. Fourth, praise is contagious. Fifth, Satan’s power is broken when we praise God. Sixth, praise is a witness to carnal Christians and non-Christians. Seventh, praise opens our hearts and minds to receive God’s message. Eighth, praise is a form of sacrifice. Ninth, praise makes for a more joyful life. Tenth, praise enhances human relationships. Eleventh, praise is a supernatural expression of faith.” (Day 16)

**Verse 5:** “For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.”

Now the psalmist states the reason why he has given the 2 commands in verse 4 to:

(1) “Sing to the Lord, you saints of his” and (2) “praise his holy name.” The reason: “For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.”

In verse 5 it is “anger” vs. “favor” and “weeping” vs. “rejoicing.”

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We have a “moment” as opposed to a “lifetime” and “night as opposed to “morning.”

Hebrews 12:11: “All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness” (NASB).

Romans 8:18: “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (NASB).

Revelation 2:28: “and I will give him the morning star” (NASB).

The Lord Jesus Christ is that bright and morning star!

Adversity and heartbreak presents us with the chance to shrivel in self-pity or shine in self-surrender.

Let’s sing verse 2 of “**We’re Marching to Zion**”: “*Let those refuse to sing Who never knew our God; But children of the heav’nly King, But children of the heav’nly King, May speak their joys abroad, May speak their joys abroad. We’re marching to Zion, Beautiful, beautiful Zion; We’re marching upward to Zion, the beautiful city of God.*”

#### **October 25 — Just When I Felt Secure It Happened (Ps. 30:6-7)**

**Psalm 30:6:** “*When I felt secure, I said, ‘I will never be shaken.’*”

**Psalm 30:7:** “*O Lord, when you favored me, you made my mountain stand firm; but when you hid your face, I was dismayed.*”

**Verse 6:** “When I felt secure, I said, ‘I will never be shaken.’”

Peterson paraphrases verse 6: “When things were going great I crowed, ‘I’ve got it made.’”

You will notice in verse 6 there are 3 “I’s” and there’s no “Lord.”

This is the picture of America before 9/11. We are shaken and don’t feel real secure yet!

Luke 12:19-20: “And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?’” (NASB).

In Ecclesiastes 1 and 2, we find Solomon struggling desperately to find meaning and purpose in life. He comes to this conclusion at the end of chapter 2: “To the man who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind” (Ecc. 2:26 NIV).

“Life is like an ice-cream cone: just when you think you’ve got it licked, it drips all over you!” (Tom Everhart, *To Every Dog There is a Season*, 52)

You can just hear David when the statistics come in from the census: “Wow! We started out with 600 and now I’ve got 1,300,000 fighting men! You know, that’s not bad for a 40 year administration!”

**Verse 7:** “O Lord, when you favored me, you made my mountain stand firm; but when you hid your face, I was dismayed.”

You will notice a dramatic change between verses 6 and 7. Whereas the focus is upon the psalmist in verse 6, it is upon the Lord in verse 7. The Lord is mentioned 5 times in verse 7. In verse 6 it was “When I felt secure.” In verse 7 it is “when you favored me.”

Don Wyrzten says: “Dependence on the Lord is the key to security.”

Let’s meditate for a few moments on the 3 key phrases in verses 6 and 7: (1) “When I felt secure”; (2) “when you favored me”; and (3) “when you hid your face, I was dismayed.”

It’s the Lord’s blessing that leads to security and the assumption that He is pleased with us. “When you hid your face, I was dismayed.” He hides His face when we are disobedient.

If David had kept his focus on the Lord, he would have the Lord’s response recorded in Isaiah 41:10: “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” (NIV).

Let’s sing verse 3 of “**We’re Marching to Zion**”: *“The hill of Zion yields A thousand sacred sweets Before we reach the heav’nly fields, Before we reach the heav’nly fields, Or walk the golden streets, Or walk the golden streets. We’re marching to Zion, Beautiful, beautiful Zion; We’re marching upward to Zion, the beautiful city of God.”*

#### **October 26 — God Be Merciful—The Sinner (Ps. 30:8-10)**

**Psalm 30:8:** *“To you, O Lord, I called; to the Lord I cried for mercy:”*

**Psalm 30:9:** *“What gain is there in my destruction, in my going down into the pit? Will the dust praise you? Will it proclaim your faithfulness?”*

**Psalm 30:10:** *“Hear, O Lord, and be merciful to me; O Lord, be my help.”*

**Verse 8:** “To you, O Lord, I called; to the Lord I cried for mercy.”

In verse 8 David says “I called” and then “I cried for mercy.”

“Lord, I called” and “Lord I cried for mercy.”

Coach Joe Gibbs says: “For most of us, it is not our successes that shape us; it is the pressure of living through adversity that catapults us to future success.” (*Racing to Win*, 74)

I can just hear David singing: *“I must tell Jesus all of my trials; I cannot bear these burdens alone; In my distress He kindly will help me; He ever loves and cares for His own. I must tell Jesus all of my troubles; He is a kind, compassionate friend; If I but ask Him, He will deliver, Make of my troubles quickly an end.”*

**Verse 9:** “What gain is there in my destruction, in my going down into the pit? Will the dust praise you? Will it proclaim your faithfulness?”

Here the psalmist turns to questioning and he has 3 questions: (1) “What gain is there in my destruction, in my going down into the pit?”; (2) “Will the dust praise you?”; and (3) “Will it proclaim your faithfulness?”

Perhaps because of the plague that resulted from the census, David thought for sure he was to die because he was the one who ordered the census in the first

place.

**Verse 10:** “Hear, O Lord, and be merciful to me; O Lord, be my help.”

Now the psalmist is very much emotionally involved in these statements. Whenever you see the psalmist using the words “O Lord” you know that he is deeply concerned. He uses “O Lord” 8 times in these 12 verses. Two of those usages are here in verse 10:

- (1) “Hear, O Lord, and be merciful” and (2) “O Lord, be my help.”

He asks the Lord for 3 things here: (1) “Hear”; (2) “be merciful”; and (3) “be my help.”

Let’s sing verse 4 of **“We’re Marching to Zion”**: *“Then let our songs abound, And ev’ry tear be dry, We’re marching thro’ Immanuel’s ground, We’re marching thro’ Immanuel’s ground, To fairer worlds on high, To fairer worlds on high. We’re marching to Zion, Beautiful, beautiful Zion; We’re marching upward to Zion, the beautiful city of God.”*

**October 27 — When I Called, O Lord, You Answered Quickly (Ps. 30:11-12)**

**Psalm 30:11:** *“You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy,”*

**Psalm 30:12:** *“that my heart may sing to you and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give you thanks forever.”*

**Verse 11:** “You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy,”

There are 3 verbs that describe the Lord’s action toward the psalmist and precipitate his praise: (1) “turned”; (2) “removed”; and (3) “clothed.” These 3 responses from the Lord form the foundation for the praise that follows in verse 12: (1) “You turned my wailing into dancing”; (2) “you removed my sackcloth”; and (3) “[you] clothed me with joy.”

Isaiah 61:10: “I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness...” (NIV).

**Verse 12:** “that my heart may sing to you and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give you thanks forever.”

“[Lord] You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy.” Your purpose in doing that was so: (1) “my heart may sing to you and not be silent” and (2) “I will give you thanks forever.”

This result and response takes us back to verse 5 of our passage: “For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.”

François Fénelon said: “But I always find you within me. You work through me in all the good I accomplish. How many times I was unable to check my emotions, resist my habits, subdue my pride, follow my reason, or stick to my plan! Without you I am ‘a reed swayed by the wind’ (Matthew 11:7). You give me courage and everything decent which I experience. You

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have given me a new heart that wants nothing except what you want. I am in your hands. It is enough for me to do what you want me to do. For this purpose I was created.” (*Meditations and Devotions*)

Ron Mehl says: “It’s easy to worship *after* the battle has been won, *after* the spoils have been gathered. It’s easy to praise God after you’ve received the answers to your prayers. But God’s heart is moved when His people worship Him in faith, resting in His Word and His character alone.” (*A Prayer That Moves Heaven*, 91)

I think it’s appropriate that we sing a verse of “**We’ll Understand It Better**”: “*We are often tossed and driv’n on the restless sea of time, Somber skies and howling tempests oft succeed a bright sunshine, In that land of perfect day, when the mists have rolled away, We will understand it better by and by. By and by when the morning comes, When the saints of God are gathered home, We’ll tell the story how we’ve overcome; We will understand it better by and by.*”

#### **October 28 — Lord, I Am In Deep Trouble! (Ps. 31:1-5)**

**Psalm 31:1:** “*In you, O Lord, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame; deliver me in your righteousness.*”

**Psalm 31:2:** “*Turn your ear to me, come quickly to my rescue; be my rock of refuge, a strong fortress to save me.*”

**Psalm 31:3:** “*Since you are my rock and my fortress, for the sake of your name lead and guide me.*”

**Psalm 31:4:** “*Free me from the trap that is set for me, for you are my refuge.*”

**Psalm 31:5:** “*Into your hands I commit my spirit; redeem me, O Lord, the God of truth.*”

I call this the Rollercoaster Psalm because you go from the heights to the depths in just a matter of a few sentences.

This is truly a Psalm of trouble and trust.

There are numerous suggestions and ideas about when David wrote this Psalm. I’m going to cut to the chase and say there is also the possibility it could fit into the rebellion of Absalom. There were 3 years of famine after David resumed the throne and the death of Absalom, but he also numbered the people. We talked about that in Psalm

30. I personally prefer this scenario because David seems to be close to the finish line. I’m going to say that he is probably in his late 60’s when he writes this Psalm. He dies in 970 B.C. at 70 years of age.

It is written very close in time to when he wrote Psalm 30.

By nature we blow hot and cold depending on our circumstances. We are up in trust when things are going great and down when they are not.

**Verse 1:** “In you, O Lord, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame; deliver me in your righteousness.”

David’s opening statement: “In you, O Lord, I have taken refuge.” In other

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words: “I have found in You Lord a place of security and safety.”

Lord because I have done this, I request of You 2 things: (1) “let me never be put to shame” and (2) “deliver me in your righteousness.”

By the way, this is the only way we can be saved too. Only God can do this!

**Verse 2:** “Turn your ear to me, come quickly to my rescue; be my rock of refuge, a strong fortress to save me.”

There are 3 requests in verse 2: (1) “Turn your ear to me”; (2) “come quickly to my rescue”; and (3) “be my rock of refuge, a strong fortress to save me.”

**Verse 3:** “Since you are my rock and my fortress, for the sake of your name lead and guide me.”

Now there are 3 reasons here in verse 3: (1) “you are my rock”; (2) “you are...my fortress”; and (3) “for the sake of your name [I would ask you to] lead and guide me.”

**Verse 4:** “Free me from the trap that is set for me, for you are my refuge.”

Back in verse 3 David says to the Lord: (1) “you are my rock” and (2) “my for

ress.” Now in verse 4: (3) “you are my refuge.” “My

rock, my fortress, and my refuge.” David asks the Lord

“for the sake of [His] name” to lead him and to guide

him in verse 3. In verse 4 we now have “Free me from the trap that is set for me.”

2 Timothy 2:26: “Then they will come to their senses and escape from the Devil’s trap. For they have been held captive by him to do whatever he wants” (NLT).

When I pray the prayer of Jabez, I always pray that phrase “Keep me from evil. Keep me from falling into Satan’s traps.”

**Verse 5:** “Into your hands I commit my spirit; redeem me, O Lord, the God of truth.”

Lord, I’m giving it all to You!

“Redeem me, O Lord, the God of truth.” In verse 3: “lead and guide me.” In verse

4: “Free me.” Now in verse 5: “redeem me.”

Let’s sing verse 2 of **“We’ll Understand It Better”**: *“We are often destitute of the things that life demands, Want of food and want of shelter, thirsty hills and barren lands, We are trusting in the Lord, and according to His Word, We will understand it better by and by. By and by when the morning comes, When the saints of God are gathered home, We’ll tell the story how we’ve overcome; We will understand it better by and by.”*

**October 29 — Lord, I Trust In You (Ps. 31:6-8)**

**Psalm 31:6:** *“I hate those who cling to worthless idols; I trust in the Lord.”*

**Psalm 31:7:** *“I will be glad and rejoice in your love, for you saw my affliction and knew the anguish of my soul.”*



**Psalms 31:8:** *“You have not handed me over to the enemy but have set my feet in a spacious place.”*

**Verse 6:** “I hate those who cling to worthless idols; I trust in the Lord.”

The 2 key statements in verse 6 are “I hate” and “I trust.”

**Verse 7:** “I will be glad and rejoice in your love, for you saw my affliction and knew the anguish of my soul.”

“I will”: (1) “be glad...in your love” and (2) “rejoice in your love.”

The reason that I am going to “be glad and rejoice in your love” is given in the next phrase: “for you saw my affliction and knew the anguish of my soul.”

You saw what was going on—externally—“you saw my affliction.” Internally—“you...knew the anguish of my soul.”

**Verse 8:** “You have not handed me over to the enemy but have set my feet in a spacious place.”

You have a negative and a positive contrast here in verse 8. Negatively—“You have not handed me over to the enemy.” “But”—positively—

“You...have set my feet in a spacious place.” Lord, You did it up great!

Lisa Beamer, after Todd’s death on 9/11 was on Larry King’s show. “Larry asked, ‘You seem to be dealing remarkably with your grief. How do you explain that?’” Lisa responded: “I know that Todd is in heaven right now, and I know that I’m going to see him again, and that his efforts were not in vain. It was part of God’s plan. Evil in this world will ultimately be conquered by God...That’s something I can hang on to during those moments when I’m not cool, calm, and collected, of which there are many, I can assure you.” (*Let’s Roll*, 251)

Let’s sing verse 3 of **“We’ll Understand It Better”**: *“Trials dark on ev’ry hand, and we cannot understand, All the ways that God would lead us to that blessed Promised Land; But He guides us with His eye and we’ll follow till we die, For we’ll understand it better by and by. By and by when the morning comes, When the saints of God are gathered home, We’ll tell the story how we’ve overcome; We will understand it better by and by.”*

### **October 30 — Our True Source—God (Pearl)**

“God wants you to be entirely His, and it requires paying close attention to keep yourself fit.” (Oswald Chambers)

“Every time you preach make sure you look God in the face about the message first, then the glory will remain through all of it. A Christian servant is one who perpetually looks into the face of God and then goes forth to talk to others.” (Oswald Chambers)

“I can only be right with God if I accept the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ as an absolute gift.” (Oswald Chambers)

“Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful apart from me. Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:4-5 NLT).

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We cannot go on our own and be fruitful. We are dependent! Why would we even want to be independent? Why would we move away from God who is the source of all that is good in our life?

“For me, the Psalms have become a step in the process of recognizing God’s true place at the center.” (Philip Yancey, *Our Daily Bread*, November 26, 2010)

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. So do not be attracted by strange, new ideas. Your spiritual strength comes from God’s special favor...” (Heb. 13:8, 9a NLT).

#### **October 31 — Lord, I’m Having a Down-Time (Ps. 31:9-13)**

**Psalm 31:9:** *“Be merciful to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and my body with grief.”*

**Psalm 31:10:** *“My life is consumed by anguish and my years by groaning; my strength fails because of my affliction, and my bones grow weak.”*

**Psalm 31:11:** *“Because of all my enemies, I am the utter contempt of my neighbors; I am a dread to my friends—those who see me on the street flee from me.”*

**Psalm 31:12:** *“I am forgotten by them as though I were dead; I have become like broken pottery.”*

**Psalm 31:13:** *“For I hear the slander of many; there is terror on every side; they conspire against me and plot to take my life.”*

How quickly we go from a spacious place to rock bottom.

There’s a heavy toll on every area of our lives when we lose perspective.

**Verse 9:** “Be merciful to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and my body with grief.”

In verse 9 we have the petition: “Be merciful to me, O Lord.” He follows this with 7 reasons why he’s asking the Lord to be merciful to him. Three of them are here in verse

9: (1) “I am in distress”; (2) “my eyes grow weak with sorrow”; and (3) “my soul and

my body [grow weak] with grief.” When we are focusing on circumstances, it will do this to us. **Verse 10:** “My life is consumed by anguish and my years by groaning; my strength fails because of my affliction, and my bones grow weak.”

We now have the reasons: (4) “My life is consumed by anguish”; (5) “my years [are consumed] by groaning”; (6) “my strength fails because of my affliction”; and (7) “my bones grow weak.”

**Verse 11:** “Because of all my enemies, I am the utter contempt of my neighbors; I am a dread to my friends—those who see me on the street flee from me.”

“Because of all my enemies.” This has to be Absalom’s rebellion.

“Because of all my enemies” there are 5 things which are true. Three of them

are here in verse 11 and 2 more in verse 12: (1) "I am the utter contempt of my neighbors";

(2) "I am a dread to my friends"; and (3) "those who see me on the street flee from me." **Verse**

**12:** "I am forgotten by them as though I were dead; I have become like broken pottery."

Putting these 5 things together, David feels like he's good for nothing: (1) "I am the utter contempt of my neighbors"; (2) "I am a dread to my friends"; (3) "those who see me on the street flee from me"; (4) "I am forgotten by them as though I were dead"; and (5) "I have become like broken pottery."

**Verse 13:** "For I hear the slander of many; there is terror on every side; they conspire against me and plot to take my life."

The reason I know these other 5 things are true is 4-fold: (1) "I hear the slander of many"; (2) "there is terror on every side"; (3) "they conspire against me"; and (4) "they...plot to take my life."

Let's sing together the last verse of "**We'll Understand It Better**":

*"Temptations, hidden snares, often take us unawares, And our hearts are made to bleed for many a thoughtless word or deed, And we wonder why the test when we try to do our best, But we'll understand it better by and by. By and by when the morning comes, When the saints of God are gathered home, We'll tell the story how we've overcome; We will understand it better by and by."*

**November 1 — When Times are Tough You Turn to the Lord (Ps. 31:14-18)**

**Psalm 31:14:** "*But I trust in you, O Lord; I say, 'You are my God.'*"

**Psalm 31:15:** "*My times are in your hands; deliver me from my enemies and from those who pursue me.*"

**Psalm 31:16:** "*Let your face shine on your servant; save me in your unfailing love.*"

**Psalm 31:17:** "*Let me not be put to shame, O Lord, for I have cried out to you; but let the wicked be put to shame and lie silent in the grave.*"

**Psalm 31:18:** "*Let their lying lips be silenced, for with pride and contempt they speak arrogantly against the righteous.*"

**Verse 14:** "But I trust in you, O Lord; I say, 'You are my God.'"

In contrast to all that they are saying, plotting, and conspiring against him, his great statement is: "I trust in you, O Lord."

He's got his eyes back on the Lord. He's dealing the Lord into the mess. He's singing "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus."

Peterson paraphrases verse 14: "Desperate, I throw myself on you: you are my God!"

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* titles these verses "Prayer for Deliverance."

(818) After David makes this bold declaration "I trust in you, O Lord," he then gives us his testimony: "I say, 'You are my God.'" As one

startled woman admitted, “God is a lot bigger than I thought.” When God is big, everything begins to look different. **Verse 15:** “My times are in your hands; deliver me from my enemies and from those who pursue me.”

My testimony is: (1) “You are my God”; (2) “My times”—both the good and the bad, the up and the down—“are in your hands”; and (3) “deliver me from my enemies and from those who pursue me.”

**Verse 16:** “Let your face shine on your servant; save me in your unfailing love.”

Now in verse 16 the psalmist turns to the Lord and he says 2 things here and then completes it with another statement in verse 17.

As he turns to the Lord he says: (1) “Let your face shine on your servant” and (2) “save me in your unfailing love.”

His first request “Let your face shine on your servant” takes us back to Numbers 6:24-26: “The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace” (NIV).

Psalm 30:7: “...when you hid your face, I was dismayed” (NIV).

Psalm 4:6: “Many are asking, ‘Who can show us any good?’ Let the light of your face shine upon us, O Lord” (NIV).

Psalm 119:135: “Make your face shine upon your servant and teach me your decrees” (NIV).

His second request of the Lord is “save me in your unfailing love.”

**Verse 17:** “Let me not be put to shame, O Lord, for I have cried out to you; but let the wicked be put to shame and lie silent in the grave.”

As he turns to the Lord in verse 16 he says 3 things: (1) “Let your face shine on your servant”; (2) “save me in your unfailing love”; and (3) “Let me not be put to shame.” The reason: “for I have cried out to you.”

He then turns to the “wicked.” “But” forms the contrast. He says 3 things about them: (1) “let the wicked be put to shame”; (2) “let the wicked...lie silent in the grave”; and (3) “let their lying lips be silenced.”

**Verse 18:** “Let their lying lips be silenced, for

with pride and contempt they speak arrogantly against the righteous.” Join me in singing a couple of verses of “**Take the Name of Jesus With You**”:

*“Take the name of Jesus with you, Child of sorrow and of woe; It will joy and comfort give you, Take it, then, where’er you go. Take the name of Jesus ever, As a shield from ev’ry snare; If temptations ‘round you gather, Breathe that holy name in prayer. Precious name, O how sweet! Hope of earth and joy of heav’n; Precious name, O how sweet! Hope of earth and joy of heav’n.”*

**November 2 — How Great is Your Goodness! (Ps. 31:19-20)**

**Psalm 31:19:** “How great is your goodness, which you have stored up for

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*those who fear you, which you bestow in the sight of men on those who take refuge in you."*

**Psalm 31:20:** *"In the shelter of your presence you hide them from the intrigues of men; in your dwelling you keep them safe from accusing tongues."*

**Verse 19:** "How great is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you, which you bestow in the sight of men on those who take refuge in you."

Peterson paraphrases verse 19: "What a stack of blessing you have piled up for those who worship you, Ready and waiting for all who run to you to escape an unkind world."

This verse reminded me of the Prayer of Jabez in 1 Chronicles 4:10: "Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, 'Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain.' And God granted his request" (NIV).

This "goodness" is something that "you have stored up" and "which you bestow."

This "goodness" is for "those who fear you" and "who take refuge in you."

Jack Graham says in his book *Lessons From the Heart*: "Don't be afraid to follow the Lord. He has your best interests at heart. Someone said, 'God will choose for you what you would choose for yourself if you had sense enough to choose it.' Another person put it this way: 'The will of God is what you would choose for yourself if you knew all the facts.'" (24)

**Verse 20:** "In the shelter of your presence you hide them from the intrigues of men; in your dwelling you keep them safe from accusing tongues."

There are 2 things that David is praising the Lord for in verse 20: (1) "In the shelter of your presence you hide them from the intrigues of men" and (2) "in your dwelling you keep them safe from accusing tongues."

Let's sing verse 3 of **"Take the Name of Jesus With You"**: *"O the precious name of Jesus! How it thrills our souls with joy; When His loving arms receive us, And His songs our tongues employ. Precious name, O how sweet! Hope of earth and joy of heav'n; Precious name, O how sweet! Hope of earth and joy of heav'n."*

### **November 3 — Be Strong and Take Heart (Ps. 31:21-24)**

**Psalm 31:21:** *"Praise be to the Lord, for he showed his wonderful love to me when I was in a besieged city."*

**Psalm 31:22:** *"In my alarm I said, 'I am cut off from your sight!' Yet you heard my cry for mercy when I called to you for help."*

**Psalm 31:23:** *"Love the Lord, all his saints! The Lord preserves the faithful, but the proud he pays back in full."*

**Psalm 31:24:** *"Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord."*

**Verse 21:** "Praise be to the Lord, for he showed his wonderful love to me when I was in a besieged city."

How refreshing to hear this outburst of praise! “Praise be to the Lord.” Then the reason for this outburst of praise: “for he showed his wonderful love to me when I was in a besieged city.”

There are really 3 times that David was in a “besieged city”: When he went to free the folks at Keilah, when he came back to Ziklag, and ultimately when he left Jerusalem, fleeing north to avoid confrontation with his son Absalom.

There are many who believe this is a reference to the city of Keilah. When David delivered them from the Philistines, they in turn betrayed him to Saul.

It is good to remind ourselves that Jerusalem was certainly a besieged city and that David left it as Absalom was coming up from the south.

The outburst of praise is given because “He showed his wonderful love to me.”

Charlie Hedges in his book *Getting the Right Things Right* says: “You can’t earn it because, as a friend of mine is fond of saying, ‘Jesus loves you for no good reason.’ In *Embracing the Love of God*, James Bryan Smith writes, ‘What we long to know is that we are loved. To be more specific, we hunger to know that we are accepted as we are, forgiven for what we have done, and cared for by a gracious, loving God. When we know this we walk away well.’” (98)

**Verse 22:** “In my alarm I said, ‘I am cut off from your sight!’ Yet you heard my cry for mercy when I called to you for help.”

It is easy in suffering to render a wrong verdict. This can be true when we get our eyes on circumstances and off the Lord. We lose perspective.

Peter on the Sea of Galilee walking toward the Lord was fine as long as he kept looking at the Lord. As he saw the winds and the waves he began to sink.

The disciples in the storm, as well, thought that they were going to perish. The Lord changed all that with just a simple statement: “Peace be still.”

Ron Mehl in his book *A Prayer That Moves Heaven* says: “I love what my friend Amos Dodge says, ‘While we’re waiting, God is working.’” (83)

Warren Wiersbe says: “Someone has said, ‘I can struggle wildly and make my predicament worse, or I can wait for God’s guidance.’ Determine to wait for God’s guidance if you face adversity.” (*Through the Years with Warren W. Wiersbe*, 372)

**Verse 23:** “Love the Lord, all his saints! The Lord preserves the faithful, but the proud he pays back in full.”

In verse 21 David says: “Praise be to the Lord.” Now in verse 23 he says “Love the Lord, all his saints!”

The reason we are to “love the Lord, all his saints” is: (1) “The Lord preserves the faithful” and (2) “the proud he pays back in full.”

**Verse 24:** “Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord.”

Now we go back to verse 21 and put these 4 wonderful statements together: (1) verse 21—“Praise be to the Lord”; (2) verse 23—“Love the Lord all his saints”; (3) verse 24—“Be strong”; and (4) verse 24—“take heart.” Our



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Psalm ends with “all you who hope in the Lord.”

James Boice says: “The very last lines encourage the saints of God to ‘be strong and take heart,’ which is a way of saying ‘keep trusting.’”

Don Wytzen says: “Four brief, but powerful concepts end this psalm of crisis: Love the Lord! Be faithful! Be humble! Be strong and take heart!”

Let’s sing together the fourth and final verse of **“Take the Name of Jesus With You”**: *“At the name of Jesus bowing, Falling prostrate at His feet; King of kings in heav’n we’ll crown Him, When our journey is complete. Precious name, O how sweet! Hope of earth and joy of heav’n; Precious name, O how sweet! Hope of earth and joy of heav’n.”*

#### **November 4 — Thou Art Worthy (Ps. 33:1-3)**

**Psalm 33:1:** *“Sing joyfully to the Lord, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him.”*

**Psalm 33:2:** *“Praise the Lord with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre.”*

**Psalm 33:3:** *“Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy.”*

What a privilege and joy it is to turn to such a positive Psalm. Psalm 33 is a psalm of praise and victory.

It was probably written during David’s successful military campaigns. The primary campaigns came from 1003 B.C. to 990 B.C. They began with great earnest when he was 37 years old and had just become king over all Israel.

It is time to praise him for the victory. It is time for music and parades.

The Lord delights in our praise!

We remember well the story of the 10 lepers that were healed and only 1 came back to say thank you and the Lord said “Where are the nine?”

**Verse 1:** “Sing joyfully to the Lord, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him.”

The Psalm begins with a command: “Sing joyfully to the Lord.”

Psalm 149:1: “Praise the Lord. Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise in the assembly of the saints” (NIV).

The ones who are qualified to fulfill this command to “Sing joyfully to the Lord” are the “righteous” and the “upright.”

Bill Bright says: “When we are filled with the Spirit and thus growing in the fruit of the Spirit—which includes joy—then we will express that joy by singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord. A happy heart inevitably will be reflected in a joyful countenance.” (*Promises*, Day 108)

**Verse 2:** “Praise the Lord with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre.”

Colossians 3:16: “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God” (NASB).

**Verse 3:** “Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy.”

Whereas in verse 2 we have introduction of instruments to assist in our

praise, in verse 3 we have the command to “play skillfully.”

In these first 3 verses we have 6 commands: (1) “Sing joyfully to the Lord”; (2) “Praise the Lord with the harp”; (3) “make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre”; (4) “Sing to him a new song”; (5) “play skillfully”; and (6) “shout for joy.”

In verse 1 we are commanded to “Sing joyfully to the Lord.” In verse 3 we are commanded to “Sing to him a new song.” I believe this is “a new song” in view of the fact that it is praising Him for something that He is doing right now. The “new song” for David would have been a wonderful experience that he has had in Psalm 32. Forgiveness of his sin—Now he is praising the Lord in view of the Lord’s mercy and grace that has been extended to him so bountifully.

I am thinking it is appropriate for each of us to join Jimmy Dean and sing “I’m Drinking From My Saucer ‘Cause My Cup is Overflowed”: *“I’ve never made a fortune, And it’s probably too late now, But I don’t worry ‘bout that much—I’m happy anyhow. / As I go along life’s journey I’m reapin’ better than I sowed, And I’m drinkin’ from my saucer, ‘Cause my cup is overflowed. / Don’t have a lot of riches, And sometimes the going’s tough, But I’ve got some kids who love me, And that makes me rich enough. / Aw, I remember times when things went wrong, And my faith got a little thin, But then all at once the dark clouds broke, And that ol’ sun peeked through again. So, Lord, help me not to gripe About the tough rows that I’ve hoed—I’m drinkin’ from my saucer, ‘Cause my cup is overflowed. / And if God gives me strength and courage When the way seems steep and rough, I’ll not ask for other blessings—I’m already blessed enough. / And may I never be too busy To help another bear his load. Then I’ll keep a ‘drinkin’ from my saucer, ‘Cause my cup is overflowed.”*

Let’s worship the Lord with the chorus “**Thou Art Worthy**”: *“Thou art worthy, Thou art worthy, Thou art worthy, Oh Lord To receive glory, glory and honour, glory and honour and power. For Thou hast created, hast all things created. Thou hast created all things. And for Thy pleasure they are created, for Thou art worthy, oh Lord.”*

### **November 5 — The Lord is Faithful (Ps. 33:4-5)**

**Psalm 33:4:** *“For the word of the Lord is right and true; he is faithful in all he does.”*

**Psalm 33:5:** *“The Lord loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love.”*

**Verse 4:** “For the word of the Lord is right and true; he is faithful in all he does.”

Remember the 6 commands we were given yesterday in verses 1-3: (1) “Sing joyfully to the Lord”; (2) “Praise the Lord with the harp”; (3) “make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre”; (4) “Sing to him a new song”; (5) “play skillfully”; and (6) “shout for joy.”

Now we have the reason for those 6 commands in verses 1-3. Verse 4 tells us: "For the word of the Lord is right and true; he is faithful in all he does."

The Lord is "right," "true," and "faithful." He is "right and true" in all that He says and "faithful in all he does." We couldn't ask for anything more.

Numbers 23:19: "God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?" (NIV).

There are 3 reasons for our praise: (1) "the word of the Lord is right"; (2) "the word of the Lord is...true"; and (3) "he is faithful in all he does."

You have His "word" in the first 2: "the Lord is right and true." You have His works in the third: "he is faithful in all he does."

Let's take a few moments to look at 2 key words in that phrase: "faithful" and "all."

Lamentations 3:22-23: "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness" (NIV).

1 Thessalonians 5:24: "Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass" (NASB).

Yes, the Lord "is faithful in all he does." Meditating upon the word "all" we need to recognize that there are no exceptions.

Romans 8:28: "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (NASB).

**Verse 5:** "The Lord loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love."

The 3 dominate ideas in verse 5 are "righteousness," "justice," and "unfailing love."

What an incredible statement! "The earth is full of his unfailing love."

Mark Lowry says: "My, Lord! How could You ever love a rotten, low-down, dirty, filthy, scumbag, dirt-wad, wormy, nasty, ugly, bowlegged, crooked-toothed, selfish, conceited, proud, lustful, boneheaded, rock-brained, hard-headed, stiff-necked sinner like me?" (*Live Long and Die Laughing*, 104)

Micah 6:8: "He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (NIV).

Let's sing a verse of "**Glory to His Name**": "*Down at the cross where my Saviour died, Down where for cleansing from sin I cried, There to my heart was the blood applied; Glory to His name. Glory to His name, Glory to His name; There to my heart was the blood applied; Glory to His name.*"

## November 6 — Instructions from Deuteronomy 8 (Pearl)

Real life comes by feeding on every word of God. (v. 3:8a)

The Lord your God disciplines you to help you. (v. 5b)

So obey the commands of the Lord your God by walking in His ways and fearing him. (v. 6)

When you have eaten your fill, praise the Lord your God for the good land He has given you. (v. 10)

But this is the time to be careful! Beware that in your plenty you do not forget the Lord your God. (v. 11a)

For when you become full and prosperous, that is the time to be careful. (vv. 12-14)

But I assure you of this; If you ever forget the Lord your God, and follow other gods, worshiping and bowing down to them, you will certainly be destroyed.

(NLT paraphrase of Deut. 8)

“Life is tougher than it needs to be for those who bring self-imposed trouble upon themselves.” (*Our Daily Bread*, Dec. 10, 2010)

“Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king” (1 Sam. 15:23 NIV).

This is Samuel as he spoke to King Saul. Saul was into arrogance, idolatry and divination (among other things). God does not go the limit. He could have been more severe. God rejected him as king and took away his position of leadership.

“If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God” (Deut. 28:1-2 NIV).

## **November 7 — The Lord is Reliable (Ps. 33:6-7)**

**Psalm 33:6:** “*By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth.*”

**Psalm 33:7:** “*He gathers the waters of the sea into jars; he puts the deep into storehouses.*”

**Verse 6:** “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth.”

His word and His work are reliable!

J. Vernon McGee said: “What tremendous power there is in His Word! I don’t know how He did it, but I do know that God did it, and that is the important thing.”

Mark Lowery says: “I believe in the big bang theory...God spoke, and BANG! There it was.” (*Live Long and Die Laughing*, 124)

Isaiah 66:2: “‘Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?’ declares the Lord. ‘This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word’” (NIV).

**Verse 7:** “He gathers the waters of the sea into jars; he puts the deep into storehouses.”

In verse 6 we have His “word” and in verse 7 we have His work.

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The psalmist is continuing here with the acts of creation, the power of the “word of the Lord” and the “breath of his mouth.”

There are 4 acts of creation that he is focusing upon. In verse 6 it was “the heavens” and “their starry host.” Now in verse 7 it is “the waters of the sea” and “the deep.”

Psalm 8:1,3-4: “O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens...When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?” (NIV).

Yes, He is the Creator and Redeemer.

Colossians 1:16-17: “For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together” (NASB).

“Why doesn’t the sky fall down? Why is it that stars and planets do not go tearing apart and ripping off into chaos?”

“Because there is a Presence that makes all things consist—and it is the Presence of that One who upholdeth all things by the word of His power. This is basically a spiritual explanation, for this universe can only be explained by spiritual and eternal laws. This is why the scientists can never manage to get through to the root of all things and never will, for they deal only with the things that they can see and touch and taste and mix in the experimental test tubes.

“The scientist does not know how to deal with this mysterious Presence and Force that holds all things together. He can mix elements and chemicals and note the reactions that take place and then write an article and say, ‘I did not see God in the formula.’ But the scientist is only able to come up with dependable and consistent formulas because of God’s faithfulness and power in holding all things together.” (*The Best of A. W. Tozer: Book 2*, 238)

Let’s join together and sing the second verse of “**Glory to His Name**”: “*I am so wondrously saved from sin, Jesus so sweetly abides within; There at the cross where He took me in; Glory to His name. Glory to His name, Glory to His name; There to my heart was the blood applied; Glory to His name.*”

**November 8 — Let All the Earth Fear the Lord (Ps. 33:8-9)**

**Psalm 33:8:** “*Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the people of the world revere him.*”

**Psalm 33:9:** “*For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.*”

**Verse 8:** “Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the people of the world revere him.”

In view of the awesome power of His word in creation, this is what the psalmist recommends. There are 2 phrases here, each beginning with the word “Let”: (1) “Let

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all the earth fear the Lord” and (2) “let all the people of the world revere him.”

The key words are “fear” and “revere.”

You will notice once again the unanimous recommendation with the word “all” used 2 times: (1) “Let all the earth” and (2) “let all the people of the world.”

Romans 1:20: “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse” (NASB).

“God’s sovereignty is the attribute by which He rules His entire creation, and to be sovereign, God must be all-knowing, all-powerful and absolutely free.” (*The Best of A.*

*W. Tozer: Book 2, 29) Verse 9:* “For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.” In verse 9 we have the reason why we are to “fear” and “revere.” Why should “all the earth fear the Lord”? Why should all “the people of the world revere him?” Now we have the reason here in verse 9: (1) “he spoke, and it came to be” and (2) “he commanded, and it stood firm.”

“For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.”

I love Joni Eareckson Tada’s prayer at the end of one of her devotions. Remember, she is a quadriplegic and has lived in a wheelchair for 40 years and yet she prays this beautiful prayer: “*My good and great God, I praise You today for the hope You offer Your people. Thank You that I have the assurance that Your plans always reflect my highest good and Your most perfect glory. Whatever trials I may face, help me to trust in Your promises.*” (*Diamonds in the Dust*, August 3)

“A man once walked into a store and took his place in line behind four other customers. Before long, he realized the line wasn’t moving. A trio of clerks behind the counter were involved in a personal discussion, and it was only after they sensed the restlessness of those waiting that they turned to give them attention. Even then, they did not offer service cheerfully. They acted as if the customers were interfering with their social lives and continued their personal conversation.

“After making his purchase, the man asked to see the manager. Suddenly, the clerk’s attitude changed. He became all smiles and he said, ‘I’m sorry if I kept you waiting.’

“The man smiled back and said, ‘Don’t worry. It won’t happen again. I can assure you it won’t.’ If that sounded like a threat...it was. Little did the clerk know that he had neglected the owner of the store!” (*God’s Little Devotional Book for Teachers*, 43)

1 Corinthians 6:19-20: “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your



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own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body” (NASB).

Let’s sing verse 3 of “**Glory to His Name**”: *“O precious fountain that saves from sin, I am so glad I have entered in; There Jesus saves me and keeps me clean; Glory to His name. Glory to His name, Glory to His name; There to my heart was the blood applied; Glory to His name.”*

#### **November 9 — The Lord Foils the Plans of the Nations (Ps. 33:10-11)**

**Psalm 33:10:** *“The Lord foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples.”*

**Psalm 33:11:** *“But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.”*

**Verse 10:** “The Lord foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples.”

Why do we “fear” and “revere” Him? Because He “foils” and “thwarts.”

(1) “The Lord foils the plans” and (2) “he thwarts the purposes.” We think we know what’s best.

We ask ourselves the question, why does the Lord do that? I believe the answer is in Isaiah 55:8-9: “‘For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,’ declares the Lord. ‘As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts’” (NIV).

In God’s providence He thwarts man’s purposes and executes His own!

Isaiah 14:24: “The Lord Almighty has sworn, ‘Surely, as I have planned, so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will stand’” (NIV).

Isaiah 14:26-27: “This is the plan determined for the whole world; this is the hand stretched out over all nations. For the Lord Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?” (NIV).

Spurgeon said: “Their persecutions, slanders, falsehoods, are like puff-balls flung against a granite wall—they produce no result at all; for the Lord overrules the evil, and brings good out of it.”

Marriage provides a great laboratory on the conflict of wills. Kenny Rodgers in his song “Every Time Two Fools Collide” says: *“You want things your way and I want them mine. And now we don’t know just where to draw the line. How can love survive if we keep choosing sides? And who picks up the pieces every time two fools collide?...There must be a way But we still haven’t tried To keep our hearts from breaking Every time two fools collide.”*

The answer to that is God’s plan rather than yours. That’ll work!

**Verse 11:** “But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.”

The key is to get locked into His “plans” and “purposes.”

The word “But” forms the contrast between what happens in verse 10 and what happens in verse 11. The Lord is the one who “foils the plans” and

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“thwarts the purposes” in verse 10. “But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.” No one is going to foil His plans or thwart His purposes.

Proverbs 19:21: “Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails” (NIV).

Proverbs 16:3: “Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed” (NIV).

Warren Wiersbe quotes Amy Carmichael: “Blessed are the single-hearted, for they shall enjoy much peace...If you refuse to be hurried and pressed, if you stay your soul on God, nothing can keep you from that clearness of spirit which is life and peace. In that stillness you will know what His will is.”

Chip Ingram says: “We realize (are you ready for this?) that life isn’t about us. You know what that is called? Humility. A broken spirit results in renewed commitment to fulfill God’s agenda instead of our own plans.” (*Holy Ambition*, 77)

Joshua in his farewell address said: “Now I am about to go the way of all the earth.

You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the Lord your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed” (Joshua 23:14 NIV).

In Joshua 24:14-15 he says: “Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve,...But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord” (NIV).

Let’s sing the final verse of “**Glorify to His Name**”: “*Come to this fountain so rich and sweet, Cast thy poor soul at the Saviour’s feet; Plunge in today, and be made complete; Glory to His name, Glory to His name; There to my heart was the blood applied; Glory to His name.*”

**November 10 — Blessed is the Nation Whose God is the Lord (Ps. 33:12-**

**15) Psalm 33:12:** “*Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people he chose for his inheritance.*”

**Psalm 33:13:** “*From heaven the Lord looks down and sees all mankind;*”

**Psalm 33:14:** “*from his dwelling place he watches all who live on earth—*”

**Psalm 33:15:** “*he who forms the hearts of all, who considers everything they do.*”

**Verse 12:** “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people he chose for his inheritance.”

The question we ask ourselves is: Is America a “nation whose God is the Lord”?

We still have “In God We Trust” on our money and we still recite “One Nation Under God” in our pledge of allegiance.

Deuteronomy 32:28-29: "They are a nation without sense, there is no discernment in them. If only they were wise and would understand this and discern what their end will be!" (NIV).

"Most end-of-life goals involve family, marriage, and personal happiness...The bookends of life are birth and death. What comes between either fulfills a destiny or destroys a dream." (*Making Peace With Reality*, 99 and 103)

Peterson in *The Message* paraphrases 2 Chronicles 7:14: "and my people, my God-defined people, respond by humbling themselves, praying, seeking my presence, and turning their backs on their wicked lives, I'll be there ready for you: I'll listen from heaven, forgive their sins, and restore their land to health."

**Verse 13:** "From heaven the Lord looks down and sees all mankind;"

There are 2 things the Lord does "From heaven": (1) "[He] looks down" and (2) "[He] sees all mankind."

You will notice again we have the usage of the word "all." This is the fifth occurrence of that word: (1) verse 4—"he is faithful in all he does"; (2) verse 8—"Let all the earth fear the Lord"; (3) verse 8—"let all the people of the world revere him"; (4) verse 11—"the purposes of his heart through all generations"; and (5) verse 13—"the Lord looks down and sees all mankind."

Jeremiah 16:17: "My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from me, nor is their sin concealed from my eyes" (NIV)

**Verse 14:** "from his dwelling place he watches all who live on earth—"

Whereas it was "from heaven" in verse 13, it is from "his dwelling place" here in verse 14. They are obviously synonymous. In verse 13, He "looks down and sees" and in verse 14, "he watches."

2 Chronicles 16:9: "For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him..." (NIV).

Job 34:21: "His eyes are on the ways of men; he sees their every step" (NIV).

Job 36:7: "He does not take his eyes off the righteous..." (NIV).

Psalms 53:2: "God looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God" (NIV).

Proverbs 5:21: "For a man's ways are in full view of the Lord, and he examines all his paths" (NIV).

**Verse 15:** "he who forms the hearts of all, who considers everything they do."

We are under constant surveillance. We never disappear from His radar screen. He is monitoring everything we do.

Notice in verses 13-15 the Lord is characterized as doing 4 things with everybody. He: (1) "looks down"; (2) "sees"; (3) "watches"; and (4) "considers."

Let's sing the first verse of George Matheson's great hymn "O Love That

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**Wilt Not Let Me Go**: “*O Love that will not let me go, I rest my weary soul in thee; I give thee back the life I owe, That in Thine ocean depths its flow May richer, fuller be.*”

**November 11 — It Is the Lord Who Gives the Victories (Ps. 33:16-17)**

**Psalm 33:16**: “*No king is saved by the size of his army; no warrior escapes by his great strength.*”

**Psalm 33:17**: “*A horse is a vain hope for deliverance; despite all its great strength it cannot save.*”

**Verse 16**: “No king is saved by the size of his army; no warrior escapes by his great strength.”

Psalm 20:7: “Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God” (NIV).

David is certainly thinking of military operations here because he speaks of a “king,” a “warrior,” and the “size of his army.”

In verse 17 he mentions a “horse.”

There are 2 things he says here. “No king is saved”: (1) “by the size of his army” and (2) “no warrior escapes by his great strength.”

Gideon certainly learned that numbers are meaningless when it comes to conflict in which the Lord is involved. The Lord told Gideon “You have too many men for me to deliver Median into your hands.”

The Lord tells him to tell the army that everyone who wants to can go home. So 22,000 men left while 10,000 remained. But the Lord said to Gideon. There are still too many men. Take them down by the water and I’ll sift them there for you. In that little exercise between the kneelers and the lappers, the Lord said to Gideon with the 300 men that lapped: “I will save you and give the Medionites into your hands.”

9,700 of the kneelers also went home.

Gideon is left with an army of 300 plus the Lord. That will win every time!

**Verse 17**: “A horse is a vain hope for deliverance; despite all its great strength it cannot save.”

Thus far in these 2 verses, the Psalmist has been speaking of the “king,” the warrior,” and now the “horse.”

The king is not saved by the size of his army. The warrior does not escape by his great strength. A horse is a vain hope for deliverance.

You will notice 3 key words in verses 16 and 17: (1) “saved”; (2) “escapes”, and (3) “deliverance.”

It is good to note that in verse 17 we have the eighth and final appearance of the word “all.”

“Despite all its great strength it cannot save.”

David understood this great truth in the Valley of Elah as he faced Goliath as a teenager. 1 Samuel 17:45-47: “David said to the Philistine, ‘You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day

the Lord will hand you over to me, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give all of you into our hands'" (NIV).

Let's sing verse 2 of **"O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go"**: *"O Light that followest all my way, I yield my flick'ring torch to thee; My heart restores its borrowed ray, That in thy sunshine's glow its day May brighter, fairer be."*

**November 12 — The Sovereign Protector (Ps. 33:18-19) Psalm 33:18: *"But the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love,"***

**Psalm 33:19: *"to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine."***

**Verse 18:** "But the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love,"

The word "But" forms the contrast to the previous 2 verses where the "king," the "warrior," and the "horse," were dominant themes. Now the Lord comes into the picture at verse 18.

Those who have "the eyes of the Lord" on them are characterized in 2 ways: (1) "those who fear him" and (2) "those whose hope is in his unfailing love."

Psalm 32:8: "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you" (NIV).

Psalm 32:10: "Many are the woes of the wicked, but the Lord's unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him" (NIV).

"The eyes of the Lord" takes us back to: (1) verse 13—"From heaven the Lord looks down and sees all mankind"; (2) verse 14—"from his dwelling place he watches all who live on earth"; and (3) verse 15—"he who forms the hearts of all, who considers everything they do." Then we see in verse 18: "the eyes of the Lord."

**Verse 19:** "to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine."

Why are "the eyes of the Lord...on those who fear him [and] on those whose hope is in his unfailing love?" The reason is 2-fold: (1) "to deliver them from death" and (2) "keep them alive in famine." These are His purposes for watching us.

Jesus was very much aware of the Father's concern to deliver from death. We read in Matthew 26:52-53: "Then Jesus said to him, 'Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?'" (NASB).

Someone said: "Saints are immortal until their work on earth is done." Verse 19 gives us 2 reasons why the Lord's eyes are constantly upon us: (1) "to deliver them from death" and (2)

keep them alive in famine.” Philippians 4:19: “And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (NASB). Our Lord is Jehovah Jireh, the Lord will provide! What joy this verse brings to us and what peace to know that the day of our death is in the Father’s hands and that the provision for our physical needs, likewise, are a deep concern to Him.

Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6:31-34: “Do not be anxious then, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘With what shall we clothe ourselves?’ For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own” (NASB).

Reading the life of Isobel Kuhn has been such a blessing these past number of months.

During her last months, Isobel found many joys. “The edelweiss of God,” she called them, thinking of the bright-eyed, woolly plants that grow on rough mountain slopes. Loving friends; good books; letters, cards, flowers, and gifts— all these she counted as edelweiss.

That last New Year of 1957, the Lord gave her a verse from Isaiah 46, and she shared it with John, always at her bedside: I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning...My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.

His pleasure, His will, had become her own; and she had proved the truth of Dante’s words, In His will is our peace.

Still confident in God, still trusting, she rested her heart upon His will as she drew near to the summit; and there, on March 20, 1957, she met Him face to face. (Gloria Repp, *Nothing Daunted: The Story of Isobel Kuhn*, 163)

Let’s sing verse 3 of “**O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go**”: “*O Joy that seekest me through pain, I cannot close my heart to thee; I trace the rainbow thro’ the rain, And feel the promise is not vain That morn shall tearless be.*”

### **November 13 — Pray for Our Children (Pearl)**

Pray for your child’s relationship with the Lord Jesus. If that is solid, other things will work out OK. If you are separated by thousands of miles, you can still feel a sense of oneness in the presence of God. As you pray there is a sense of security that God will do what He promised.

Through prayer, righteous parents can change the course and direction of their family. The prayer of a righteous parent can put a child’s heart into the hand of the Lord. (David Jeremiah, *Sanctuary*, paraphrase p. 54)

To thee I repair for grace upon grace until every void made by sin be replenished and until my family is filled with all thy fullness. (*Valley of Vision*,



paraphrase p. 116)

The constraining love of God, often spoken in a quiet voice, “This is the way walk ye in it,” will change an attitude and a life.

Seek, ask and pray until you know when to get out of the way and let God take over.

Engage your mind before you engage your tongue.

“A lot of people are like buttons—always popping off at the wrong time.”

(a note from the memoirs of Rosalea Anderson—Don’s mother)

“Listening may be the most loving thing you do today.” (*Our Daily Bread*, March 7, 2011)

## November 14 — Waiting on the Lord (Ps. 20-22)

**Psalm 33:20:** “*We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield.*”

**Psalm 33:21:** “*In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name.*”

**Psalm 33:22:** “*May your unfailing love rest upon us, O Lord, even as we put our hope in you.*”

**Verse 20:** “We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield.”

David makes a declaration in verse 20 and then follows it with why we do it. The declaration: “We wait in hope for the Lord.” The reason we do that is 2-fold: (1) “he is our help” and (2) “our shield.”

Psalm 84:11: “For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless” (NIV).

William Plumer says: “*Waiting* on God implies a quiet and submissive spirit, a conscientious discharge of known duty, heartiness and earnestness of soul in expecting deliverance at the right time and in the right way.”

Psalm 27:13-14: “I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord” (NIV).

Ecclesiastes 3:11: “He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end” (NIV).

**Verse 21:** “In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name.”

Can we say with the psalmist that “In him [in Him alone] our hearts rejoice”? “Our hearts rejoice” in Him plus nothing? The psalmist then gives us the reason: “for we trust in his holy name.”

There are 2 dominant thoughts in verse 21: (1) “our hearts rejoice” and (2) “we trust in his holy name.”

**Verse 22:** “May your unfailing love rest upon us, O Lord, even as we put our hope in you.”

David turns to prayer in this final verse. This is his closing petition: “May your unfailing love rest upon us, O Lord, even as we put our hope in you.”

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You will notice the word “hope” occurring 4 times in these final verses: (1) “A horse is a vain hope for deliverance”—verse 17; (2) “on those whose hope is in his unfailing love”—verse 18; (3) “We wait in hope for the Lord”—verse 20; and now (4) “we put our hope in you”—verse 22.

The words “unfailing love” occur 3 times in the psalm: (1) “the earth is full of his unfailing love”—verse 5; (2) “on those whose hope is in his unfailing love”—verse 18; and (3) “May your unfailing love rest upon us”—verse 22.

The petition is in the first phrase of the verse.

The place of believers is in the second phrase.

William Bennett in his book *Why We Fight* tells the story of the morning of September 11th:

On the morning of September 11, Jeremy Glick furtively telephoned his wife from onboard the hijacked United Airlines flight to confirm the rumor that in the last few minutes other planes had already crashed into the World Trade Center. When she told him it was true, he passed the information on to Beamer and the others. “We’ve decided,” he reported back to his wife after the men had conferred; “we’re going to do it.” Tom Burnett had also consulted with his wife. “I know we’re all going to die,” he said to her. But “there’s three of us who are going to do something about it.” Todd Beamer had a telephone line open to a GTE operator in Chicago. He made her promise to contact his wife, then she heard him recite the Lord’s Prayer, and then came the defining words: “Are you guys ready? Let’s roll.”

That is why we fight. (163)

Let’s sing verse 4 of “**O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go**”: “*O Cross that liftest up my head, I dare not ask to hide from thee; I lay in dust life’s glory dead, And from the ground there blossoms red Life that shall endless be.*”

#### **November 15 — Discipline is Painful (Ps.**

**38:1-2) Psalm 38:1: “O Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger or discipline me in your wrath.” Psalm 38:2: “For your arrows have pierced me, and your hand has come down upon me.”**

Psalm 38 could be titled “The Other Side of Sin.”

It is 1 of 7 penitential psalms, that is psalms where there is repentance for sins. The

others are: Psalm 6, 32, 51, 102, 130 and 143. Psalm 38 then rounds out the 7.

Psalm 38 is a song of sorrow. This particular Psalm had to be written at the time of David’s sin. You really can’t

say one good thing about sin because it involves selfishness, Satan, suffering, and a spanking from the Lord. God is holy and He hates it!

Galatians 6:7-8: “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a

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man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life” (NASB).

It is not a pleasant experience at all to be disciplined by the hand of the Lord. One need only to have a conversation with Lot, Achan, Ananias and Sapphira, or Judas Iscariot, along with numerous others, of whom David is also included.

We are getting ready to see what sin does from our study of Psalm 38.

**Verse 1:** “O Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger or discipline me in your wrath.”

There are 2 things that David asks of the Lord here in verse 1: (1) “do not rebuke

me in your anger” and (2) “do not...discipline me in your wrath.” Satan always gives us the long view on pleasure and says nothing of the penalty.

We really don’t think of the consequences when we start playing with sin.

William Plumer says: “God’s hot displeasure is terrible. Whoever has felt it will wish never to feel it again. One drop of the divine anger falling into the conscience of man makes him turn pale and tremble and die away.”

Hebrews 10:31: “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (TLB).

**Verse 2:** “For your arrows have pierced me, and your hand has come down upon me.”

Here the psalmist gives us the reason for his negative petitions in verse 1: (1) “do not rebuke me in your anger” and (2) “do not...discipline me in your wrath.” The reason is 2-fold: (1) “your arrows have pierced me” and (2) “your hand has come down upon me.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 2: “Your sharp-pointed arrows of rebuke draw blood; my backside smarts from your caning.”

Let’s meditate for a moment on Hebrews 12:5-11: “and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, ‘My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reproved by Him; For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives.’ It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, THAT WE MAY SHARE HIS HOLINESS. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, AFTERWARDS IT YIELDS THE PEACEFUL FRUIT OF

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RIGHTEOUSNESS” (NASB).

Sin is the deadliest plague ever to affect mankind. What sin does: (1) physical and spiritual death; (2) corrupts the mind, the will, and the affections; (3) brings people under the control of Satan; (4) makes them objects of God’s wrath; (5) robs people of peace and replaces it with misery; (6) grieves the Holy Spirit; (7) causes God not to answer our prayers; (8) limits our ability to serve and disqualifies some; (9) worship is hypocritical and unacceptable; (10) withholds blessing; (11) robs us of joy; (12) subjects us to God’s chastening; (13) hinders our spiritual growth; (14) pollutes our fellowship; and (15) our lives dishonor God.

But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

I think it would be good for us to sing a verse of **“Lord, I’m Coming Home”**: *“I’ve wandered far away from God, Now I’m coming home; The paths of sin too long I’ve trod, Lord, I’m coming home. Coming home, coming home, Never more to roam, Open wide Thine arms of love, Lord, I’m coming home.”*

**November 16 — Sin Has Affected Me Physically (Ps. 38:3-4) Psalm 38:3:**

*“Because of your wrath there is no health in my body; my bones have no soundness because of my sin.”*

**Psalm 38:4: “My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear.”**

**Verse 3:** “Because of your wrath there is no health in my body; my bones have no soundness because of my sin.”

The 2 “Because” phrases in verse 3 gives us a great deal of insight: (1) “Because of your wrath” and (2) “because of my sin.” It helps us understand how God feels about sin and His response to it.

Genesis 6:5-6: “The Lord saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain” (NIV).

In Genesis 4:6-7: “Then the Lord said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it’” (NIV).

Cain’s response in Genesis 4:13: “My punishment is more than I can bear” (NIV).

**Verse 4:** “My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 4: “I’m swamped by my bad behavior, collapsed under gunnysacks of guilt.”

David acknowledges his “sin” in verse 3 and his “guilt” in verse 4.

Don Wytzen prays: “I thank You, Lord, for giving me a sensitive conscience that serves as a spiritual gyroscope for my life.”

Let's sing verse 2 of "**Lord, I'm Coming Home**": *"I've wasted many precious years, Now I'm coming home; I now repent with bitter tears, Lord, I'm coming home. Coming home, coming home, Never more to roam, Open wide Thine arms of love, Lord, I'm coming home."*

**November 17 — Sin Brings a Price to Pay (Ps. 38:5-7)**

**Psalm 38:5:** *"My wounds fester and are loathsome because of my sinful folly."*

**Psalm 38:6:** *"I am bowed down and brought very low; all day long I go about mourning."*

**Psalm 38:7:** *"My back is filled with searing pain; there is no health in my body."*

**Verse 5:** "My wounds fester and are loathsome because of my sinful folly."

This is the third time we have had the occurrence of the word "because." Twice back in verse 3 and now here in verse 5.

In verse 3 it was: (1) "Because of your wrath" and (2) "because of my sin. Now in verse 5 it is "because of my sinful folly."

In Isaiah 1:4-6 the Lord speaks about the sin of the nation Israel: "Ah, sinful nation, a people loaded with guilt, a brood of evildoers, children given to corruption! They have forsaken the Lord; they have spurned the Holy One of Israel and turned their backs on him. Why should you be beaten anymore? Why do you persist in rebellion? Your whole head is injured, your whole heart afflicted. From the sole of your foot to the top of your head there is no soundness—only wounds and welts and open sores, not cleansed or bandaged or soothed with oil" (NIV).

Psalm 119:67-68: "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word. You are good, and what you do is good; teach me your decrees" (NIV).

**Verse 6:** "I am bowed down and brought very low; all day long I go about mourning."

Warren Wiersbe speaks about the price that is being paid for sin and the reason for it: "Because God wants us to hate sin. If for no other reason, the consequences of sin ought to warn us against sinning...look past the pleasure to the pain and learn to say no."

Sheila Walsh says: "I never knew you lived so close to the floor, / But every time I am bowed down, / Crushed by this weight of grief, / I feel your hand on my head, / Your breath on my cheek, / Your tears on my neck. / You never tell me to pull myself together, / To stem the flow of many years. / You simply stay by my side / For as long as it takes, / So close to the floor." (*God's Most Precious Jewels are Crystallized Tears*, Barbara Johnson, 162).

**Verse 7:** "My back is filled with searing pain; there is no health in my body."

Peterson paraphrases verse 7: "All my insides are on fire, my body is a wreck."

Let's sing verse 3 of "**Lord, I'm Coming Home**": *"I've tired of sin and*

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*straying, Lord, Now I'm coming home; I'll trust Thy love, believe Thy word, Lord, I'm coming home. Coming home, coming home, Never more to roam, Open wide Thine arms of love, Lord, I'm coming home."*

**November 18 —I Am Emotionally Drained (Ps. 38:8-9)**

**Psalm 38:8:** *"I am feeble and utterly crushed; I groan in anguish of heart."*

**Psalm 38:9:** *"All my longings lie open before you, O Lord; my sighing is not hidden from you."*

**Verse 8:** "I am feeble and utterly crushed; I groan in anguish of heart."

Peterson paraphrases verse 8: "I'm on my last legs; I've had it—my life is a vomit of groans."

When Leonardo da Vinci was painting his masterpiece, *The Last Supper*, he selected as the person to sit for the character of the Christ a young man, Pietri Bandinelli, by name, connected with the Milan Cathedral as chorister. Years passed before the great picture was completed, and when one character only—that of Judas Iscariot—was wanting, the great painter noticed a man in the streets of Rome whom he selected as his model. With shoulders far bent toward the ground, having an expression of cold, hardened, evil, saturnine, the man seemed to afford the opportunities of a model terribly true to the artist's conception of Judas...[The candidate said to the artist] "Maestro, I was in this studio twenty-five years ago. I, then, sat for Christ." (*Illustrations Unlimited*, James S. Hewett, 454)

I saw a bumper sticker the other day that had the word "Sad" on it and it caught my attention. S=Suicide. A=Alcohol. D=Drugs. Yes, those truly are instruments to bring sadness into our lives.

**Verse 9:** "All my longings lie open before you, O Lord; my sighing is not hidden from you."

David, here in verse 9, is focusing on 2 things: (1) "my longings" and (2) "my sighing."

Lord, I don't need to keep on telling You my heart because You already know how I feel and what I want.

Romans 8:26-27: "And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God" (NASB).

Let's sing verse 4 of **"Lord, I'm Coming Home"**: *"My soul is sick, my heart is sore, Now I'm coming home; My strength renew, my hope restore, Lord, I'm coming home. Coming home, coming home, Never more to roam, Open wide Thine arms of love, Lord, I'm coming home."*

**November 19 — Sin Brings With It Lost Friendships (Ps. 38:10-12)**

**Psalm 38:10:** *"My heart pounds, my strength fails me; even the light has gone from my eyes."*



**Psalm 38:11:** *“My friends and companions avoid me because of my wounds; my neighbors stay far away.”*

**Psalm 38:12:** *“Those who seek my life set their traps, those who would harm me talk of my ruin; all day long they plot deception.”*

**Verse 10:** “My heart pounds, my strength fails me; even the light has gone from my eyes.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 10: “My heart’s about to break; I’m a burned-out case. Cataracts blind me to God and good.”

Isaiah 42:3: “A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice” (NIV).

There are 3 things David says here: (1) I’m suffering from an irregular heartbeat;

(2) I’m feeling terribly weak; and (3) “the light has gone from my eyes.” Isaiah 44:20: “He feeds on ashes, a deluded heart misleads him; he cannot save himself, or say, ‘Is not this thing in my right hand a lie?’” (NIV) **Verse 11:** “My friends and companions avoid me because of my wounds; my neighbors stay far away.”

David is describing himself as being lonely and despondent.

Peterson paraphrases this verse: “old friends avoid me like the plague. My cousins never visit, my neighbors stab me in the back.”

Don Wytzen offers this prayer: “I cry to You, Lord, out of my deep loneliness and despair. Please come to me, minister to me, and fully meet my need!”

**Verse 12:** “Those who seek my life set their traps, those who would harm me talk of my ruin; all day long they plot deception.”

Keil and Delitzsch say: “His enemies, however, endeavour to take advantage of his fall and helplessness, in order to give him his final death-blow.”

There are 3 things that his enemies are doing to him at this time: (1) they are setting their traps in order to catch him in some public inconsistency; (2) they talk of his ruin; and (3) “all day long they plot deception” to accomplish their purpose.

Peterson paraphrases it: “My competitors blacken my name, devoutly they pray for my ruin.”

Randy Alcorn says: “Satan is the master of extremes, and he cares little which side of the horse we fall off. He cares only that we don’t stay in the saddle.” (*Money, Possessions and Eternity*, 39)

Let’s sing together the first verse of **“What a Friend We Have in Jesus”**:  
*“What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear! What a privilege to carry Ev’rything to God in prayer! O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear, All because we do not carry Ev’rything to God in prayer!”*

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## November 20 — Thanksgiving (Donna)

My husband Mark chose Habakkuk 3:17-19 as the scripture for his sermon. The title of his sermon was: “No Matter What Happens, I Will Rejoice In The God Of My Salvation.” Read this passage of scripture and notice the word “Though.”

Habakkuk 3:17-18: “Though the fig tree should not blossom and there be no fruit on the vines, Though the yield of the olive should fail and the fields produce no food, Though the flock should be cut off from the fold and there be no cattle in the stalls, Yet I will exult in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.”

Habakkuk is saying even **THOUGH** a difficulty may be in my life...I will still exult in the Lord. Habakkuk realized our thanksgiving to God is not to be dependent upon our circumstances. God is God.

He used this prayer at the conclusion of his sermon. It spoke to me so powerfully. I have kept a copy in my Bible at Habakkuk 3. In our day and time with so much uncertainty surrounding us, this thanksgiving prayer is even more applicable in 2011. I pray it will speak to your heart. **Mark’s Thanksgiving Prayer (inspired by Habakkuk 3:17-18)**

Lord, even if we were invaded by a foreign country, we still could say thank You, because You are the King of the universe.

Lord, even if we had to struggle to get enough food, we still could say thank You, because You are the Bread of life.

Lord, even if our land changed, our lakes dried up, our mountains turned to dust, we still could say thank You, because our satisfaction is found in You, not in our surroundings.

Lord, even if we suffer financial loss, we still can say thank You, because our joy is not in our abundance of things, but our abundance of You.

Lord, even if we lose a friend or loved one to death, we still can say thank You, because death has not conquered us, You have conquered death.

Lord, even if our families are not all they should be, we still can say thank You because You are our peace.

Lord, even if our health fails, we still can say thank You, because You have our lives in Your control. Nothing can happen that You don’t allow.

May you have a thanksgiving filled Thanksgiving even **THOUGH...** (Guest contributor, Donna Anderson Skorheim)

## November 21 — My Hearing and Speaking Have Been Affected (Ps. 38:13-14)

**Psalm 38:13:** *“I am like a deaf man, who cannot hear, like a mute, who cannot open his mouth;”*

**Psalm 38:14:** *“I have become like a man who does not hear, whose mouth can offer no reply.”*

**Verse 13:** *“I am like a deaf man, who cannot hear, like a mute, who cannot open his mouth;”*

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Peterson paraphrases verse 13: “But I’m deaf and mute to it all, ears shut, mouth shut.”

He can’t hear and he can’t speak, therefore there is no defense.

Hebrews 5:11: “Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing” (NASB).

**Verse 14:** “I have become like a man who does not hear, whose mouth can offer no reply.”

Peterson paraphrases it: “I don’t hear a word they say, don’t speak a word in response.”

Psalms 19:12-14: “How can I know all the sins lurking in my heart? Cleanse me from these hidden faults. Keep me from deliberate sins! Don’t let them control me. Then I will be free of guilt and innocent of great sin. May the words of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart be pleasing to you, O Lord my rock and my redeemer” (NLT).

Lord, give me ears to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches and a mouth that has been freed to proclaim the glories of our wonderful Savior!

Let’s sing verse 2 of **“What a Friend We Have in Jesus”**: *“Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere? We should never be discouraged, Take it to the Lord in prayer. Can we find a friend so faithful Who will all our sorrows share? Jesus knows our ev’ry weakness, Take it to the Lord in prayer.”*

**November 22 — Lord, I Know You Will Come (Ps. 38:15-16)**

**Psalms 38:15:** *“I wait for you, O Lord; you will answer, O Lord my God.”*

**Psalms 38:16:** *“For I said, ‘Do not let them gloat or exalt themselves over me when my foot slips.’”*

**Verse 15:** “I wait for you, O Lord; you will answer, O Lord my God.”

David says 2 things: “I wait” and “you will answer.”

David does have the ability to restrain himself and not to act prematurely. He is famous for waiting on the Lord. Psalms 27:13-14: “I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord” (NIV).

Psalms 37:5: “Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this” (NIV).

Psalms 37:34: “Wait for the Lord, and keep his way, and he will exalt you to possess the land...” (RSV).

Warren Wiersbe says: “Although God requires that we reap the consequences of our sin, He loves us and wants to restore us to fellowship. Don’t allow Satan to rob you of God’s grace. He forgives, cleanses and restores. Have you stumbled? Confess your sin and repent. He is faithful to forgive.”

Bill Bright said: “‘Humility is perfect quietness of heart,’ Andrew Murray once wrote. ‘It is to expect nothing, to wonder at nothing that is done to me, to feel nothing done against me. It is to be at rest when nobody praises me, and when I am blamed or despised. It is to have a blessed home in the Lord, where I can go in and shut the door, and kneel to my Father in secret, and am at peace

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as in a deep sea of calmness, when all around and above is trouble.” (*Promises*, Day 9)

Bruce Wilkinson said: “Be prepared to follow your Lord through loneliness, homelessness, the rupture of tender ties, and the plowing of a solitary furrow. But keep your eye fixed on the eternal side of your life!” (*Closer Walk*, 80)

Elisabeth Elliot said: “Waiting is a form of suffering—the difficulty of self-restraint, the anguish of unfulfilled longing, the bewilderment of unanswered prayer, flesh and heart failing, soul breaking. These are indeed tribulations, and tribulation is the curriculum if we are to learn patience. We want answers now, right now, but we are required at times to walk in darkness.” (*Taking Flight*, 62-63)

Psalm 62:5-6: “Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken” (NIV).

Fénelon said: “Happy are they who give themselves to God! They are delivered from their passions, from the judgments of others, from their malice, from the tyranny of their sayings, from their cold and wretched mocking, from the misfortunes which the world distributes to wealth, from the unfaithfulness and inconstancy of friends, from the wiles and snares of the enemy, from our own weakness, from the misfortunes and brevity of life, from the horrors of a profane death, from cruel remorse attached to wicked pleasures, and in the end, from the eternal condemnation of God.” (*Devotional Classics*, 46)

**Verse 16:** “For I said, ‘Do not let them gloat or exalt themselves over me when my foot slips.’”

Peterson paraphrases verse 16: “I wait and pray so they won’t laugh me off, won’t smugly strut off when I stumble.”

We titled our meditation “Lord, I Know You Will Come.” Because of the Lord’s answer and His unconditional love, David can now say “Lord, I Knew You Would Come!”

Let’s sing together verse 3 of “**What a Friend We Have in Jesus**”: “*Are we weak and heavy laden, Cumbered with a load of care? Precious Savior, still our refuge Take it to the Lord in prayer. Do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer; In His arms He’ll take and shield thee, Thou wilt find a solace there.*”

## **November 23 — Lord, It Really Hurts (Ps. 38:17-18)**

**Psalm 38:17:** “*For I am about to fall, and my pain is ever with me.*”

**Psalm 38:18:** “*I confess my iniquity; I am troubled by my sin.*”

**Verse 17:** “For I am about to fall, and my pain is ever with me.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 17: “I’m on the edge of losing it—the pain in my gut keeps burning.”

Warren Wiersbe says: “David was ready to quit. David, the great conqueror and disciplined soldier, the one who killed Goliath, was ready to quit. He had sinned against the Lord, and he was suffering for it. Even his friends were

against him. Let's learn some lessons from David to avoid his experience."

It has been said, "A conscience is like a thermostat on an air conditioning unit—it kicks in when things are on the verge of getting too hot." (*God's Little Daily Devotional*, 347)

E. V. Hill says: "If God is God, men ought not to be able to run His red lights or ignore His stop signs." (*A Savior Worth Having*, 67)

**Verse 18:** "I confess my iniquity; I am troubled by my sin."

Peterson paraphrases verse 18: "I'm ready to tell my story of failure, I'm no longer smug in my sin."

Psalms 32:1-2: "Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit."

Psalms 51:2: "Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin."

Chip Ingram asks these questions: (1) Am I rightly related to God? (2) Am I

prepared to die? (3) Am I taking sin seriously? (4) Am I spending or investing my life?

(5) Am I experiencing the joy of the Lord? (6) Am I impacting my world for good? William Plumer says: "Good resolutions are good things... When kept, they lead to the highest attainments men ever make." (*Psalms*, 468) Wyrzten prays: "Heavenly Father, I confess my sin before You today. Bind my wandering heart to You. Amen." (*A Musician Looks at the Psalms*, 108)

Bishop Lancelot Andrewes prays: "Alas, wretched man that I am, I have sinned, o Lord, against Thee: much and grievously have I sinned, and that by observing lying vanities: and it profited me not. I hide not anything: I make no excuses: I give Thee glory, O Lord, this day: I acknowledge against myself my sins: indeed it is I that have sinned against the Lord..." (*The Preces Privatae of Lancelot Andrewes*, 34)

Let's sing a verse of Fanny J. Crosby's great hymn "**Jesus Is Calling**":  
"Jesus is tenderly calling thee home, Calling today, calling today; Why from the sunshine of love wilt thou roam Farther and farther away? Calling today, Calling today, Jesus is calling, Is tenderly calling today."

## November 24 — My Enemies Are Many (Ps. 38:19-20)

**Psalms 38:19:** "Many are those who are my vigorous enemies; those who hate me without reason are numerous."

**Psalms 38:20:** "Those who repay my good with evil slander me when I pursue what is good."

**Verse 19:** "Many are those who are my vigorous enemies; those who hate me without reason are numerous."

Peterson paraphrases verse 19: "My enemies are alive and in action, a lynch mob after my neck."

Jerry White says: "Although we desperately long for a lasting peace in the

world, we see that it will never come in a material or international sense. Peace on this earth, in this war-torn world, will come only with the return of Christ at the end of the age. At this point I can't resist a quote about world peace: 'Peace is the brief glorious moment in history when everybody stands around reloading.'" (*Making Peace With Reality*, 111. Quote Lloyd Cory, *Quote, Unquote*, 332)

Mark Lowry says: "God doesn't need any of us; He chooses to work through us. And when Bill Gaither goes to glory, God will raise someone else up. When Billy Graham takes his flight, God will raise someone else up. And when I'm gone...there'll be a moment of silence. My family and friends have earned it." (*Live Long and Die Laughing*, 80)

John 15:18-19: "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you" (NASB).

Matthew 5:11-12: "Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (NASB).

Max Lucado describes Jesus' enemies: "Or that he resisted the urge to fry the two-bit, self-appointed hall monitors of holiness who dared suggest that he was doing the work of the devil. Not that he kept his cool while the dozen best friends he ever had felt the heat and got out of the kitchen. Or that he gave no command to the angels who begged, 'Just give the nod, Lord. One word and these demons will be deviled eggs.'" (*He Chose the Nails*, 27)

The Lord walked right through it all to Calvary, death and the resurrection!

**Verse 20:** "Those who repay my good with evil slander me when I pursue what is good."

Peterson paraphrases verse 20: "I give out good and get back evil from God-haters who can't stand a God-lover."

Jerry White quotes a song from Dan Foster, "There's a Reason": "The words of a song express it well: *'Why do new waves of trouble keep pounding around me before yesterday's waves ebb away?'*" (*Making Peace With Reality*, 95)

"When critics get together, / As the critics often do, / To discuss the whys and wherefores / Of the plan you're putting through; / When they've twisted it and torn it, / And have done the worst they can, / Just stop and ask them sweetly, / 'Do you have a better plan?'" (*Inspiring Quotations*, 100)

Let's sing verse 2 of "**Jesus Is Calling**": "*Jesus is calling the weary to rest, Calling today, calling today; Bring Him thy burden and thou shalt be blest; He will not turn thee away. Calling today, Calling today, Jesus is calling, Is tenderly calling today.*"

**November 25 — Lord, I Need You Now (Ps. 38:21-22)**



**Psalm 38:21:** “O Lord, do not forsake me; be not far from me, O my God.”

**Psalm 38:22:** “Come quickly to help me, O Lord my Savior.”

**Verse 21:** “O Lord, do not forsake me; be not far from me, O my God.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 21: “Don’t dump me, God; my God, don’t stand me up.”

This is the fifth of 6 times that we have the emotional outburst “O Lord.”

We see this statement in: (1) “O Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger”—verse 1;

(2) “O Lord, my sighing is not hidden from you”—verse 9; (3) “I wait for you, O Lord”—verse 15; (4) “you will answer, O Lord my God”—verse 15; and now (5) “O Lord, do not forsake me”—verse 21. There will be a sixth and final usage: “O Lord, my Savior”—verse 22.

“O Lord” there are 2 things I am asking of You: (1) “do not forsake me” and (2) “be not far from me.”

Deuteronomy 31:8: “The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged” (NIV).

Hebrews 13:5b-6: “‘I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,’ so that we confidently say, ‘The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?’” (NASB).

I would also include verse 8: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever” (NASB).

He has promised us His presence.

In Exodus 33:14 the Lord said to Moses: “The Lord replied, ‘My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest’” (NIV).

Isaiah 41:10: “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” (NIV).

Chip Ingram says: “When I get really close to God, what I find is that I’m not doing anywhere near as well as I thought I was doing. I find motives in me that are just so ugly, so arrogant. When I draw near to God and I have special times with Him and see who He really is, I realize that I’m about as indispensable as mud. Your life and my life are just like a wink. The world was going on before we came, and it’s going to be zooming on after we leave” (*Holy Ambition*, 74-75)

Harry Ironside says: The secret of  
holiness is heart-occupation with  
Christ. As we gaze upon Him, we  
become more and more like Him.

Do you want to be holy? Spend much time in His presence. Let the loveliness of the risen Lord so fill the vision of your soul that all else is shut out. Then the things of the flesh will shrivel up and disappear and the things of the Spirit will become supreme in your life.

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We do not become holy by looking into our own hearts. There we find only corruption. But as we look away from self altogether, and as we contemplate Jesus' holiness, purity, love, and compassion, His devotion to the Father's will, we shall be transformed into His blessed image.

There is no other way by which we may be delivered from the power of the flesh and of the principles of the world. (Bruce Wilkinson, *Closer Walk*, 220) **Verse 22:** "Come quickly to help me, O Lord my Savior." Peterson paraphrases verse 22: "Hurry up and help me; I want some wide-open space in my life!" In verse 22 we have the

third and final petition from David: (1) "do not forsake me"; (2) "be not far from me"; and now (3) "Come quickly to help me."

The last word is "Savior." You remember the woman at the well spoke of the Savior of the world. We each need a Savior! Isaiah 43:11: "I, even I, am the Lord, and apart from me there is no savior" (NIV).

Before we sing another verse of Fanny Crosby's hymn, let's hear a little bit about her:

Fanny Crosby, the hymnwriter, gave us more than eight thousand gospel songs. Although blinded at the age of six weeks, she never held any bitterness in her heart because of it.

"I think it is a great pity that the Master did not give you sight when He showered so many other gifts upon you," a friend once said to her. "Do you know," she responded quickly, "that if at birth I had been able to make one petition, it would have been that I should be born blind." "Why?" asked the astounded clergyman. "Because," she replied, "when I get to heaven, the first face that shall ever gladden my sight will be that of my Savior." (Bill Bright, *Promises*, Day 72)

Let's sing verse 3 of "**Jesus Is Calling**": "*Jesus is waiting; O come to Him now, Waiting today, waiting today; Come with thy sins; at His feet lowly bow; Come, and no longer delay. Calling today, Calling today, Jesus is calling, Is tenderly calling today.*"

#### **November 26 — In Hot Pursuit (Ps. 56:1-2) Psalm**

**56:1:** "*Be merciful to me, O God, for men hotly pursue me; all day long they press their attack.*"

**Psalm 56:2:** "*My slanderers pursue me all day long; many are attacking me in their pride.*"

Psalm 56 is "The Prayer of the Hunted One." You could call David the fugitive at this point. David is a man on the run, he is in his mid to late 20's and not yet king. He is probably around 24-25 years of age. Saul is jealous and has been in hot pursuit of him. He came so close on numerous occasions.

David fled to the city of Gath in the land of the Philistines when he was sure that Saul and his men were going to capture him. It is while David was in Gath that he wrote this particular Psalm. When you and I fail to trust, we make a big mess!

Before we look at our verses today, let's take a moment to look at background scripture for this particular Psalm. Begin reading in 1 Samuel 21:10 down to 22:1: "That day David fled from Saul and went to Achish king of Gath. But the servants of Achish said to him, 'Isn't this David, the king of the land? Isn't he the one they sing about in their dances: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands"?' David took these words to heart and was very much afraid of Achish king of Gath. So he pretended to be insane in their presence; and while he was in their hands he acted like a madman, making marks on the doors of the gate and letting saliva run down his beard. Achish said to his servants, 'Look at the man! He is insane! Why bring him to me? Am I so short of madmen that you have to bring this fellow here to carry on like this in front of me? Must this man come into my house?' David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and his father's household heard about it, they went down to him there" (NIV).

Psalm 34:15 would be a good verse for us to begin our meditation: "The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their cry" (NIV).

**Verse 1:** "Be merciful to me, O God, for men hotly pursue me; all day long they press their attack."

The plea of David at this point is: "Be merciful to me, O God." He then states the reason for his plea: "for men hotly pursue me; all day long they press their attack." They "pursue" and "they press their attack." It is obviously a very stressful and serious situation that David finds himself in.

We need to understand that the wrath the Philistines felt against David had to do with the fact David had killed their champion, Goliath, who was from Gath.

B. C. Forbes said: "History has demonstrated that the most notable winners usually encountered heartbreaking obstacles before they triumphed." **Verse 2:** "My slanderers pursue me all day long; many are attacking me in their pride."

They "pursue," they "attack," and they do it "all day long."

Let's sing a verse of "**Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me**": "*Jesus, Savior pilot me Over life's*

*tempestuous sea; Unknown waves before me roll, Hiding rocks and treach'rous shoal; Chart and compass come from Thee, Jesus, Savior, pilot me!*"

## November 27 — Everlasting Life (Pearl)

Just as doctors teach of physical wellness to prevent death, John the Baptist preached a message of repentance for everlasting life.

Repentance means to change one's mind and attitude about God. Those who

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repent and accept Christ's provision of forgiveness from their sins, through His death on the cross, will escape spiritual death. (See John 3:16)

Repentance involves confessing and then forsaking sin. (*Our Daily Bread*, Feb. 17, 2011, paraphrased)

"Prove by the way you live that you have really turned from your sins and turned to God" (Matt. 3:8 NLT).

There is something very wrong if we can be comfortable around drunkenness, cursing, lewdness and other degrading (sinful) activities.

"Beware of the pleasant view of the fatherhood of God: God is so kind and loving that of course He will forgive us" (Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost For His Highest*, Nov. 20)

If you get a good dose of what it cost your Heavenly Father and your Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, it will break your heart to realize the disappointment and shame you have heaped upon them. If you are truly repentant you would rather die than disappoint them again!

Repent, confess, or whatever is needed, and get back to "the way" (John 14:6) without delay or quibbling. No excuses. Just do it!

#### **November 28 — In God I Trust (Ps. 56:3-4)**

**Psalm 56:3:** "*When I am afraid, I will trust in you.*"

**Psalm 56:4:** "*In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me?*"

**Verse 3:** "When I am afraid, I will trust in you."

What we have now is the statement of David's principle of operation.

Peterson paraphrases verse 3: "When I get really afraid I come to you in trust."

Oswald Chambers said: "Unbelief is the most active thing on earth; it is a fretful, worrying, questioning, annoying, self-centered spirit. To believe is to stop all this and let God work. Put all 'supposing' on one side and dwell in the shadow of the Almighty. Deliberately tell God that you will not fret about that thing. All our fret and worry is caused by calculating without God." (*In the Presence of His Majesty*)

David Jeremiah says: "Fear has been described as a small trickle of doubt that flows through the mind until it wears such a great channel that all your thoughts drain into it. Tiny fears, almost unperceived, can build up day by day until we find ourselves paralyzed and unable to function. And there are so many varieties. Craig Massey details six general categories that most of us face: poverty, criticism, loss of love, illness, old age, and death." (*Slaying the Giants in Your Life*, 4)

Warren Wiersbe says: "When the outlook is bleak, try the uplook. Apart from God's promises, we have no hope. As Vance Havner used to say, 'Faith sees the invisible, chooses the imperishable, and does the impossible.' Our work today is a part of God's work in the future, and we want to do our best." (*Be Quoted*, 120)

Corrie ten Boom said: "Faith sees the invisible, believes the unbelievable and receives the impossible."

**Verse 4:** "In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me?"

David the fugitive makes this declaration of purpose which is 3-fold: (1) "I praise"; (2) "I trust"; and (3) "I will not be afraid."

Ron Mehl says: "Listening to God is very, very important, because otherwise you're going to turn around someday and discover that what you love most is gone—consumed in the night while you were asleep and unaware." (*A Prayer That Moves Heaven*, 66)

Lancelot Andrewes said: "Let the power of the Father shepherd me: the wisdom of the Son enlighten me: the operation of the Spirit quicken me." (103)

Our big responsibility is to listen to what He says.

Philippians 4:13: "I am ready for anything through the strength of the one who indwells me."

Let's sing verse 2 of "**Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me**": "*As a mother stills her child, Thou canst hush the ocean wild; Boist'rous waves obey Thy will When Thou say'st to them, 'Be still! Wondrous Sov'reign of the sea, Jesus, Savior, pilot me!'*"

## November 29 — Their Motivation is Murder (Ps. 56:5-7)

**Psalm 56:5:** "*All day long they twist my words; they are always plotting to harm me.*"

**Psalm 56:6:** "*They conspire, they lurk, they watch my steps, eager to take my life.*"

**Psalm 56:7:** "*On no account let them escape; in your anger, O God, bring down the nations.*"

**Verse 5:** "All day long they twist my words; they are always plotting to harm me."

We had a great moment of victory in verse 4 when the psalmist had his eyes upon the Lord. His determination is: (1) "I praise"; (2) "I trust"; and (3) "I will not be afraid." Now he has his eyes off the Lord again and back on the circumstances that surround him. He uses the words "All day long" again for the third time.

Back in verse 1: "all day long they press their attack." In verse 2: "all day long; many are attacking me in their pride." Now in verse 5: "All day long they twist my words."

The enemy is involved in 2 things: (1) "twist[ing] my words" and (2) "plotting to harm me."

**Verse 6:** "They conspire, they lurk, they watch my steps, eager to take my life."

Whereas in verse 5 he describes them as "twist[ing] my words" and "plotting to harm me." Now the key words in verse 6 are: "conspire,"

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“lurk,” and “watch.”

The reason for doing these 5 things is because they are “eager to take my life.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 6: “They gang up, sneak together through the alleys To take me by surprise, wait their chance to get me.”

**Verse 7:** “On no account let them escape; in your anger, O God, bring down the nations.”

In essence David is saying here for God to take action against these that pursue him.

David in essence is saying, “Lord, please be consistent in Your judgment of these enemies of mine.”

Genesis 18:25: “...Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?” (NIV).

Lord, let the enemy experience the bitter fruitage of rebellion against Your servant and Your purpose.

Let’s sing verse 3 of “**Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me**”: “*When at last I near the shore, And the fearful breakers roar ‘Twixt me and the peaceful rest Then, while leaning on Thy breast, May I hear Thee say to me, ‘Fear not, I will pilot thee!’*”

**November 30 — Record My Lament, List My Tears (Ps. 56:8-9)**

**Psalm 56:8:** “*Record my lament; list my tears on your scroll—are they not in your record?*”

**Psalm 56:9:** “*Then my enemies will turn back when I call for help. By this I will know that God is for me.*”

**Verse 8:** “Record my lament; list my tears on your scroll—are they not in your record?”

Peterson paraphrases verse 8: “You’ve kept track of my every toss and turn through the sleepless nights, Each tear entered in your ledger, each ache written in your book.”

This is a double request: (1) “Record my lament” and (2) “list my tears on your scroll.” He concludes verse 8 with a question: “are they not in your record?”

Question #1 in the passage is back in verse 4: “What can mortal man do to me?” Now, question #2 is in verse 8: “are they not in your record?”

Then we have a repetition down in verse 11 with question #3: “What can man do to me?”

Psalm 126:5-6: “Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him” (NIV).

Warren Wiersbe says: “God knows your difficulties and sorrows. The day is coming when your sorrow will be turned to joy, and your tears will glorify Him.”

1 Peter 5:7: “casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you” (NASB).

**Verse 9:** “Then my enemies will turn back when I call for help. By this I



will know that God is for me.”

David begins this verse with the word “Then” which points us back to verse 8: his “lament” and the listing of his “tears.” Being aware that the Lord has done this because David is precious in His sight, He knows then that the Lord is on his side and his “enemies will turn back when [David calls] for help.” He says: “By this I will know that God is for me.”

Romans 8:31: “What then shall we say of these things? If God is for us, who is against us?” (NASB).

If God is against us, it really doesn’t matter who is for us.

Warren Wiersbe says: “Although everything may seem stacked against you, God is on your side. He knows who you are, where you are and what you’re up against. He will protect you and deliver you.”

“By this I will know that God is for me.” Knowing this, there will be no turning back!

Let’s sing a few verses of **“I Have Decided to Follow Jesus”**: *“I have decided to follow Jesus, I have decided to follow Jesus, I have decided to follow Jesus, No turning back, no turning back. The world behind me, the cross before me; The world behind me, the cross before me; The world behind me, the cross before me, No turning back; no turning back. Tho’ none go with me, I still will follow, Tho’ none go with me, I still will follow, Tho’ none go with me, I still will follow, No turning back, no turning back.”*

## **December 1 — Lord, I Take You at Your Word (Ps. 56:10-11)**

**Psalm 56:10:** *“In God, whose word I praise, in the Lord, whose word I praise—”*

**Psalm 56:11:** *“in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?”*

**Verse 10:** “In God, whose word I praise, in the Lord, whose word I praise—”

Peterson paraphrases verse 10: “I’m proud to praise God, proud to praise God.”

James Boice says: “There is another aspect to David’s confidence in God—it is also based upon the Word of God...“whose word I praise” occurs three times.”

The first one back in verse 4 and the second and third in verse 10.

Jeremiah 15:16: “When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart’s delight, for I bear your name, O Lord God Almighty” (NIV).

Psalm 19:7-11: “The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the Lord are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there

is great reward” (NIV).

Psalm 119:165: “Great peace have they who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble” (NIV).

Hebrews 6:19: “This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil” (NASB).

That anchor is God’s Word. Our anchor goes heavenward. It is anchored in God and His Word.

**Verse 11:** “in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?”

Here, once again, we have the statement which was recorded back in verse 4 with a different word in the Hebrew for “man.”

We read in verse 4: “in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me?”

Here we read: “in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?”

In verse 10 David said: “I praise.” Here in verse 11 he says: “I trust” and “I will not be afraid.”

Lord, I’ll trust You even though the cancer has spread. Even though I’m dying. Even though the election doesn’t turn out the way I wanted it. Even though the divorce is final. Even though my dreams are crushed. Even though I fall flat on my face. Lord, my trust is complete and unconditional.

David’s plan is clear then: “I praise,” “I trust,” and “I will not be afraid.”

Matthew 10:28: “And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (NASB).

Let’s sing a verse of “**Sweet By and By**”: *“There’s a land that is fairer than day, And by faith we can see it afar; For the Father waits over the way, To prepare us a dwelling place there. In the sweet by and by, We shall meet on that beautiful shore. In the sweet by and by, We shall meet on that beautiful shore.”*

## December 2 — Lord, You Came Through For Me (Ps. 56:12-13)

**Psalm 56:12:** “*I am under vows to you, O God; I will present my thank offerings to you.*”

**Psalm 56:13:** “*For you have delivered me from death and my feet from stumbling, that I may walk before God in the light of life.*”

**Verse 12:** “I am under vows to you, O God; I will present my thank offerings to you.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 12: “God, you did everything you promised, and I’m thanking you with all my heart.”

C. H. Spurgeon said: “Vows made in his trouble he does not lightly forget, nor should we. We voluntarily made them, let us cheerfully keep them.” I can just hear David saying, “God, if You will get me out of Gath, I’ll follow and serve You the rest of my life!” “He who would be great must be fervent in his prayers, fearless in his principles, firm in his purposes, and faithful in his

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promises.” (14,000 Quips and Quotes, 220) **Verse 13:** “For you have delivered me from death and my feet from stumbling, that I may walk before God in the light of life.”

In verse 13 we now have the reason David will present his “thank offerings” to the Lord. The reason is 2-fold. “For you have”: (1) “delivered me from death” and (2) “delivered...my feet from stumbling.”

The purpose is then stated in the latter phrase of the verse: “that I may walk before God in the light of life.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 13: “You pulled me from the brink of death, my feet from the cliff-edge of doom. Now I stroll at leisure with God in the sunlit fields of life.”

I find myself praying every morning as I conclude my time with the Lord: “Lord, keep me on task, on track and out of Satan’s traps.”

Don Wyrzten says: “Though under severe stress, David is a real model for me. He places his complete trust in the Lord and in His Word. He is so confident of deliverance that he speaks in the past tense: ‘You have delivered my soul from death and my feet from stumbling’ (v. 13). David wasn’t victimized by his circumstances. He didn’t let pressure overwhelm him. His conscious choice made all the difference. He chose to praise the Lord and to trust His supernatural powers of protection. David’s decision drove away his fear and enabled him to see his deliverance as an accomplished fact.”

There are 2 reasons for David’s “thank offerings” recorded in verse 13: (1) “you have delivered me from death” and (2) “you have delivered...my feet from stumbling.”

Jude 24-25: “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen” (NIV).

The purpose behind all this is seen in the last phrase: “that I may walk before God in the light of life.”

Psalms 68:19: “Praise the Lord, praise God our savior! For each day he carries us in his arms” (NLT).

Isaiah 40:11: “He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young” (NIV).

Proverbs 4:18: “The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day” (NIV).

Wyrzten prays: “Father, I am moved, not only by Your vigilant protection, but by Your tenderness. Not a whisper goes unheard! What can I do but praise Your Name?”

Let’s sing verses 2 and 3 of **“Sweet By and By”**: *“We shall sing on that beautiful shore The melodious songs of the blest, And our spirits shall sorrow no more, Not a sigh for the blessing of rest. To our bountiful Father above We*

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*will offer our tribute of praise, For the glorious gift of His love And the blessings that hallow our days. In the sweet by and by, We shall meet on that beautiful shore. In the sweet by and by, We shall meet on that beautiful shore."*

### **December 3 — Joy to the World! (Ps. 66:1-2)**

**Psalm 66:1:** *"Shout with joy to God, all the earth!"*

**Psalm 66:2:** *"Sing the glory of his name; make his praise glorious!"*

When David writes Psalm 66 he is in his late 40's. He has been a king for 15-20 years. He's experienced a great string of military victories. Jerusalem has become the capital city. The Ark is there and he is living in his palace.

C. H. Spurgeon said: "Praise is the topic, and the subjects for song are the Lord's great works, his gracious benefits, his faithful deliverances, and all his dealings with his people..."

**Verse 1:** "Shout with joy to God, all the earth!"

Peterson paraphrases verse 1: "All together now—applause for God!"

When good things happen, we turn up the volume of praise!

"It is high time we start making happy noises about God, that we boldly proclaim

His name and shout His praises." (Brandt) In these first verses, there are 3 commands: (1) "Shout with joy to God"—verse 1;

(2) "Sing the glory of his name"—verse 2; and (3) "Say to God"—verse 3. We are commanded to "shout," "sing," and "say." I am reminded of verse 4 of "Joy to the World": *"He rules the world with truth and*

*grace, And makes the nations prove. The glories of His righteousness, And wonders of His love."*

Erwin Lutzer said: "If we haven't learned to be worshipers, it doesn't really matter how well we do anything else."

**Verse 2:** "Sing the glory of his name; make his praise glorious!"

Whereas in verse 1 we had the first command "Shout with joy to God, all the earth," here in verse 2 we have the second command: "Sing the glory of his name."

F. B. Meyer said: "Make His praise glorious!—We should make our praise as worthy of its object as possible. Praise Him with a glorious hymn!"

A. W. Tozer said: "More spiritual progress can be made in one short moment of speechless silence in the awesome presence of God than in years of mere study."

Let's sing a verse of **"Springs of Living Water"**: *"I thirsted in the barren land of sin and shame, And nothing satisfying there I found; But to the blessed cross of Christ one day I came, Where springs of living water did abound. Drinking at the springs of living water, Happy now am I, My soul they satisfy; Drinking at the springs of living water, O wonderful and bountiful supply."*

### **December 4 — God Does It His Way (Pearl)**

“In this way, God disarmed the evil rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross of Christ” (Col. 2:15 NLT).

“I pray that you will begin to understand the incredible greatness of his power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God’s right hand in the heavenly realms” (Eph. 1:19-20 NLT).

“If a prophet does not acknowledge Jesus, that person is not from God...” (1 John

4:3 NLT). Jesus is not bound by our limitations or expectations. He speaks and acts with authority and wisdom beyond ours. “We gain the victory when we give up sin’s pleasure in exchange for Christ’s power.” (*Our Daily Bread*, November 10, 2010)

“We encounter difficulties when we try to usurp the authority of the Holy Spirit for our own purposes.” (Chambers, *My Utmost For His Highest*, Dec. 14)

#### **December 5 — How Awesome Are Your Deeds! (Ps. 66:3-4)**

**Psalm 66:3:** “*Say to God, ‘How awesome are your deeds! So great is your power that your enemies cringe before you.’*”

**Psalm 66:4:** “*All the earth bows down to you; they sing praise to you, they sing praise to your name.’ Selah*”

**Verse 3:** “Say to God, ‘How awesome are your deeds! So great is your power that your enemies cringe before you.’”

I think it would be good at this point for us to meditate upon 3 other passages of scripture in the Psalms that can touch our hearts with regard to our warm and wonderful worship of our Lord and Savior.

Psalm 57:5: “Be exalted, O God, above the highest heavens! May your glory shine over all the earth” (NLT).

Psalm 44:8: “O God, we give glory to you all day long and constantly praise your name” (NLT).

Psalm 28:7: “The Lord is my strength, my shield from every danger. I trust in him with all my heart. He helps me, and my heart is filled with joy I burst out in songs of thanksgiving” (NLT).

**Verse 4:** “All the earth bows down to you; they sing praise to you, they sing praise to your name.’ Selah”

Back in verse 1 we had “all the earth.” Now in verse 4 we have mentioned one again “All the earth.”

The picture here is of the future of the Davidic kingdom when David’s greater Son, Jesus Christ, rules and reigns in His millennial kingdom.

It’s time for the Hallelujah chorus!

There are 3 things in verse 4 that we need to think about: (1) “All the earth bows down to you”; (2) “they sing praise to you”; and (3) “they sing praise to

your name.”

Philippians 2 tells us that “every knee shall bow...and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (2:10-11 NASB).

C. S. Lewis said: “A man can no more diminish God’s glory by refusing to worship him than a lunatic can put out the sun by scribbling the word darkness on the walls of his cell.”

Let’s sing verse 2 of “**Springs of Living Water**”: “*How sweet the living water from the hills of God, It makes me glad and happy all the way; Now glory, grace and blessing mark the path I’ve trod, I’m shoutin’ Hallelujah’ ev’ry day. Drinking at the springs of living water, Happy now am I, My soul they satisfy; Drinking at the springs of living water, O wonderful and bountiful supply.*”

**December 6 — Come and See! (Ps. 66:5-7) Psalm 66:5: “Come and see what God has done, how awesome his works in man’s behalf!”**

**Psalm 66:6: “He turned the sea into dry land, they passed through the waters on foot—come, let us rejoice in him.”**

**Psalm 66:7: “He rules forever by his power, his eyes watch the nations—let not the rebellious rise up against him. Selah”**

**Verse 5:** “Come and see what God has done, how awesome his works in man’s behalf!”

Peterson paraphrases verse 5: “Take a good look at God’s wonders—they’ll take your breath away.”

Don Wytzen says: “‘Come and see what God has done,’ exhorts the psalmist. Israel is encouraged to remember past victories and to join in a song of deliverance. Strong verbs signal the personal involvement of surrounding nations: ‘Shout for joy!’ ‘Sing to the glory of his name!’ ‘Make his praise glorious!’”

Joni Eareckson Tada says: “A sacrifice of praise will always cost you something. It will be a difficult thing to do. It requires trading in our pride, our anger, and most valued of all, our human logic. We will be compelled to voice our words of praise firmly and precisely, even as our logic screams that God has no idea what he’s doing. Most of the verses written about praise in God’s Word were penned by men and women who faced crushed heartaches, injustice, treachery, slander, and scores of other intolerable situations.”

“Come and see what God has done, how awesome his works in man’s behalf!”

I feel like stopping and singing that great old spiritual “Were You There?”: “*Were you there when they crucified my Lord?... Were you there when they nailed Him to the tree?... Were you there when they pierced Him in the side?... Were you there when they laid Him in the tomb?... Were you there when He rose up from the dead? Oh! Sometimes I feel like shouting glory, glory, glory! Were you there when He rose up from the dead?*”



Yes indeed! He is our Redeemer and King!

**Verse 6:** “He turned the sea into dry land, they passed through the waters on foot— come, let us rejoice in him.”

Don Wyrzten says: “Israel has reason to rejoice. God has performed ‘awesome works’—the parting of the Red Sea, the routing of rebels and the overthrow of dangerous enemies, the provision of His presence in times of severe testing and trial.”

Whereas the invitation in verse 5 was “Come and see what God has done,” now verse 6 concludes with “come, let us rejoice in him.”

**Verse 7:** “He rules forever by his power, his eyes watch the nations—let not the rebellious rise up against him. Selah”

In this verse the Psalmist reminds us of 2 things: (1) His authority and (2) His awareness.

This is the second occurrence of the word “Selah” that concludes verse 7.

His authority—“He rules forever by his power.” His awareness—“his eyes watch the nations.”

“Let not the rebellious rise up against him.”

Warren Wiersbe says: “Have you lost your song of praise? Come and see the works of God; it will restore your song. His works reveal His greatness and His love. If you are walking with the Lord, praise Him and tell others what He is doing in your life.”

Brennan Manning in his book *The Wisdom of Tenderness* says: “God is God. The Holy One isn’t to be commanded, controlled, manipulated, or exploited.” (155)

The last phrase “let not the rebellious rise up against him” reminds me of the Lord’s words to Job: “If you lay a hand on him, you will remember the struggle and never do it again!” (Job 41:8 NIV).

Hebrews 10:31: “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (NASB).

Let’s sing verse 3 of “**Springs of Living Water**”: “*O sinner, won’t you come today to Calvary, A fountain there is flowing deep and wide; The Saviour now invites you to the water free, Where thirsting spirits can be satisfied. Drinking at the springs of living water, Happy now am I, My soul they satisfy; Drinking at the springs of living water, O wonderful and bountiful supply.*”

## **December 7 — God Has Done Great Things (Ps. 66:8-9)**

**Psalm 66:8:** “*Praise our God, O peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard;*”

**Psalm 66:9:** “*he has preserved our lives and kept our feet from slipping.*”

I find myself singing before we even get started with the verses for the morning! “*To God be the glory, great things He hath done!*” Verse 3 says “*Great things He hath taught us, great things He hath done, And great our rejoicing thro’ Jesus the Son; But purer and higher and greater will be Our wonder, our transport, when Jesus we see. Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Let*

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*the earth hear His voice! Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Let the people rejoice! O come to the Father thro' Jesus the Son, And give Him the glory, great things He hath done."*

**Verse 8:** "Praise our God, O peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard,"

In verse 1 it was "all the earth." In verse 4 it was "all the earth." Now here in verse 8 it is "Praise our God, O peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard."

Joseph Addison said: "When all thy mercies, O my God! My rising soul surveys, Transported with the view, I'm lost in wonder, love, and praise."

Erwin Lutzer said: "You don't learn to praise in a day, especially since you may have been complaining for years! New habits take time to develop. But you can begin today, and practice tomorrow, and the next day, until it becomes part of you."

It's easier to tell God what I've done for Him than to thank Him for what He has done for me.

**Verse 9:** "he has preserved our lives and kept our feet from slipping."

The reason the call for praising our God is 2-fold: (1) "he has preserved our lives" and (2) "he has...kept our feet from slipping."

He is speaking here of military victories. Our obligation is to respond in praise for His intervention on the field of battle.

Ron Mehl says: "If you become passive, if you put obedience to the Lord on hold, if you decide to wait for a better or more inspiring day to do what the Lord told you to do, then watch out! Satan will rob you right down to your underwear. One day you will wake up, look around you, and say, 'What happened?' What happened to my faith? What happened to my marriage? What happened to my children? What happened to all of those things that were so precious to me?" (*A Prayer That Moves Heaven*, 75)

Let's sing verse 1 of "**To God Be the Glory**": "*To God be the glory, great things He hath done, So loved He the world that He gave us His Son, Who yielded His life an atonement for sin, And opened the Life-gate that all may go in. Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Let the earth hear His voice! Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Let the people rejoice! O come to the Father thro' Jesus the Son, And give Him the glory, great things He hath done."*

## **December 8 — Tested and Refined By Fire (Ps. 66:10-12)**

**Psalm 66:10:** "*For you, O God, tested us; you refined us like silver.*"

**Psalm 66:11:** "*You brought us into prison and laid burdens on our backs.*"

**Psalm 66:12:** "*You let men ride over our heads; we went through fire and water, but you brought us to a place of abundance.*"

**Verse 10:** "For you, O God, tested us; you refined us like silver."

The reason he has used the words "preserved" and "kept" is because God has: (1) "tested us" and (2) "refined us like silver."

It was Brandt who said: "He walks with us into the crucible of conflict. He tests and tries us in the valley of pain and sorrow."

Isaiah 48:10-11: "See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested

you in the furnace of affliction. For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another” (NIV).

1 Peter 1:6-7: “In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (NASB).

1 Peter 4:12-13: “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy” (KJV).

James 1:2-4: “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials; knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing” (NASB).

A. W. Tozer said: “My father was a Methodist and believed in the laying on of hands, and believe me, he really laid them on!” (*Happy Father’s Day*, 38) Proverbs 23:13-14: “Don’t fail to correct your children. They don’t die if you spank them...discipline may well save them from death” (Prov. 23:13-14 NLT).

**Verse 11:** “You brought us into prison and laid burdens on our backs.”

The first 2 things that God did are recorded in verse 10: (1) “[He] tested us” and (2) “[He] refined us like silver.” Now in verse 11: (3) “[He] brought us into prison” and (4) “[He] laid burdens on our backs.”

It’s tough to face the Lord’s curriculum in preparing us for fruitfulness. Prison prepares us for freedom. Burdens produce brokenness!

Warren Wiersbe says: “God can heal the brokenhearted—if all the pieces are given to Him.” (*Be Quoted*, 28)

**Verse 12:** “You let men ride over our heads; we went through fire and water, but you brought us to a place of abundance.”

God did 7 things in verses 10-12: (1) “tested us,” (2) “refined us like silver”; (3) “brought us into prison”; (4) “laid burdens on our backs”; (5) “let men ride over our heads”; (6) “we went through fire and water”; and (7) “[He] brought us to a place of abundance.”

Isaiah 43:1-2: “But now, this is what the Lord says—he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: ‘Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze’” (NIV).

The Lord then says in verse 4: Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you...” (Is. 43:4).

Don Wytzen prays: “Dear Lord, I praise You for walking with me through

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the fire and water of purification so that I may enjoy You forever in the “place of abundance.”

Alan Nelson in his book *Embracing Brokenness* says: “The death of a dream hurts. Even as you become aware of what needs to happen in your life—relinquishing selfishness, submitting your goals, or surrendering your rights—you still feel a sense of loss in your life. A part of yourself is being put to death, even if it is a loathsome, fruitless part.” (96)

“God has a history of using the insignificant to accomplish the impossible.” (*God’s Little Devotional Book for Teachers*, 172)

Our meditation ends with “you brought us to a place of abundance.” Does God know what He is doing? The answer is Yes!

Psalms 65:11: “You crown the year with your bounty, and your carts overflow with abundance” (NIV).

Ecclesiastes 3:11: “God makes everything beautiful in its time.”

I feel like singing one of Fanny Crosby’s great hymns, “**Close To Thee**”: “*Thou, my everlasting portion, More than friend or life to me; All along my pilgrim journey, Saviour, let me walk with Thee. Close to Thee, close to Thee, Close to Thee, close to Thee; All along my pilgrim journey, Saviour, let me walk with Thee.*”

#### **December 9 — A Promise Kept (Ps. 66:13-15)**

**Psalm 66:13:** “*I will come to your temple with burnt offerings and fulfill my vows to you—*”

**Psalm 66:14:** “*vows my lips promised and my mouth spoke when I was in trouble.*”

**Psalm 66:15:** “*I will sacrifice fat animals to you and an offering of rams; I will offer bulls and goats. Selah*”

**Verse 13:** “I will come to your temple with burnt offerings and fulfill my vows to you—”

I love the way Peterson paraphrases this verse: “I’m bringing my prizes and presents to your house. I’m doing what I said I’d do.”

**Verse 14:** “vows my lips promised and my mouth spoke when I was in trouble.”

It would be pretty tough to try to focus on one situation where David was in trouble. There are just so many times when he was really in great difficulty.

After he prayed “God, get me out of Gath!” we read in Psalm 56:13: “For you have delivered me from death and my feet from stumbling, that I may walk before God in the light of life” (NIV).

We wonder how many times over the years of military conflict that he had made a vow in very stressful and difficult circumstances while they were at war.

**Verse 15:** “I will sacrifice fat animals to you and an offering of rams; I will offer bulls and goats. Selah”

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When we make a promise to the Lord, it is a very serious matter. I think it would be good for us at the conclusion of this particular study to listen to Solomon in Ecclesiastes 5:1-7: “Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong. Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few. As a dream comes when there are many cares, so the speech of a fool when there are many words. When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow. It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it. Do not let your mouth lead you into sin. And do not protest to the [temple] messenger, ‘My vow was a mistake.’ Why should God be angry at what you say and destroy the work of your hands? Much dreaming and many words are meaningless. Therefore stand in awe of God” (NIV).

These are sobering words. Is the Spirit of God impressing upon you some vow or promise you made in the past that is stifling the closeness and joy of your relationship with the Lord because that vow or that promise has not been fulfilled?

I think it’s appropriate for us to continue singing Fanny Crosby’s great hymn **“Close To Thee”**: *“Not for ease or worldly pleasure, Nor for fame my prayer shall be; Gladly will I toil and suffer, Only let me walk with Thee. Close to Thee, close to Thee, Close to Thee, close to Thee; Gladly will I toil and suffer, Only let me walk with Thee.”*

**December 10 — My Prayers Were Answered (Ps. 66:16-18) Psalm 66:16:**

*“Come and listen, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me.”*

**Psalm 66:17:** *“I cried out to him with my mouth; his praise was on my tongue.”*

**Psalm 66:18:** *“If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened;”*

**Verse 16:** “Come and listen, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me.”

We could title these remaining verses “My Personal Witness.”

In verse 5 it was “come and see what God has done.” Now in verse 16 it is “Come and listen.”

Psalm 9:1: “I will thank you, Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all the marvelous things you have done” (NLT).

Chip Ingram in his book *Holy Ambition* says: “Do you ever wonder why is it that so many people, so many groups, honestly intend to do so much, yet usually accomplish so little? The answer is good intentions followed by inaction. I don’t think most people approach life with the conscious attitude that says, ‘I’d like to waste my life. I’m going to get up today and blow the whole day off. I’m hoping to accomplish absolutely nothing of significance tomorrow; in fact, I think I’ll

just blow off the next decade or two and be a nothing and die.’ I think most of us have good but vague intentions, but we don’t know what to do with them.” (118-19)

Jerry White says: “Very little will happen without intensive focus. Follow-through, concentration, direction, and effort are all needed. Although human effort is not the major means of finding and deepening meaning, it is clearly a part of God’s plan.” (*Making Peace With Reality*, 105)

**Verse 17:** “I cried out to him with my mouth; his praise was on my tongue.”

Here in verse 17 we have petition and praise, which is a good thing to do as you are exercising your discipline of prayer.

The petition: “I cried out to him with my mouth.” The praise: “his praise was on my tongue.”

**Verse 18:** “If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.”

John Phillips says: “If God has convicted me about some sin in my life, if that sin remains cherished, indulged, unconfessed—then my prayers are in vain. God does not even hear them.”

Someone said: “When a man won’t listen to his conscience, it’s usually because he doesn’t want advice from a stranger.”

Isaiah 59:1-2: “Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear” (NIV).

Let’s sing verse 3 of “**Close To Thee**”: “*Lead me through the vale of shadows, Bear me o’er life’s fitful sea; Then the gate of life eternal May I enter, Lord, with Thee. Close to Thee, close to Thee, Close to Thee, close to Thee; Then the gate of life eternal May I enter, Lord, with Thee.*”

### **December 11 — Don’t Second-Guess God (Pearl)**

“Then David confessed to Nathan, ‘I have sinned against the Lord.’ Nathan replied, ‘Yes, but the Lord has forgiven you, and you won’t die from this sin. But you have given the enemies of the Lord great opportunity to despise and blaspheme him, so your child will die’ (2 Sam. 12:13-14 NLT).

When God forgives we need to be careful that we are not another illustration of “despising and blaspheming God” when He chooses to forgive a person whom we want to see suffer for their sin.

God is sovereign. He alone knows if the sinning one will repent.

“I will show kindness to anyone I choose, and I will show mercy to anyone I choose” (Exodus 33:19b NLT).

“Never let loyalty and kindness get away from you” (Prov. 3:3a NLT).

“You have to ‘walk in the light’ of the vision that has been given to you. Don’t compare yourself with others or judge them—that is between God and them.” (Chambers, *My Utmost For His Highest*, Dec. 29)

“The purposes of God are right, although we may not see just how He works all things for good and transforms tragedy.” (C. H. Spurgeon)



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## December 12 — The Exceeding Abundant (Ps. 66:19-20)

**Psalm 66:19:** *“but God has surely listened and heard my voice in prayer.”*

**Psalm 66:20:** *“Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love from me!”*

**Verse 19:** “but God has surely listened and heard my voice in prayer.”

In contrast to the possibility of sin interrupting the prayer process, the psalmist says “God has surely” done 2 things: (1) “listened” and (2) “heard my voice in prayer.”

1 John 5:14-15: “And how bold and free we then become in his presence, freely asking according to his will, sure that he’s listening. And if we’re confident that he’s listening, we know that what we’ve asked for is as good as ours” (MSG).

**Verse 20:** “Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love from me!”

His “Praise” is 2-fold. He is praising God: (1) “who has not rejected my prayer” and (2) “[has not] withheld his love from me!”

Joe Gibbs in his book *Racing to Win* says: “Recently, I received an outrageous offer to return to coach in the NFL. The salary and perks involved were far more than a kid from Enka, North Carolina, could ever have imagined! Just for fun, and to remain true to my commitment to run all major financial decisions past Pat, I told her about the offer. Without hesitation, Pat said, ‘You can go, if you want. I’m not. I’m staying here with our grandbabies.’ I smiled. ‘Me, too,’ I said. Relationships are far more valuable than money.” (188)

It is always a good thing to bear witness to God’s faithfulness in answering our prayers.

Don Wytzen prays: “O Lord, I can’t keep silent! You inspire me to write and to sing songs of thanksgiving for the miracle of Your love and forgiveness!”

Warren Wiersbe says: “The trials of God have a refining and strengthening effect. The result is they make us more like Jesus. Are you discouraged today by trials? Be encouraged that God will see you through and that He will use your trials to build you.”

Isaac Watts wrote: “My advocate appears for my defense on high; the Father bows His ears and lays His thunder by. Not all that hell or sin can say shall turn His heart, His love, away.”

Ignatius Loyola said: “Take Lord and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding and my entire will—all that I have and call my own. You have given it all to me. To you, Lord, I return it.”

Ephesians 3:20: “God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams!” (MSG).

Let’s complete our devotion today by singing a verse of **“More About Jesus”**: *“More about Jesus would I know, More of His grace to others show; More of His saving fullness see, More of His love who died for me. More, more*

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*about Jesus, More, more about Jesus; More of His saving fullness see, More of His love who died for me.”*

**December 13 — Lord, I’m Not Getting Any Younger (Ps. 71:1-2)**

**Psalm 71:1:** *“In you, O Lord, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame.”*

**Psalm 71:2:** *“Rescue me and deliver me in your righteousness; turn your ear to me and save me.”*

There are a lot of phrases in this Psalm that lead us to a Mahanaim connection. This was a staging area for war against Absalom, his son.

He has been king for 35 years and lost it. He’s now 65-years-old and has 5 years left. In those last 5 years there are 3 years of economic collapse, an ego trip by numbering the people and Adonijah tries to steal the kingdom while David is on his death bed.

There are 3 observations we need to make as we approach Psalm 71: (1) there is no easy track to the finish line; (2) age proves what you are made of; and (3) you have got to be proactive to make a strong finish.

**Verse 1:** “In you, O Lord, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame.”

In verse 1 we have a praise and a petition. Praise—“In you, O Lord, I have taken refuge.” Petition—“let me never be put to shame.”

You notice the Lord is the center of everything. Psalm 68:19: “Praise the Lord; praise God our savior! For each day He carries us in his arms” (NLT).

1 Thessalonians 5:24: “Faithful is the one who calls you, who also will do it.”

Warren Wiersbe says: “Another problem we face as we get older is *confusion*. ‘In You, O Lord, I put my trust; let me never be put to shame [confusion]’ (v. 1). We can’t always keep up with so many rapid changes in this world. As we get older, we might say, ‘I don’t quite know what’s going on.’ But God says, ‘Look, don’t worry about it. You trust Me, and I’ll never allow you to be confused.’”

**Verse 2:** “Rescue me and deliver me in your righteousness; turn your ear to me and save me.”

There are 4 petitions in verse 2 and they center around 4 words: (1) “Rescue”; (2) “deliver”; (3) “turn”; and (4) “save.”

The petitions are: (1) “Rescue me”; (2) “deliver me in your righteousness”; (3) “turn your ear to me”; and (4) “save me.”

We need to remember that this is the hope and prayer of an old man.

This is the best way to negotiate in our senior years—he and the Lord. It’s what He wants. Getting it done, that’s the key.

Let’s sing verse 2 of **“More About Jesus”**: *“More about Jesus let me learn, More of His holy will discern; Spirit of God, my Teacher be, Showing the things of Christ to me. More, more about Jesus, More, more about Jesus;*

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*More of His saving fullness see, More of His love who died for me.”*

**December 14 — Lord, I’m Still in the Battle (Ps. 71:3-4)**

**Psalm 71:3:** *“Be my rock of refuge, to which I can always go; give the command to save me, for you are my rock and my fortress.”*

**Psalm 71:4:** *“Deliver me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked, from the grasp of evil and cruel men.”*

**Verse 3:** “Be my rock of refuge, to which I can always go; give the command to save me, for you are my rock and my fortress.”

In verse 1 the psalmist says: “I have taken refuge.” Now here in verse 3: “Be my rock of refuge.”

Lord, be a place of safety and security where I can always go!

The petitions are to “be” and “give the command.” Whatever You say will be done!

The reason for my petitions are 2-fold: (1) “you are my rock” and (2) “you are...my fortress.” “Give the command to save me.” In other words, speak the word to save me. When God speaks it is done! The disciples learned this on the stormy sea when Jesus rose from sleep and commanded the storm “Peace be still!”

I’m thinking of the last verse of “Rock of Ages” at this point: *“While I draw this fleeting breath, When my eyes shall close in death, When I rise to worlds unknown, See Thee on Thy judgment throne, Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee.”*

**Verse 4:** “Deliver me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked, from the grasp of evil and cruel men.”

Whereas back in verse 2 we have 4 petitions: (1) “rescue”; (2) “deliver”; (3) “turn”; and (4) “save.” Now in verse 4 we have just 1 petition: “Deliver me, O my God.” Lord, be my deliverer! “Deliver me...from”: (1) “the hand of the wicked” and (2) “the grasp of evil and cruel men.”

This obviously is a reference to Absalom and to the men who have joined forces with him to take away David’s kingdom.

Isaiah 54:17: “no weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and this is their vindication from me,” declares the Lord” (NIV).

2 Chronicles 15:7: “But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded” (NIV).

Chip Ingram confesses: There was about a two-year stretch when I thought God had forgotten my name. I felt like my dreams were dying and I was a nobody going nowhere.” (*I Am With You Always*, 80)

It’s at times like this that Proverbs 3:5-6 must be dominate in our thinking: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight” (NIV).

Let’s sing verse 3 of **“More About Jesus”**: *“More about Jesus, in His Word,*

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*Holding communion with my Lord; Hearing His voice in ev'ry line, Making each faithful saying mine. More, more about Jesus; More of His saving fullness see, More of His love who died for me."*

**December 15 — Lord, You Are My Hope (Ps. 71:5-6)**

**Psalm 71:5:** *"For you have been my hope, O Sovereign Lord, my confidence since my youth."*

**Psalm 71:6:** *"From birth I have relied on you; you brought me forth from my mother's womb. I will ever praise you."*

**Verse 5:** "For you have been my hope, O Sovereign Lord, my confidence since my youth."

Here in verse 5 we now have the reason for the previous request for deliverance in verse 4. There are 2 reasons why: (1) "you have been my hope" and (2) "you have been...my confidence."

The psalmist in his old age, as he muses about his relationship with the Lord, can say that he had been in this for a long time. "Since my youth": (1) "you have been my hope" and (2) "you have been...my confidence." When we think of "my youth" we think of sheep and being a shepherd and we also think of the anointing by Samuel and the battle with Goliath in the Valley of Elah.

He mentions the phrase "O Sovereign Lord" which lets us know that he understands that the Lord is in total control.

Brandt summarizes these first verses: "Good Lord, You have kept me within the secure embrace of Your love these many years. My life is one long list of divine deliverances. I have come running to You again and again when the forces of evil set themselves against me."

Don Wytzen says: "This psalmist believes in the sovereignty of God—that the Lord, the Supreme Ruler of the universe, has everything under His control. Not only is He sovereign, but He sustains. From birth, through youth, into the middle years and beyond, the psalmist has felt His sustaining grace."

**Verse 6:** "From birth I have relied on you; you brought me forth from my mother's womb. I will ever praise you."

The key word here in verse 6 is "relied." What the psalmist is saying is: "I've been in a dependent relationship with you all of my life." He can't remember when he wasn't!

Brandt paraphrase the thought in these verses: "From the moment of my birth, I was dedicated to Your will, given life by You only to yield it back to You. And since that time, the days and hours of my life have been filled with praise for You."

Ron Mehl in his book *A Prayer That Moves Heaven* writes: "I think this is one of the reasons the Lord has been so gracious to me over the years. I've never been ashamed to let Him—or anybody else—know that I'm in way over my head. You see, I never have to worry about 'blowing my cover' and having people find out that Ron Mehl is inadequate and out of his league. I tell them right up front! I let them know from the get-go that God really is my strength

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and my wisdom and my help. I tell everyone I can that unless the Lord intervenes for me, unless He empowers me and grants me discernment and perseverance and patience, I will fall flat on my face.” (4041)

Let’s sing the fourth stanza of “**More About Jesus**”: *“More about Jesus on His throne, Riches in glory all His own; More of His kingdom’s sure increase; More of His coming, Prince of Peace. More, more about Jesus; More of His saving fullness see, More of His love who died for me.”*

#### **December 16 — Lord, You Are My Strong Refuge (Ps. 71:7-8)**

**Psalm 71:7:** *“I have become like a portent to many, but you are my strong refuge.”*

**Psalm 71:8:** *“My mouth is filled with your praise, declaring your splendor all day long.”*

**Verse 7:** “I have become like a portent to many, but you are my strong refuge.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 7: “Many gasp in alarm when they see me, but you take me in stride.”

Verse 7 is divided into 2 by the word “but” which forms the contrast between the “many” and the Lord. “I have become like a portent to many, but you [Lord] are my strong refuge.”

The *New Living* translates verse 7: “My life is an example to many, because you have been my strength and protection.”

The NET Bible translates Psalm 71:7: “Many are appalled when they see me, but you are my secure shelter.”

David is saying I’m like a sign or a bad omen to many.

Boice said: “In...greatness of his sufferings and the magnitude of his calamities...[he is] a marvel of God’s protecting care.” (paraphrase)

Don Wytzen says: “A person can likewise exhibit strong character through endurance, persistence, and continuance in habits of holiness.”

I really believe there is no need for a choice here at this point. A Christian has a tremendous opportunity to be a wonder and a witness to the cause of Christ, whether he is experiencing extreme suffering or tremendous blessing in his life.

God is in the business of using both the Josephs and the Jobs in His sovereign program to bring forth fruit through our lives.

**Verse 8:** “My mouth is filled with your praise, declaring your splendor all day long.”

Whether blessings or buffetings, it doesn’t make any difference at all. David is focused on the Lord and not on the circumstances of the moment. He has an attitude of gratitude, no matter what.

“My mouth is filled with your praise.” Did I read this right? No longer king. Son is rebelling. You’re unemployed. You’re 65 with no social security and this is what you’re doing! Wonder of wonders! The way it is expressed “declaring

your splendor all day long.”

The word “splendor” reminds me of the Lord’s high priestly prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. John 17:5: “And now, Father, glorify me with your very own splendor, The very splendor I had in your presence Before there was a world” (MSG).

You will notice 3 words that end verse 8: “all day long.” Three times it occurs. David is not going to allow any circumstance or situation interrupt this continuous flow of praise from his lips.

Spurgeon said: “What a blessed mouthful!”

I don’t know about you but I feel like singing a stanza of “**O Worship the King**”: *“O worship the King, all glorious above, O gratefully sing His pow’r and His love; Our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of Days, Pavillioned in splendor and girded with praise.”*

### **December 17 — Lord, Don’t Take Me Out of the Game (Ps. 71:9-10)**

**Psalm 71:9:** “*Do not cast me away when I am old; do not forsake me when my strength is gone.*”

**Psalm 71:10:** “*For my enemies speak against me; those who wait to kill me conspire together.*”

**Verse 9:** “Do not cast me away when I am old; do not forsake me when my strength is gone.”

Here we have 2 negative commands from the psalmist: (1) “Do not cast me away” and (2) “do not forsake me.” The psalmist is fearful that these might happen: (1) “when I am old” and (2) “when my strength is gone.”

I love the way Peterson paraphrases verse 9: “But don’t turn me out to pasture when I’m old or put me on the shelf when I can’t pull my weight.”

I find myself often praying, “Lord, am I becoming irrelevant? Dated? Narrow?” The Lord usually responds, “I’m the one doing it so quit second-guessing me!”

Isaiah 46:3-4: “Listen to me, O house of Jacob, all you who remain of the house of Israel, you whom I have upheld since you were conceived, and have carried since your birth. Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you” (NIV).

Wyrzten prays: “O Lord, You are fully trustworthy. I rest myself in You for the remaining days of my life and into all eternity!”

Tommy Nelson wrote the book *The Problem of Life With God*. He writes: “When I visit with people older than I am, I always ask them a question: ‘If you had to do life over, what would you do differently?’ Most of the time they say something like, ‘I would not have overlooked so many “todays” because of my ambitions for tomorrow. I wish I had smelled the roses more. I wish I hadn’t worried so much because now I’m so old I can’t even remember all the things I was worried about.’” (71)

Richard Davids in his book said: “‘A woman’s age,’ he said, ‘is her own



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business. Yes sir, and some have been in business a long time.” (*The Man Who Moved a Mountain*, 104)

“Most of our old folks are against sin. In fact, they’re against just about everything they’re too old to enjoy.” (*14,000 Quips and Quotes*, 470)

**Verse 10:** “For my enemies speak against me; those who wait to kill me conspire together.”

Here the psalmist gives us the reason why he asked the Lord in verse 9 “Do not cast me away” and “do not forsake me.” The reason being: (1) “my enemies speak against me” and (2) “those who wait to kill me conspire together.”

“My enemies” not only used words to “speak against me” they are ready to use weapons “to kill me [as they] conspire together.”

I think it is appropriate for us to meditate on Paul’s conclusions in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18: “Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal” (NASB).

Let’s sing verse 3 of “**O Worship the King**”: “*Thy bountiful care what tongue can recite? It breathes in the air, it shines in the light; It streams from the hills, it descends to the plain, And sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.*”

#### **December 18 — In God We Trust (Pearl)**

Psalm 36:7-9: “How precious is your unfailing love, O Lord! All humanity finds shelter in the shadow of your wings. You feed them from the abundance of your own house, letting them drink from your rivers of delight. For you are the fountain of life, the light by which we see” (NLT).

Jude 21: “Live in such a way that God’s love can bless you as you wait for the eternal life that our Lord Jesus Christ in his mercy is going to give you” (NLT).

Psalm 43:3-4a: “Send out your light and your truth; let them guide me. Let them lead me to your holy mountain, to the place where you live” (NLT).

Habakkuk 3:18: “I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation. The Sovereign Lord is my strength! He will make me as surefooted as a deer and bring me safely over the mountains” (NLT).

The human spirit soars with hope when lifted by an encouraging word. Don’t put off until tomorrow the loving words you can say today.

#### **December 19 — My Goal is To Be a Strong Finisher (Ps. 71:11-13) Psalm**

**71:11:** “*They say, ‘God has forsaken him; pursue him and seize him, for no one will rescue him.’*”

**Psalm 71:12:** “*Be not far from me, O God; come quickly, O my God, to help me.*”

**Psalm 71:13:** “*May my accusers perish in shame; may those who want to*

*harm me be covered with scorn and disgrace.”*

**Verse 11:** “They say, ‘God has forsaken him; pursue him and seize him, for no one will rescue him.’”

These “enemies” that the psalmist describes who have been using “words” are now ready to use weapons and are saying 3 things: (1) “God has forsaken him”; (2) “pursue him”; and (3) “seize him.” Then they give the reason for their 3-fold battle plan: “for no one will rescue him.” In other words, he’s an easy take. He has no one to help!

This verse sounds so much like the advice of Ahithophel to Absalom for him to pursue and seize him immediately.

**Verse 12:** “Be not far from me, O God; come quickly, O my God, to help me.”

There are 2 commands or 2 petitions here in verse 12: (1) for His presence—“be not far from me, O God” and (2) for His protection—“come quickly, O my God, to help me.”

**Verse 13:** “May my accusers perish in shame; may those who want to harm me be covered with scorn and disgrace.”

Here the psalmist has 2 petitions: (1) “may [they] perish in shame” and (2) “may [they] be covered with scorn and disgrace.”

Those who are referred to as “enemies” in verse 10 now are referred to as “accusers” here in verse 13. It is the desire of the psalmist that they “perish in shame” and “be covered with scorn and disgrace.”

All of these statements seem to come alive when we think of David in his late sixties writing from Mahanaim and Absalom has taken over the kingdom from his father.

Joseph Alexander says: “They shall be shamed, they shall cease (or be consumed)—the adversaries of my soul; they shall put on (or be clothed with) reproach or disgrace—the seekers of my hurt.” (*The Psalms Translated and Explained*, 300)

I am reminded of the Lord’s words to Jacob when he left home to go to the home of Laban. Genesis 28:15: “I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you” (NIV).

The Lord spoke in a similar fashion to Abram in Genesis 15:1: “After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: ‘Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward’” (NIV).

2 Timothy 4:6-8: “You take over. I’m about to die, my life an offering on God’s altar. This is the only race worth running. I’ve run hard right to the finish, believed all the way. All that’s left now is the shouting—God’s applause! Depend on it, he’s an honest judge. He’ll do right not only by me, but by everyone eager for his coming” (MSG).

Someone said: “Aspire to inspire before you expire!”

Let’s sing verse 4 of “**O Worship the King**”: “*Frail children of dust, and*

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*feeble as frail, In Thee do we trust, nor find Thee to fail; Thy mercies how tender! How firm to the end! Our Maker, Defender, Redeemer and Friend."*

**December 20 — I'm Pressing On Toward the Goal (Ps. 71:14-15)**

**Psalm 71:14:** "*But as for me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more.*"

**Psalm 71:15:** "*My mouth will tell of your righteousness, of your salvation all day long, though I know not its measure.*"

**Verse 14:** "But as for me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more."

Once again we have the blessed "But" in the text, the contrast to these wicked ones. The psalmist puts the focus on himself. He has 6 things he is going to say about himself in the next verses.

There are 2 things he says about himself in verse 14: (1) "I will always have hope" and (2) "I will praise you more and more."

(1) "I will always have hope." I know You are going to come through in this situation.

(2) "I will praise you more and more." I am going to crank up the praise another notch! We just don't seem to do that sort of thing ourselves.

**Verse 15:** "My mouth will tell of your righteousness, of your salvation all day long, though I know not its measure."

In verse 14 he said "as for me, I will always have hope, I will praise you more and more." Now in verse 15 we have 2 more statements: (1) "My mouth will tell of your righteousness" and (2) "My mouth will tell...of your salvation." This is going to be something that I will do "all day long." This takes us to verse 8: "My mouth is filled with your praise, declaring your splendor all day long."

This is something I am going to be doing "all day long, though I know not its measure."

This is going to be all right even though I don't know how You are going to work it all out!

Ephesians 3:17-19: "so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fulness of God" (NASB).

Stewart Perowne said: "God's righteousness and God's salvation are infinitely beyond all man's power to calculate or to repeat." (*Commentary on the Psalms*, 561)

My mind turns to Philippians 3:13-14: "No, dear brothers and sisters, I am still not all I should be, but I am focusing all my energies on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I strain to reach the end of the race and receive the prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is

calling us up to heaven” (NLT).

It seems appropriate to close this meditation by singing a verse of **“Higher Ground”**: *“I’m pressing on the upward way, New heights I’m gaining ev’ry day; Still praying as I’m onward bound, ‘Lord, plant my feet on higher ground. Lord, lift me up and let me stand, By faith, on Heaven’s tableland, a higher plane that I have found; Lord plant my feet on higher ground.’”*

**December 21 — I Want to Be a Good Witness to the End (Ps. 71:16-17)**

**Psalm 71:16:** *“I will come and proclaim your mighty acts, O Sovereign Lord; I will proclaim your righteousness, yours alone.”*

**Psalm 71:17:** *“Since my youth, O God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds.”*

**Verse 16:** “I will come and proclaim your mighty acts, O Sovereign Lord; I will proclaim your righteousness, yours alone.”

We now have a total of 6 promises from the psalmist. In verse 14 we had the first 2. “As for me”: (1) “I will always have hope” and (2) “I will praise you more and more.” Then in verse 15 we had: (3) “My mouth will tell of your righteousness” and (4) “My mouth will tell...of your salvation.” Now there are 2 promises here in verse 16: (5) “I will come and proclaim your mighty acts” and (6) “I will proclaim your righteousness.”

Once again the psalmist uses the title: “O Sovereign Lord.”

We saw this in verse 5: “For you have been my hope, O Sovereign Lord, my confidence since my youth.”

The focus on verse 16 is on the Lord’s “righteousness” and not on ours! He says it is “your righteousness, yours alone.” Our only hope is in His “righteousness” which becomes ours as a gift when we, by faith, reach out and receive it.

In verse 15 it was: “[I] will tell of your righteousness.” Now, in verse 16, it is: “I will proclaim your righteousness.”

**Verse 17:** “Since my youth, O God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds.”

“Since my youth, O God” 2 things have happened: (1) “you have taught me” and

(2) “to this day I declare your marvelous deeds.”

F. B. Meyer said: “Thou hast taught me.—Be content to let God teach you just one step or lesson at a time. And declare what you are taught.”

C. H. Spurgeon said: “It is really necessary that every one of us should be taught of God; for, if we are not, somebody else will teach us, and that somebody else will so teach us that we shall lose our souls for ever.”

Joshua 1:8: “Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful” (NIV).

Ezra 7:10: “For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the

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Law of the Lord, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel” (NIV).

2 Timothy 2:15: “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth” (NASB).

We are approaching the day of Christ’s birth so let’s sing a verse or 2 of some of the more familiar Christmas carols. This morning let’s sing 2 verses of **“O Come, All Ye Faithful”**: *“O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant, Come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem; Come and behold Him, born the King of angels: O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord. Sing choirs of angels, sing in exultation, Sing all ye bright hosts of heav’n above; Glory to God, all glory in the highest: O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord.”*

### **December 22 — I Want to Leave a Legacy (Ps. 71:18-19)**

**Psalm 71:18:** *“Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, O God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your might to all who are to come.”*

**Psalm 71:19:** *“Your righteousness reaches to the skies, O God, you who have done great things. Who, O God, is like you?”*

**Verse 18:** “Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, O God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your might to all who are to come.”

Once again we have a negative command when it comes to the whole business of aging.

In verse 9 we had 2 negative commands: (1) “Do not cast me away” and (2) “do not forsake me.” Now, here in verse 18, there is a repetition: “Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, O God.”

In verse 9 he spoke of being old and his strength being gone. Here in verse 18 he speaks of being “old and gray.” He is concerned that the Lord might forsake him.

Isaiah 46:4: “Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you” (NIV).

Psalm 23:4: “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me” (NIV).

1 Chronicles 28:20: “David also said to Solomon his son, ‘Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you until all the work for the service of the temple of the Lord is finished’” (NIV).

David asks the Lord not to forsake him until he does 2 things. He wants to do 2 things before he is finished: (1) “I declare your power to the next generation” and (2) “I declare...your might to all who are to come.”

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He wants to leave a spiritual legacy. He wants, in that legacy, to speak with a clear testimony of “your power” and “your might” so that they will have all they need in order to lead a victorious life for the glory of God.

Leslie Brandt paraphrases verse 18: “Now, as I near the late afternoon and evening of my life, I continue to seek Your love and mercy. Even while I shout Your praises and proclaim Your salvation, I reach for the assurance of Your love and concern.” (*Psalms Now*, 117)

“Growing old but not retiring for the battle still is on; Going on without relenting till the final victory’s won. Ever on, nor think of resting, for the battle rages still; And my Savior walks beside me as I seek to do His will. Let me labor in Thy harvest more than ever in the past, Reaping in what Thou hast planted till I dwell with Thee at last; That before Thy throne eternal I may have some fruit to bring, Not my work—the fruit of Calvary, all Thine own, my Lord and King.” (InfoSearch 3.21)

**Verse 19:** “Your righteousness reaches to the skies, O God, you who have done great things. Who, O God, is like you?”

There are 3 things that we see in this verse: (1) “Your righteousness reaches to the skies”; (2) “you...have done great things”; and (3) “Who...is like you?”

Leslie Brandt paraphrases this verse: “You are, O God, the Creator and Performer of great and glorious things. There is no one like You.” (118)

Bruce Wilkinson in *Closer Walk* says: “God will never ask of you that which He has not capable of doing through you.” (278)

Let’s sing a couple of verses of “**Hark, the Herald Angels Sing**”: “*Hark, the herald angels sing, ‘Glory to the newborn King; Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!’ Joyful, all ye nations, rise, Join the triumph of the skies; With the’ angelic host proclaim, ‘Christ is born in Bethlehem!’ Hark, the herald angels sing, ‘Glory to the newborn King.’ Hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail, the Sun of Righteousness! Light and life to all He brings, Risen with healing in His wings. Mild He lays His glory by, Born that man no more may die. Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them second birth. Hark, the herald angels sing, ‘Glory to the newborn King.’*”

**December 23 — The Journey Has Been Hard But You’ve Been Faithful (Ps. 71:2021)**

**Psalm 71:20:** “*Though you have made me see troubles, many and bitter, you will restore my life again; from the depths of the earth you will again bring me up.*”

**Psalm 71:21:** “*You will increase my honor and comfort me once again.*”

**Verse 20:** “Though you have made me see troubles, many and bitter, you will restore my life again; from the depths of the earth you will again bring me up.”

The psalmist turns the focus on the past in the first part of the verse and then to the future in the last part of the verse.



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As far as the past is concerned “you have made me see [many] troubles” and “bitter [troubles].”

As far as the future is concerned, there are 4 things he has to say in the remainder of verses 20 and 21: (1) “you will restore my life again” and (2) “from the depths of the earth you will again bring me up.”

David turns from the past to the future very quickly: (1) “you will restore my life again” and (2) “you will again bring me up [from the depths].”

Part of the sovereign Lord’s curriculum in David’s life has been “many and bitter [troubles].”

That is true for all of us! Psalm 34:19: “A righteous man may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all” (NIV).

1 Peter 4:19: “Therefore, let those also who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right” (NASB).

Isaiah 48:10-11: “See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another” (NIV).

1 Peter 4:12-13: “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation” (NASB).

Genesis 50:20: “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives” (NIV).

Bruce Bickel says: “...It’s a dog-eat-dog world out there, and I feel like I’m wearing Alpo underwear.” (*Real Life Has No Expiration Date*, 48)

Lisa Beamer said: “Slowly I began to understand that the plans God has for us don’t just include ‘good’ things, but the whole array of human events.” (*Let’s Roll!*, 68)

**Verse 21:** “You will increase my honor and comfort me once again.”

In verse 20 the psalmist looked to the past and was able to say “you have made me see troubles, many and bitter.” In the later part of verse 20 and in verse 21 we see him looking to the future with these 4 things in mind: (1) “you will restore my life again”;

(2) “you will bring me up...from the depths”; (3) “You will increase my honor”; and

(4) “You will...comfort me once again.”

Bruce Wilkinson says: “Combine a servant’s heart with an obedient will, and you too will become something you may never have been before: a need-oriented, servant-hearted, Christlike leader. And there’s always room for more of those!” (*Closer Walk*, 123)

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Henry Drummond said: “You will find as you look back upon your life, that the moments that stand out are the moments when you have done things for others.” (*Stories for the Kindred Heart*, 218)

John 1:14: “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth” (NASB).

Mark 10:45: “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (NASB).

Let’s celebrate the Christmas season by singing a couple of verses of “**It Came Upon the Midnight Clear**”: *“It came upon the midnight clear, That glorious song of old, From angels bending near the earth To touch their harps of gold: ‘Peace on the earth, good will to men, From heav’n’s all-gracious King!’ The world in solemn stillness lay To hear the angels sing. For lo, the days are hast’ning on, By prophet bards foretold, When with the ever circling years comes round the age of gold; When peace shall over all the earth Its ancient splendors fling, And the whole world give back the song Which now the angels sing.”*

**December 24 — I’m Going Out With a Song and a Testimony (Ps. 71:22-24)**

**Psalm 71:22:** *“I will praise you with the harp for your faithfulness, O my God; I will sing praise to you with the lyre, O Holy One of Israel.”*

**Psalm 71:23:** *“My lips will shout for joy when I sing praise to you—I, whom you have redeemed.”*

**Psalm 71:24:** *“My tongue will tell of your righteous acts all day long, for those who wanted to harm me have been put to shame and confusion.”*

**Verse 22:** “I will praise you with the harp for your faithfulness, O my God; I will sing praise to you with the lyre, O Holy One of Israel.”

You will notice the reason and focus for his praise is given to us in verse 22: “for your faithfulness.”

Henri Nouwen said: “Our life is full of brokenness—broken relationships, broken promises, broken expectations. How can we live with that brokenness without becoming bitter and resentful except by returning again and again to God’s faithful presence in our lives.”

David concludes our psalm with a holy determination that nothing along life’s journey will interrupt his attitude of gratitude and his song of praise.

Praise will be the normal outflow of an attitude of gratitude and a declaration of dependence.

**Verse 23:** “My lips will shout for joy when I sing praise to you—I, whom you have redeemed.”

In verse 23 we learn that David is serious. Included in his praise is the “shout” and the “song.”

Isaiah 61:10: “I will sing for joy in God, explode in praise from deep in my soul” (MSG).

J. Vernon McGee said: “As we grow old, let’s not talk about

aches and pains, let's rejoice in the Lord and sing His praises." You will notice in verse 23 that the psalmist tells you why his "lips will shout for joy" and why he will "sing praise": "[It is] I whom you have redeemed."

I could hardly contain myself in wanting to spend a few moments just singing Fanny Crosby's great old hymn "Redeemed": *"Redeemed how I love to proclaim it!*

*Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb; Redeemed thro' His infinite mercy, His child, and forever, I am. I think of my blessed Redeemer, I think of Him all the day long; I sing, for I cannot be silent; His love is the theme of my song."*

**Verse 24:** "My tongue will tell of your righteous acts all day long, for those who wanted to harm me have been put to shame and confusion."

There are 4 key statements in these final 3 verses: (1) "I will praise you"; (2) "I will sing praise to you"; (3) "My lips will shout for joy"; and (4) "My tongue will tell of your righteous acts."

This is the third time we have had the phrase "all day long": (1) verse 8—"declaring your splendor all day long"; (2) verse 15—"My mouth will tell of your righteousness, of your salvation all day long"; and (3) verse 24—"My tongue will tell of your righteous acts all day long."

The reason for this explosive outburst of praise is given in the final phrase of verse

24: "for those who wanted to harm me have been put to shame and confusion."

If in fact he is at Mahanaim and the battle has not been completed as yet, he is actually so confident about the future outcome that he sees it as the past, as having "been put to shame and confusion."

Wyrzten prays: "O Lord, teach me how to praise You and remind me to practice until my heart sings in perfect harmony with Your will."

Warren Wiersbe says: "You can always live to bring glory to God no matter what your age is. Those of us who are older can do that in a special way; we can teach the younger generation about His faithfulness. Preserve your Christian heritage for future generations. Let your life be a continual testimony for God."

I find myself singing with Russell Newport that great song "Find Us Faithful": *"Surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses Let us run the race not only for the prize. But as those who've gone before us Let us leave to those behind us A heritage of faithfulness passed on through Godly light. O May all who come behind us, find us faithful. May the fire of our devotion light their way. May the footprints that we leave, lead them to believe. And the lives we live inspire them to obey. O May all who come behind us, find us faithful."*

Let's sing a verse of "**Silent Night**": *"Silent night! Holy night! All is calm, all is bright 'Round yon virgin mother and Child! Holy Infant, so tender and mild, Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace."*

**December 25 — Joy to the World! (Pearl)**

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Merry Christmas! “Joy to the world! The Lord is come: Let earth receive her King; Let every heart prepare Him room, And heaven and nature sing.” (Isaac Watts)

The Lord (Jesus Christ) is come. Only the incarnation of Jesus Christ is the just and true reason for the first Christmas celebration and every one since.

The incarnation, the presence of God among us, is the greatest gift God could ever give to man or that man can ever receive from God.

“The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born tonight in Bethlehem, the city of David!” (Luke 2:11 NLT).

“But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village in Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel will come from you, one whose origins are from the distant past” (Micah 5:2 NLT).

Micah never understood just how far back the “one whose origins are from the distant past” really was.

“In the beginning the Word already existed. He was with God, and he was God. He was in the beginning with God” (John 1:1-2 NLT).

Our poor mind cannot get around heaven—the most awesome and beautiful place that we can’t even imagine.

Jesus left heaven to come to earth because of His love for us. What a price to pay!

On top of that He paid a second price—crucifixion. The most cruel, hideous death ever contrived by man. The good news is: He’s alive! He’s alive! He arose from the dead and He is alive! And that is not all: He is coming again!

If we can’t get our mind around heaven, we sure will have trouble when Jesus comes again. This time it will not be a manger or a cross. This time He will bring the armies of heaven with Him. See Rev. 1:12-19, Rev. 19:15-16, and Rev. 19:21 (NLT) for just a sample.

Today as we celebrate the birth of the incarnate Son of God, let’s praise Him, worship and truly honor Him and tell Him how much we love Him.

*“Jesus paid it all; All to Him I owe. Sin had left a crimson stain; He washed it white as snow.”* (Elvina Hall)

Now that’s something to celebrate!

## **December 26 — He Tends His Flock (Ps. 80:1-3)**

**Psalm 80:1:** *“Hear us, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock; you who sit enthroned between the cherubim, shine forth”*

**Psalm 80:2:** *“before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh. Awaken your might; come and save us.”*

**Psalm 80:3:** *“Restore us, O God; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.”*

This Psalm is written by Asaph. He is a descendant of Gershom, son of Levi, nominated by the chief Levites as a leading singer, using symbols.

David made him leader of the choral worship. Twelve of the Psalms are attributed to his authorship: Psalm 50 and 73-83.

**Verse 1:** “Hear us, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock; you who sit enthroned between the cherubim, shine forth”

In these first 3 verses we will see 7 petitions from the lips of the psalmist: (1) “hear us”; (2) “shine forth”; (3) “awaken your might”; (4) “come”; (5) “save us”; (6) “restore us”; and (7) “make your face shine upon us.”

These first 3 verses are a prayer for the restoration of God’s former favour to them.

2 Chronicles 7:14: “if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (NIV).

The Lord is referred to as Israel’s shepherd. Isaiah 40:11: “He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young” (NIV).

The petition of the Lord is to “shine forth.” Show us Your glory. It is gone behind a cloud.

**Verse 2:** “before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh. Awaken your might; come and save us.”

Of the 7 petitions in these first 3 verses, we find in verse 1: (1) “hear us” and (2) “shine forth.”

Now here in verse 2 we have: (3) “awaken your might”; (4) “come”; and (5) “save us.”

This is a reference to Rachel’s sons, Joseph and Benjamin. The grandsons are Ephraim and Manasseh who were born while Joseph was in Egypt.

“Awaken your might; come and save us.”

If they don’t deal with the issues, partly cloudy is going to turn into a storm and they are going to be shoveling hail pellets of judgment off their driveways!

J. Vernon McGee said that Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh were the 3 tribes. According to Numbers 2 that are immediately behind the ark in the order of the march. (paraphrased)

**Verse 3:** “Restore us, O God; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.”

Here in verse 3 we have “Restore us, O God.” Down in verse 7 we will have “Restore us, O God Almighty.” In our last verse we will have “Restore us, O Lord God Almighty.”

The psalmist asks 2 things of the Lord here in verse 3: (1) “Restore us, O God” and

(2) “make your face shine upon us.” The reason he wants this to happen is “that we may be saved.” We now have the 7 petitions in the first 3 verses

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complete: (1) “Hear us”; (2) “shine forth”; (3) “awaken your might”; (4) “come”; (5) “save us”; (6) “Restore us”; and (7) “make your face shine upon us.”

To “shine” means to bestow His favor.

Psalm 4:6: “Many are asking, ‘Who can show us any good?’ Let the light of your face shine upon us, O Lord” (NIV).

Numbers 6:24-26: “The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace” (NIV).

Don Wytzen records this prayer: “Shepherd of Israel, please listen! And let me hear the tender melody of Your love so I can tune my life to Your perfect pitch.”

James Boice says: “In Psalm 80 the prayer that God might make his face shine upon the people is that God might be favorable to them again. They are threatened by the Assyrian armies...If the psalm was written before the fall of the northern kingdom, as it seems to have been, we know that God did not smile favorably. And we know the reason too! The people did not repent of their sins and truly seek after God and righteousness. So the psalm warns us that restoration is not automatic. God is good—he is the Good Shepherd—but he is also a stern judge of unrepentant sin.”

It’s the Christmas season so let’s sing a verse of “**The First Noel**”: “*The first Noel the angel did say, Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay; In fields where they lay keeping their sheep, On a cold winter’s night that was so deep. Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel, Born is the King of Israel.*”

#### **December 27 — I Will Shepherd the Flock With Justice (Ps. 80:4-6)**

**Psalm 80:4:** “*O Lord God Almighty, how long will your anger smolder against the prayers of your people?*”

**Psalm 80:5:** “*You have fed them with the bread of tears; you have made them drink tears by the bowlful.*”

**Psalm 80:6:** “*You have made us a source of contention to our neighbors, and our enemies mock us.*”

**Verse 4:** “O Lord God Almighty, how long will your anger smolder against the prayers of your people?”

There are 2 questions in this Psalm: (1) “how long?”—verse 4; and (2) “Why?”—verse 12.

Psalm 30:5: “For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning” (NIV).

Psalm 29:4-5: “The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is majestic. The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars; the Lord breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon” (NIV).

Hebrews 10:31: “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (ESV).



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Revelation 6:10: “and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, wilt Thou refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?’” (NASB).

Warren Wiersbe says: “We certainly ought to pray this in times of *affliction*. The people of Israel were going through the affliction of God. He was angry with them and had to chasten them. The psalmist says, ‘You are feeding us with the bread of tears. We are drinking our tears. We are a strife to our neighbors. Our enemies are laughing at us’ (vv. 5, 6). Asaph doesn’t pray for the Lord to change his circumstances. Rather, he says, ‘Lord, restore us. We have wandered away. We are not what we ought to be. Turn us right again.’”

Peterson has a graphic paraphrase of Jeremiah 5:21-22: “Listen to this, you scatterbrains, airheads, With eyes that see but don’t really look, and ears that hear but don’t really listen. Why don’t you honor me? Why aren’t you in awe before me?” (MSG).

Ron Mehl says: “It’s a fact: God functions in the midst of obedience; Satan functions in the midst of passivity. If you want God to work in your life, just begin to do what He has said. Start the gears of your will in motion, whether your emotions are engaged or not.” (*A Prayer That Moves Heaven*, 73)

Kris Lundgaard says: “Since this is the way God deals with us, we can’t expect to recover unless we find these things worked in our hearts: sincere prayer, thorough confession and repentance, fresh faith and praise to God. We have no reason to hope that if we continue to be spiritual sluggards and pigs, wallowing in the mud of worldliness, God will pop in uninvited and fix us up. If he worked that way, without showing us our danger and convicting us of our sin, how would we ever know to thank him? And how we should thank him! Backsliding isn’t a hangnail—it’s a cancer that weakens our souls and will certainly destroy us if God doesn’t heal us.” (*Through the Looking Glass*, 198)

**Verse 5:** “You have fed them with the bread of tears; you have made them drink tears by the bowlful.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 5: “You put us on a diet of tears, bucket after bucket of salty tears to drink.”

**Verse 6:** “You have made us a source of contention to our neighbors, and our enemies mock us.”

In these 2 verses—verses 5 and 6—you have 4 things that God has done in acts of discipline and judgment against His people: (1) “you have fed them with the bread of tears”; (2) “you have made them drink tears by the bowlful”; (3) “You have made us a source of contention to our neighbors”; and (4) “our enemies mock us.”

People in general just don’t recognize God tightening the screws of judgment upon them.

Bickel and Jantz say: “We tick God off every time we return to the sin that we previously confessed. This should be a sobering and saddening thought for each of us. When we intentionally sin *again*, we are engaged in an act of

outright defiance and rebellion against God. Our repeated sin is no trivial matter. It doesn't matter whether that conduct involves sexual sin, substance abuse, anger, materialism, idolatry, selfishness, gossip, or spiritual arrogance. Every volitional act on our part that knowingly takes us back into sin is an egregious affront to God." (*What Ticks God Off*, 89)

Let's sing a couple of verses of Martin Luther's Christmas hymn "**Away in a Manger**": "*Away in a manger, No crib for a bed, The little Lord Jesus Laid down His sweet head; The stars in the sky Looked down where He lay, The little Lord Jesus, Asleep on the hay. The cattle are lowing, The Baby awakes, But little Lord Jesus, No crying He makes; I love Thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky, And stay by my cradle, Till morning is nigh.*"

**December 28 — Restore Us, O God Almighty (Ps. 80:7-10)**

**Psalm 80:7:** "*Restore us, O God Almighty; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.*"

**Psalm 80:8:** "*You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it.*"

**Psalm 80:9:** "*You cleared the ground for it, and it took root and filled the land.*"

**Psalm 80:10:** "*The mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches.*"

**Verse 7:** "Restore us, O God Almighty; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved."

Warren Wiersbe says: "There are times when you need God's restoration. Sometimes He afflicts you and chastens you because His glory is at stake—He wants you to glorify Him. Have you failed God? Do you need His restoration? Pray Asaph's prayer today from your heart."

Wyrzten prays: "Shepherd of Israel, please don't be angry with me! Open me up emotionally and show me how my deepest needs can be met in You."

Lancelot Andrewes said: "teach me to do the things that pleaseth Thee for Thou art my God: let thy loving Spirit lead me forth into the land of righteousness." (*The Preces Privatae of Lancelot Andrews*, 19)

Fénelon said: "God wants to foster your dependence on Him. He gives you light as a wise mother would give her child tasks to do. No more light is given until that particular job is finished. Have you finished all that God sets before you? He will instantly give you a new work for He never leaves you idle. But if you haven't done what He has asked, He will show you no more. Let God work in you, and be happy with the light He gives you. Each new gift from God is built upon the one before it." (*The Seeking Heart*, 136)

**Verse 8:** "You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it."

John 15:16: "You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you" (NASB).

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John 15:5: “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing” (NASB).

**Verse 9:** “You cleared the ground for it, and it took root and filled the land.”

There were 2 things the Lord did for the “vine” in verse 8 and 1 more thing here in verse 9: (1) “You brought a vine out of Egypt”; (2) “you drove out the nations and planted it”; and (3) “You cleared the ground for it.”

In response to these 3 things which the Lord has done for the “vine,” the verse concludes by saying the “vine” responded by: (1) “it took root” and (2) “it...filled the land.”

Colossians 2:6-7: “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude” (NASB).

**Verse 10:** “The mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches.”

I think it is good for us to remember that when God is involved in something, big things are bound to happen!

Acts 2:41: “So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls” (NASB).

Acts 6:7: “And the word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith” (NASB).

Let’s sing a verse of “**Angels We Have Heard on High**”: “*Angels we have heard on high Sweetly singing o’er the plains, And the mountains in reply Echoing their joyous strains. Gloria in excelsis Deo! Gloria in excelsis Deo!*”

## **December 29 — The Time of Judgment Has Come (Ps. 80:11-13)**

**Psalms 80:11:** “*It sent out its boughs to the Sea, its shoots as far as the River.*”

**Psalms 80:12:** “*Why have you broken down its walls so that all who pass by pick its grapes?*”

**Psalms 80:13:** “*Boars from the forest ravage it and the creatures of the field feed on it.*”

**Verse 11:** “It sent out its boughs to the Sea, its shoots as far as the River.”

The psalmist is describing the Mediterranean Sea on the west and Euphrates River on the east.

**Verse 12:** “Why have you broken down its walls so that all who pass by pick its grapes?”

Question #1 was back in verse 4: “how long will your anger smolder against the prayers of your people?” Question #2 is here in verse 12: “Why have you broken down its walls so that all who pass by pick its grapes?”

When we continue to ask the questions “Why?” and “how long?” we have not surrendered to what the Lord is allowing in our lives to cause us to be repentant and responsive to Him. When you have broken down walls the

enemy comes in like a flood.

Every trial and difficulty provides us with a chance to shrivel in self-pity or to shine in self-surrender.

The answers to “how long?” and “Why?” are very simple. When the Lord sees repentance and obedience, the other matters will clear up automatically. The old cowboy said: “When you get the hogs out of the creek, the water will clear up!”

There’s a little Diamond Shamrock drive-in grocery just a couple of blocks from our garden home. I stop there every morning to pick up the paper on my way to the office. I had stopped the other morning and one of the ladies in the store was on her knees stocking a shelf. When I came in she said, “Lord have mercy!” My response was, “He’s ready when you are!” I really believe that much of what we go through in our lives is a direct consequence of our unwillingness to do things God’s way. And our unwillingness to learn what it is He is trying to teach us.

“Why have you broken down its walls so that all who pass by pick its grapes?”

There are numerous reasons that are very clear in the blatant disobedience, both morally and spiritually, on the part of the children of Israel.

**Verse 13:** “Boars from the forest ravage it and the creatures of the field feed on it.”

Peterson paraphrases verse 13: “Wild pigs crash through and crush it, and the mice nibble away at what’s left.”

Joel 2:25: “I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten—the great locust and the young locust, the other locusts and the locust swarm—my great army that I sent among you” (NIV).

Mark Lowry says: “Can’t you hear the Lord now? ‘I give...I give...I give...and all you do is complain!’ I’m so glad we don’t live in Old Testament times. Do you remember what happened back then, when God got a bellyful of His children grumbling? Yep, He killed ‘em. That’s one serious ‘time-out’! They got touched by an angel, and it wasn’t the sweet Roma Downey or Della Reese-type, either! God used one of those big Arnold Schwarzenegger-terminator-type angels to punish them for their grumbling.” (*Live Long and Die Laughing*, 70-71)

Luke 15:18-19: “I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men’” (NASB).

What happened? “And he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him, and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him, and kissed him” (Luke 15:20 NASB).

Let’s sing a verse of Phillips Brooks Christmas carol “**O Little Town of Bethlehem**”: “*O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie! Above thy*

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*deep and dreamless sleep The silent stars go by; Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
The everlasting Light; The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee  
tonight.”*

**December 30 — O Lord, Watch Over This Vine (Ps. 80:14-16)**

**Psalm 80:14:** “*Return to us, O God Almighty! Look down from heaven  
and see! Watch over this vine,*”

**Psalm 80:15:** “*the root your right hand has planted, the son you have  
raised up for yourself.*”

**Psalm 80:16:** “*Your vine is cut down, it is burned with fire; at your  
rebuke your people perish.*”

**Verse 14:** “Return to us, O God Almighty! Look down from heaven and see!  
Watch over this vine,”

In verse 14 we have 3 petitions: (1) “Return to us”; (2) “Look down from  
heaven and see”; and (3) “Watch over this vine.”

It is “return” in verse 14. It is “revive” in verse 18. It’s “restore” in verse 19.

Jonathan Edwards once said that the spiritual journey requires an “intense  
concentration on God’s point of view.” Such concentration, he said, will  
“cause an intense narrowing of all our interests on earth, and an immense  
broadening of our interests in heaven.” (Larry Crabb, *The Pressure’s Off*, 128)

Wiersbe asks the question: “Why is a fruitful life a happy life? Because a  
fruitful Christian is experiencing God’s power in his life and fulfilling his  
greatest potential. Furthermore, he is serving others, and this is a constant  
source of joy. The more faithful he is to the Lord, the more blessing (and  
trials) he experiences; but this prepares him to be even more useful to the  
Lord.” (*Through the Year*, 365)

**Verse 15:** “the root your right hand has planted, the son you have raised  
up for yourself.”

William Plumer says: “The right hand denotes skill and strength. God had  
shown great wisdom and power in establishing the Jewish nation.” (*Psalms*,  
771)

“The root your right hand has planted” is the root of Abraham. “The son  
you have raised up for yourself” is the promised son Isaac given to him and  
Sarah miraculously.

**Verse 16:** “Your vine is cut down, it is burned with fire; at your rebuke  
your people perish.”

Jesus in one of His last messages on the way to Garden of Gethsemane talks  
about the vine and the branches. Listen to John 15:4-6: “Abide in Me, and I in  
you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so  
neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he  
who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can  
do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and  
dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned”  
(NASB).

This is obviously a reference to the captivity of the northern kingdom when Assyria was successful in conquering Israel in 721 B.C. The same thing happened to Judah in 586 B.C., when the Babylonians were successful in conquering the southern kingdom, the land of Judah.

I can hear in my mind the words of Jesus hundreds of years later when He says in Matthew 23:37: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling" (NASB).

Jeremiah 6:16: "This is what the Lord says: 'Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, "We will not walk in it"' (NIV).

Hebrews 4:7: "He again fixes a certain day, 'Today,' saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before, 'Today if you hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts'" (NASB).

Let's sing a verse of that Christmas carol "**Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne**":  
*"Thou  
 didst leave Thy throne And Thy kingly crown When Thou camest to earth for me;  
 But in Bethlehem's home Was there found no room For Thy holy nativity: O  
 come to my heart, Lord Jesus, There is room in my heart for Thee."*

#### **December 31 — Revive and Restore, O Lord (Ps. 80:17-19)**

**Psalm 80:17:** "*Let your hand rest on the man at your right hand, the son of man you have raised up for yourself.*"

**Psalm 80:18:** "*Then we will not turn away from you; revive us, and we will call on your name.*"

**Psalm 80:19:** "*Restore us, O Lord God Almighty; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.*"

**Verse 17:** "Let your hand rest on the man at your right hand, the son of man you have raised up for yourself."

The psalmist in verse 17 turns to petition: "Let your hand rest on the man at your right hand, the son of man you have raised up for yourself."

J. Vernon McGee reminds us: "'The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool' (Ps. 110:1). The Lord Jesus applied this to Himself when His enemies challenged His messianic claim" (Matt. 22:44).

**Verse 18:** "Then we will not turn away from you; revive us, and we will call on your name."

Whereas the word was "return" in verse 14, the word is "revive" here in verse 18.

Wiersbe says: "God had departed from His people. He had planted this vine, the nation of Israel, in the land of Canaan. He had cast out the other nations to make room for Israel. The vine took root and began to bear fruit. But



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the people of Israel began to sin against the Lord. Instead of being distinctively separate, they began to imitate the other nations and visit their altars and participate in their sacrifices. So God said, ‘If that’s the way you want it, you can have it.’ God left His people. The word Ichabod means ‘the glory has departed’ (1 Sam. 4:21).”

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary* says: “The man at Your right hand may allude to Benjamin, which means ‘son of the right hand.’ The son of man refers to Israel (again as a son).” (853)

**Verse 19:** “Restore us, O Lord God Almighty; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.”

This is now the third time we have had this phrase: (1) verse 3—“Restore us, O God”; (2) verse 7—“Restore us, O God Almighty”; and now (3) verse 19—“Restore us, O Lord God Almighty.”

We have “Return” in verse 14, we have “revive” in verse 18, we now have “Restore” here in verse 19.

C. H. Spurgeon asked the question: “What are the means of revival? They are twofold. One is, ‘Turn us again, O Lord God of Hosts’; and the other is, ‘Cause Thy face to shine.’ There cannot be revival without both of these.”

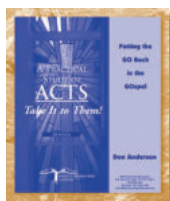
Lisa Beamer writes: “When I was seven, I prayed and told Jesus I wanted to commit my life to following him. However, since I was so young, I didn’t know all that decision meant until later. My realization expanded as I grew up. I didn’t have a crisis experience or a dramatic turnaround. Instead, my relationship with God evolved naturally. God was always a part of my life. I didn’t have to work up my faith or manufacture some outrageous testimony. I learned early on that God loved me, and I believed that as I trusted him with my life, he’d take care of me.” (*Let’s Roll!*, 54)

Lord, teach us how to respond quickly in repentance to Your heavy hand of discipline upon us.

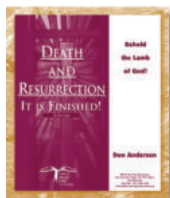
Lord, I want to cooperate fully with Your restoration process so that Your face shines upon me.

Let’s conclude the year with the singing of that great Christmas carol **“Joy to the World”**: *“Joy to the world! The Lord is come: Let earth receive her King; Let ev’ry heart prepare Him room, And heav’n and nature sing, And heav’n and nature sing, And heav’n, and heav’n and nature sing. He rules the world with truth and grace, And makes the nations prove The glories of His righteousness, And wonders of His love, And wonders of His love, And wonders wonders of His love.”*

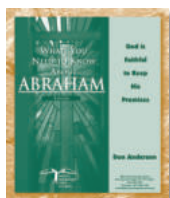
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## PURE SCRIPTURE FOR THE SOUL

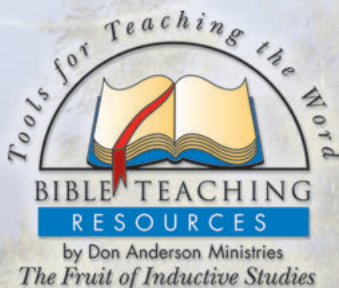
This devotional from Don and Pearl Anderson and Bible Teaching Resources provides pure Scripture for the soul to encourage you in your walk with Christ. Daily readings feature a Bible passage, prayer of response and a devotional thought written by Don and Pearl to help focus you on God's Word every day.

*"When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, O Lord God Almighty."*

*Jeremiah 15:16*



**DON ANDERSON** is a popular guest speaker at churches, para-church organizations, conferences, and retreats. His refreshing style and unique insights, captured on CD and DVD and published in his many books, effectively communicate timeless truths from Scripture and their application to everyday life. Don currently serves as the pastor of Hide-A-Way Lake Community Church in Hideaway, Texas.



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